

News

## Hydro project gains funding

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A MULTI-million dollar investment by a Japanese energy company will help bring a hydro energy project north of Townsville online.

Electric Power Development Co Ltd, trading as J-POWER, has agreed to a \$25 million conditional investment into Genex Power. The money will mainly be used to fund the Kidston Pumped Storage Hydro Project.

The hydro project would be part of the Kidston Renewable Energy Hub about 270km northwest north of Townsville.

A solar project is already at the site and Genex hopes to add more solar and wind to the hub in the future.

Genex chief executive officer James Harding said J-POWER's investment was a "vote of confidence" in the project and the company.

"It takes care of our equity stake in the project," Mr Harding said. "That sort of completes the funding. We still have to get final approval from others like NAIF (Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility), ARENA (Australian Renewable Energy Agency) and Energy Australia." Mr Harding said there would potentially be 300 construction jobs as part of the hydro project, with more available to establish a Powerlink transmission line.

The Japanese investment is subject to Genex's shareholders approval. Conditions attached to the agreement include financial close for the hydro project

happening before the end of the year. J-POWER would also have a member on the board of Genex.

Mr Harding said he was confident financial close would be reached well before the end of the year.

Once finances are secured, Mr Harding said detailed design work and equipment would be sourced and construction would begin quickly.

He said the project was expected to take about 42 months to build and hoped it would be completed by the start of 2023.

The pumped hydro project will be built at two disused gold mine pits near Einasleigh.

The two open cut pits are at different levels and as the water falls between the pits it will generate electricity.

"As soon as we get financial close on this we will focus on completing the development of the next stage of solar," Mr Harding said.

"We've also identified a wind resource close to Kidston and we are assessing that to see if it's viable. You could potentially have the hydro, solar and wind all coming online within six months of each other." Mr Harding said the renewable energy industry was looking at the project carefully as demand for pumped storage hydro electricity grew nationally. With the conditional investment from J-POWER and the potential board position, Mr Harding said the Japanese company was looking at committing to other projects in the future.