



Media Release

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Off-grid renewable solution moves closer to fruition

The Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA) today announced \$450,000 funding to support a \$935,000 pilot-scale rollout of an innovative renewable energy solution.

ARENA CEO Ivor Frischknecht said Laing O'Rourke would be constructing, setting up and packing down the world's first fully redeployable solar-diesel hybrid power plant.

"ARENA supported Laing O'Rourke to undertake initial design work into this technology and we are very pleased to see it moving into the demonstration stage," Mr Frischknecht said.

"The speed at which this game-changing solution has progressed from the drawing board to the field is a testament to the clever Australian design and its potential to bring more renewable energy to off-grid Australia."

The first deployment will be a 1 MW plant with 134 kWp of solar photovoltaics at Laing O'Rourke's 350-bed Combabula accommodation village in regional Queensland, which will house workers during the construction phase of a major resource project.

Mr Frischknecht said the permanent nature of fixed framed solar installations is currently a substantial barrier to their use off-grid, particularly in mining operations and other short-term and medium-term ventures.

"The plant will consist of transport-friendly container-sized modules, including a control centre and inverters with external, pre-wired connections to allow fast, easy setup and pack down," Mr Frischknecht said.

"A semi-portable hybrid system like this carries enormous potential – it may provide industries and communities in regional and remote locations with a viable renewable energy alternative and could equally be used to assist in international relief efforts."

Laing O'Rourke Managing Director Cathal O'Rourke said the company is leveraging its Design for Manufacture and Assembly approach to provide an innovative solution that reduces operating costs and provides a cleaner energy alternative.

"Construction and engineering must break away from traditional processes if it is to evolve and deliver projects quickly, safely and more sustainably," Mr O'Rourke said.

"Our engineering and construction operations across Australia currently deploy hundreds of diesel generators, of which many can potentially be augmented with this new renewable energy technology.

"As specialists in major remote and regional projects, we have an opportunity to harness vast amounts of solar energy at our projects, for a sustainable engineering solution."

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About ARENA

ARENA was established by the Australian Government as an independent authority on 1 July 2012 to make renewable energy technologies more affordable and increase the amount of renewable energy used in Australia. ARENA is funded to 2022 to invest in renewable energy projects, support research and development activities, and increase industry and community knowledge about renewable energy.

About Laing O'Rourke

Laing O'Rourke is an A\$8 billion global construction company dedicated to engineering excellence. With operations in Australia for more than 50 years, Laing O'Rourke delivers building construction, railway services, materials handling, marine and civil infrastructure and a range of support services to clients in the oil and gas, resources, transport, defence, health, commercial and industrial sectors. Laing O'Rourke is the largest privately-owned construction and engineering firm in Australia. www.laingorourke.com