

Media Release

Ayers Rock Resort powers industry innovation through solar leadership

22 March 2016

A newly-completed solar project near iconic Uluru in Australia's red centre is proving how on-site renewable energy is cleaner and cheaper than alternative sources of energy for many remote businesses and consumers.

The Clean Energy Finance Corporation (CEFC) and Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA) today congratulated Voyages Indigenous Tourism Australia (Voyages) and Australian renewable energy company Epuron for the 1.8MW solar photovoltaic system at the Ayers Rock Resort.

The CEFC last year loaned \$4.7 million to Epuron to construct, own and maintain the \$7 million 5,770-module solar array at the Resort. The installation is expected to generate enough power to cover up to 30 per cent of the Resort's daytime use, or about 15 per cent of its annual overall energy use.

CEFC CEO Oliver Yates said that solar energy is playing a major role in transforming Australia's energy future while reducing costs and providing greater regional energy security.

"This project displaced expensive and inefficient power generated using trucked-in fuel with clean on-site power from the sun. It was economic in its own right and better for the environment," Mr Yates said.

"We're pleased that CEFC finance has helped encourage additional private sector investment in renewable energy and is helping to build technical experience in this sector."

ARENA is providing \$450,000 funding support to Voyages to analyse and promote the learning and expertise gained throughout development and construction.

ARENA CEO Ivor Frischknecht said the project was exciting and significant because it demonstrated that solar PV was economically viable in remote Australian locations.

"Voyages was able to build the solar installation with limited government support, using an operational lease model never before delivered at this scale. As a result, it will benefit from significant savings in the Resort's power expenses over the next 20 years," Mr Frischknecht said.

"The knowledge generated and shared through this project will help other remote and off-grid power users to build on Voyages' work and determine whether switching to renewable energy makes sense for them."

Epuron Executive Director Martin Poole said: "This project builds on our track record with solar generation projects in remote areas. Epuron is pleased to work with Voyages and we acknowledge the contribution of our main contractor Complete Power Solutions."

The innovative development was conceived by Voyages in partnership with CAT Projects, an award winning engineering consultancy based in Alice Springs. Voyages and CAT Projects completed detailed feasibility and design, as well as the innovative contractual framework, and awarded the contract to Epuron after a successful tender process in 2014.

Named Tjintu, which means sun in the local Pitjantjatjara language, the solar PV array is distributed across five separate locations around the Ayers Rock Resort.

About the CEFC

The Clean Energy Finance Corporation (CEFC) invests commercially to increase the flow of funds into renewable energy, energy efficiency and low emissions technologies. The CEFC has supported projects across the Australian economy, benefitting a diverse range of businesses, large and small. The CEFC's mission is to accelerate Australia's transformation towards a more competitive economy in a carbon constrained world, by acting as a catalyst to increase investment in emissions reduction. The CEFC does this through direct investments which attract private sector finance, as well as through its strategic co-financing partners. The CEFC was created by the Australian Government and operates under the Clean Energy Finance Corporation Act 2012. More information is available on the CEFC website: www.cleanenergyfinancecorp.com.au

About ARENA

ARENA was established by the Australian Government to make renewable energy technologies more affordable and increase the supply of renewable energy in Australia. ARENA invests in renewable energy projects, supports research and development activities, boosts job creation and industry development, and increases knowledge about renewable energy. ARENA has a portfolio of more than 240 supported projects and is actively seeking new projects to fund in 2016. For more information, visit www.arena.gov.au.

About Epuron

Epuron, which was established in 2003, is a leading, privately-owned Australian renewable energy company with a focus on development, ownership and operation of utility-scale renewable energy projects. The addition of the Ayer's Rock Resort solar project increases Epuron's solar portfolio to 6.9MW of generating capacity.

Epuron owns and operates the 4.1 MW Uterne solar power station in Alice Springs, which is one of the largest tracking solar power plants in the Southern Hemisphere. In addition to Uterne, Epuron owns and operates three off-grid solar projects located at Ti Tree, Kalkarindji and Alpururulam in the Northern Territory. These projects all displace diesel usage in these remote communities.

About Ayers Rock Resort and Voyages Indigenous Tourism Australia

Ayers Rock Resort provides a variety of accommodation from the premium Sails in the Desert hotel, Award-winning Desert Gardens Hotel, newly renovated Emu Walk Apartments, the authentic Outback Pioneer Hotel and Lodge and Ayers Rock Campground. Ayers Rock Resort is managed by Voyages Indigenous Tourism Australia. Voyages Indigenous Tourism Australia is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Indigenous Land Corporation (ILC) and manages tourism and resorts on its behalf. Voyages offers unique experiences and cultural immersion in spectacular locations around Australia including Ayers Rock Resort in the Northern Territory, Home Valley Station in The Kimberley in Western Australia and the Mossman Gorge Centre, in Tropical North Queensland. Voyages works collaboratively with local communities, respecting and supporting the local Indigenous cultures and offering employment and training opportunities to the local and broader Australian and Torres-Strait Islander Indigenous communities. Profits from all business activities are re-invested in the Indigenous and resort experiences and through the various training and development programs in place around Australia.

Media Contacts

CEFC

Media line 0457 732 219
media@cleanenergyfinancecorp.com.au

ARENA

James Webber 0410 028 899
Judith Ion 0434 1669 037
media@arena.gov.au

EPURON

Martin Poole
0411 159114
info@epuron.com.au

VOYAGES

Karena Noble
0418 912 162
Karena.noble@voyages.com.au

CAT

Lyndon Frearson
0438 839920
lyndon.frearson@catprojects.com.au

Images are available for download from:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/8fn0rhnqxl8zzz3/AACqjjCQ-clArO-75EF1Zwvba?dl=0>

ENDS