

19th October 2022

Cutting-edge clean energy project begins construction in Newstead, Victoria

The central Victorian community of Newstead is set to be home to a cutting-edge clean energy project, thanks to a partnership between community energy group, Renewable Newstead and renewable energy transition champion, Flow Power.

Set to start construction in October 2022, the Newstead Energy Project will consist of a 3MW solar farm and a 5MWh battery energy storage system, that features a unique and Victorian-first Direct Current (DC) coupled system.

Renewable Newstead committee members had long championed the idea of reducing their community's carbon footprint with local and grid connected clean energy projects. The community energy group was able to successfully identify a site for the clean energy project, completing a feasibility study and securing a \$1.1 million grant from the Victorian State Government. They then engaged with end-to-end energy solution specialists, Flow Power, to bring the project to life.

"The Renewable Newstead long-held dream is getting closer. The first idea for a local energy project in Newstead emerged in 2009. Local volunteers have helped bring this to fruition, and we've had a big hand with the help of a \$1.1M grant from the Victorian Government in 2018. Now we're pleased to see Flow Power take on the project to bring our dream to life - locally generated clean energy and a retail offer for our residents to champion renewable energy" said Renewable Newstead Convenor Geoff Park.

Newstead Energy Project will be delivered in full (financed, developed, built, and connected) by Flow Power, who will then own and operate the farm and retail the electricity it generates. Flow Power will employ local contractors creating jobs and additional community benefits through a community fund.

The battery system will provide additional benefits with the ability to feed into the grid at times of low sunshine and outside daylight hours. The 6.2 hectare site will include 80-100m rows of panels, 6m apart and include a tracking system to follow the sun and provide maximum energy production.

"We're proud to create an energy solution together with Renewable Newstead, that not only delivers a local clean energy generator, but incorporates solar, battery, energy hardware and community engagement. This combination is the holy grail of the ideal energy system and is the missing link in what is needed to transition this industry to a 100% renewable energy market." said Flow Power Chief Executive Officer Matthew van der Linden.

The Newstead Energy Project will be Flow Power's 6th clean energy project since 2021 and will help take their renewable portfolio to over 400MW by when complete. Building on their goal of creating Australia's renewable energy future, together with people and communities such as Newstead.

To maintain the connection with the community, Flow Power will facilitate residents to link with the project through an exclusive retail energy plan where customers' electricity usage will be linked to the Newstead Energy Project through Green Power. This means, for every unit of electricity used on this plan, Newstead Energy Project will send clean energy into Australia's grid on behalf of that home.

"This is a unique project in that it has been community driven by a small township. It will now be executed and delivered by a developer Renewable Newstead felt we can trust. It will be grid-connected, supplying clean energy to our grid as we move towards 100% renewables." said Renewable Newstead member Don Culvenor.

Flow Power's offer will reward price efficient energy usage, include smart energy tech for live data access and support Flow Power's vision to transition Australia's energy mix to renewable fuel sources.

"We would like to thank the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning for their support in seeing the project be realised" said Mr. van der Linden.

Victorian Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Action, The Hon. Lily D'Ambrosio, MP and Member for Bendigo West, The Hon. Maree Edwards, MP joined the Renewable Newstead and Flow Power teams and traditional landowner's Dja Dja Wurrung representatives on-site for the commencement of the energy projects construction on the 18th of October.

The site is on the traditional lands of the Dja Dja Wurrung people. A Cultural Heritage Management Plan has been developed and will guide the care of this country during the construction and operation of the energy project.

The construction is expected to take around 9 months and the energy project is expected to be operational by July 2023. Interested locals and customers can find out more at www.renewablenewstead.com.au and www.flowpower.com.au.

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About Flow Power

Flow Power is an electricity retailer transforming the way Australian businesses buy their electricity. Since 2008 the company has found new and better ways to deliver reliable energy that brings costs down and puts the power back in the customer's hands. Flow Power is one of Australia's fastest-growing energy retailers, serving some of Australia's best-loved brands and organisations, such as The Sydney Opera House, Snack Brands, Westpac, The City of Sydney, and Pernod Ricard.

For more information: www.flowpower.com.au

About Renewable Newstead

Renewable Newstead was formed in 2011 to support the community's desire for locally generated and affordable clean energy. The committee had long held a vision to bring a renewable and grid-connected solution to the Newstead community by 2022.

For more information: <https://renewablenewstead.com.au/>