

Business

## **New hydro power project set to create 500 NQ jobs**

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A NEW hydro scheme in north Queensland is set to create 500 jobs over the next three years after a 30-year deal was sealed to sell power from the project.

Genex said yesterday that it had finalised offtake arrangements with Energy Australia from its planned pumped hydro scheme at the old Kidston gold mine.

Genex executive director Simon Kidston said that most of the jobs would be sourced from the Townsville, Cairns and Atherton Tablelands, with an existing airfield at the site to be used to ferry workers in.

“This an important project for north Queensland with jobs in earthmoving, catering, welding and steel works,” he said. The project, 280km northwest of Townsville, is set to start in the third quarter of the year and Mr Kidston said he did not envisage delays due to the coronavirus epidemic. He said the 250 MW project would play a major part in stabilising the grid as renewable energy became an increasingly bigger part of the power mix.

The scheme will work by pumping water between two disused mining pits at the site through tunnels in which turbines will be installed. Mr Kidston said water would be pumped to the higher elevated body of water during the day using power from the grid. The water would be released into the turbines to create power during the night when demand was traditionally higher and solar power was not available. The project will be the first pumped storage hydro project in the national electricity market in almost 40 years.