



Media Release

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Solar rolling out in Northern Territory off-grid communities

Remote communities from the Tiwi Islands to the South Australian border are set to be connected to solar power as construction begins on the next phase of the \$59 million Solar Energy Transformation Program (SETuP) project.

On behalf of the Australian Government, the Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA) previously announced \$31.5 million in funding towards SETuP, jointly funded by the Northern Territory (NT) Government and managed by Power and Water Corporation (PWC).

Tranche Two, which is commencing construction this month and is expected to be completed by November this year, will see 5.6 MW of solar PV rolled out to a further 17 communities across the Territory from Finke near the South Australian border to the Tiwi Islands.

Solar PV will be integrated with diesel generators at 15 sites including a 1 MW solar system at the Tiwi Island community of Wurrumiyanga which will ultimately supply electricity to three communities on Bathurst and Melville Islands, via an interconnection project.

On completion of Tranche Two, the SETuP program will provide 10 MW of solar photovoltaic power into the energy mix of 28 remote off-grid communities across the NT.

Last year, Tranche One involved successfully integrating 3.325 MW of solar PV into diesel power systems in an initial 10 remote Indigenous communities.

In April, alongside Tranche One, Daly River also became the first Northern Territory remote community to pilot be partially powered by solar and battery, as a 2MWh lithium-ion battery with a 0.8 MW peak output was installed alongside 3,200 solar panels. Daly River, with 50% of its energy from solar, is a demonstration of what is possible for the other communities to achieve in coming years.

ARENA CEO Ivor Frischknecht said Tranche Two would complete the roll out of this ambitious project to bring renewable energy to off grid and off shore communities.

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“As the largest roll out of solar PV to remote communities, this is a significant achievement that is four years in the making and one that ARENA is extremely proud to be supporting,” Mr Frischknecht said.

“This project will reduce the reliance on diesel which is costly and subject to price volatility, creates job opportunities in remote communities and provides renewable energy which can be expanded in the future. Each community will be operationally and technically ready to plug in more solar and storage as costs of renewable technologies fall. Over time, this could lead to very high percentage renewable power, driven by the lower cost of renewable energy,” he said.

Power and Water Chief Executive Michael Thomson said: “This project demonstrates how delivery of cost-effective, renewable energy may be employed to provide reliable power to remote communities, where both energy demand and costs are high.”

“Reducing our reliance on diesel fuel in remote locations makes economic and environmental sense. As these hybrid systems combine existing Power and Water assets with clean technologies, we are able to ensure service remains consistent while making a 15 per cent saving on diesel fuel.”

For a full list of the communities comprising Tranche Two, visit www.powerwater.com.au.

For further information, visit arena.gov.au