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Page 1 of 1

[back](#)

# MP sights bill relief in power plan

**ANDREW BACKHOUSE**

THE second stage of a major North Queensland solar and hydro-electric project needs immediate funding in order to drive down electricity prices and create jobs, says Herbert MP Cathy O'Toole.

Genex Power, which has a 50 megawatt solar project at Kidston, about 270km north-west of Townsville, is planning a second phase with the potential to produce 270MW.

Last week, Genex announced it had approval from the Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility to move to the full due diligence phase for its stage two solar and hydro pumped storage projects.

The move made the project a frontrunner to receive a concessional loan from the \$5 billion Federal Government initiative, which aims to encourage infrastructure that benefits Northern Australia.

Ms O'Toole said she welcomed the announcement but immediate action was needed.

"NAIF has been around for two years and there have been no projects," she said.

"This project (Genex) would put downward pressure on electricity prices which is a huge impost on small business.

"It would also create jobs.

"The Federal Government needs to fund this project and keep the momentum behind it.

"It's taking so long and there's always something else to be done. It's a great project."

Genex executive director Simon Kidston said 88 people were already on site for the construction of stage one. He said 500 construction jobs would be created for stage two.



**Herbert MP Cathy O'Toole.**