



Media Release

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Proving solar benefits at the edge of Australian grids

The Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA) today announced \$8.4 million funding support for Canadian Solar and Scouller Energy to construct a 5 MW DC (4.5 MW AC) solar farm near Normanton in far North-West Queensland.

ARENA CEO Ivor Frischknecht said Normanton Solar Farm would help demonstrate how integrating solar into the grid can improve energy reliability in regional Australia.

“Like many regional Australian communities, Normanton is on the fringe of one of our major electricity networks,” Mr Frischknecht said.

“Power generated in Rockhampton is fed across more than 1000 kilometres of transmission lines to the Normanton area. Electricity transmitted over long distances typically experiences significant losses along the way.

“Adding renewable energy generation closer to where it’s needed can provide more reliable and efficient power. This is a key ARENA investment focus for fringe-of-grid and network constrained areas.

“Normanton Solar Farm will act as a test case for network provider Ergon Energy to understand the true impact on network losses. This will provide a starting point to explore regulatory changes that would support more renewable energy installations in fringe-of-grid locations across Australia.”

Normanton Solar Farm will be jointly owned by Canadian Solar and Scouller Energy. Canadian Solar Australia has been contracted to construct the solar plant. Ergon Energy has signed a power purchase agreement to buy electricity from the plant.

Mr Frischknecht said Ergon Energy would work with Canadian Solar and Scouller Energy to analyse and report on the network impacts of operating the plant.

“This will allow energy distribution businesses to consider whether it’s feasible to compensate large-scale solar plants for the network benefits they provide,” Mr Frischknecht said.

“This could make large-scale solar plants more competitive and encourage more project developments, potentially increasing solar uptake and benefitting local communities where these projects can positively impact on the grid.”

Normanton Solar Farm is scheduled for completion in December 2016.

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 Canadian Solar Inc

Founded in 2001 in Canada, Canadian Solar is one of the world's largest and foremost solar power companies. As a leading manufacturer of solar photovoltaic modules and a provider of solar energy solutions, Canadian Solar has a geographically diversified pipeline of utility-scale power projects. In the past 14 years, Canadian Solar has successfully deployed over 12 GW of premium quality modules in over 70 countries around the world. Furthermore, Canadian Solar is one of the most bankable companies in the solar industry, having been publically listed on NASDAQ since 2006. For additional information about the company, products, and projects, please visit www.canadiansolar.com.

About Scouller Energy Pty Ltd

Scouller Energy Pty Ltd, headed by Doug Scouller, is the Normanton Solar Farm project developer. Scouller Energy's distributed renewable energy power station model is suited to fringe-of-grid locations and aims to improve the quality of energy supply for regional communities and to reduce high transmission losses. The model has been successfully applied in other parts of the world and Scouller Energy aims to develop a portfolio of solar farms in fringe of grid locations throughout North West Queensland. For additional information, please visit www.scoullereenergy.com.au.

About Ergon Energy

Ergon Energy, as a Queensland Government-owned corporation, supplies electricity to over 733,000 customers across a vast operating area of over one million square kilometres – around 97% of the state of Queensland – from the expanding coastal and rural population centres to the remote communities of outback Queensland and the Torres Strait. Ergon Energy was formed in 1999 by the Queensland Government, from the then six regional Queensland electricity distributors and their subsidiary retailer. Today the principal operating companies are Ergon Energy Corporation Limited, as the electricity distributor, and its subsidiary Ergon Energy Queensland Pty Ltd, the electricity retailer. For additional information, please visit www.ergon.com.au.