

News

POWERING THE NORTH KIDSTON TO BOOST OUTPUT

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THE proponents of a \$330 million hydro-electric pumped storage project at Kidston are on a “clear pathway” to proceed after redesigning the scheme to boost its energy storage 25 per cent to more than 2000 megawatt hours.

Genex Power released details of the plans yesterday showing an installed capacity maintained at 250MW but with a continuous generation of eight hours instead of six hours.

Genex has ditched a shallow upper dam project and plumbed for the use of two existing pits from the old Kidston gold mine as upper and lower storages as well as moved from fixed to variable speed turbines.

The turbines provide for faster ramping and will better match generation from a co-located 270MW solar PV project.

Genex managing director Michael Addison said the redesign was the culmination of months of work alongside advisers, including consultants Entura and project partner HydroChina.

“The Kidston renewable energy hub is currently the most advanced, lowest cost, large-scale energy storage project in the country,” Mr Addison said.

The company said it was clear the National Electricity Market was undergoing a rapid shift from a traditional baseload dominant market to a new dynamic where dispatchability and storage of renewable energy would underpin future generation. It expected to reach financial close next year.

Meanwhile, another big renewable scheme, the first stage \$160 million Kennedy Park wind, solar and battery project at Hughenden, has reached financial close.

The Australian Renewable Energy Agency will provide \$18 million in funding while up to \$93.5 million in debt finance will come from the Clean Energy Finance Corporation.

The 60MW project will consist of 43.2MW of wind, 15MW of solar PV, a 2MW lithium ion battery and a synchronous condenser.

It is joint venture between Australian renewable energy developer Windlab and Eurus Energy with the project expanded to include nearly double the wind power originally intended through 12 3.6MW turbines.

On completion, the combined wind and solar farm will generate 210,000 megawatt hours of electricity a year – enough to power more than 35,000 homes.

The project will also improve stability and reliability of the grid through technologies to control voltage and frequency. The project is expected to be operating by the end of 2018 and lay the foundation for a much larger second phase – a \$2 billion 1200MW solar and wind farm called Big Kennedy due to commence in 2019.
