



Media Release

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ARENA supports innovative off-grid hybrid power solution

The Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA) today announced \$410,000 funding to support an exciting feasibility study into a portable hybrid solar-diesel power plant.

ARENA CEO Ivor Frischknecht said Laing O'Rourke will undertake the study, which has the potential to change the renewable energy landscape in regional and remote Australia.

“The permanent and long-term nature of solar installations is currently a giant barrier to their use off-grid, particularly in mining operations,” Mr Frischknecht said.

“One of ARENA’s key priorities is to drive the uptake of renewable energy in off-grid locations and a portable hybrid system, constructed off-site and easily transportable, could be a real game changer for off-grid locations in Australia and beyond.

“A system, constructed off-site, that is stackable, storable and quick to set up and break down carries numerous benefits for regional and remote communities and industries.

“In addition to the untapped potential for export and use in emergency situations, it offers a cheaper, more cost effective energy source as well as the ability to unshackle off-grid locations from a sole reliance on trucked-in diesel which is costly, dangerous and subject to variable weather conditions.”

Laing O'Rourke Managing Director Cathal O'Rourke said the company is leveraging their 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.

Laing O'Rourke’s Clean Technology Leader Dr Will Rayward-Smith said the business is well placed to support renewable energy in off-grid locations.

“Our Select Plant Hire subsidiary currently manages hundreds of diesel generators across Australia, which can potentially be augmented with this new plant,” Dr Rayward-Smith said.

“As specialists in major remote and regional projects, we have an opportunity to harness vast amounts of solar energy at these sites.”

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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