

**Media Release**  
**6 February 2017**



## **AUSTRALIA'S LARGEST SOLAR PROJECT SECURES EQUITY PARTNER; SIGNS 13 YEAR PPA WITH MAJOR ENERGY SUPPLIER**

Australia's largest solar project has moved a significant step closer towards construction and operation.

The Ross River Solar Farm, located near Townsville and developed by ESCO Pacific, is a 142 megawatt utility-scale energy project that will generate clean and renewable electricity.

Palisade Investment Partners (Palisade) has acquired a 50% equity interest in the project from ESCO Pacific, and both parties are now finalising project development and progressing towards financial close.

A major milestone in the ESCO Pacific / Palisade partnership has already been achieved, with the signing of a power purchase agreement with one of the country's leading energy companies, EnergyAustralia. The 13-year deal is understood to be the largest single solar PPA in Australia.

The c.\$225m project is located on a disused mango plantation. Its location was selected because of the high solar irradiance in the region, and its average 320 days of sunshine annually. The site offers proximity to a grid connection point as well as suitable flat land free from environmental constraints.

ESCO Pacific secured development approval for the solar farm from Townsville City Council in June 2016. Construction is expected to commence in the first quarter of 2017, and will take approximately 12 months.

Palisade, a specialist independent infrastructure manager, will finance the project through funds it manages including its recently-launched Palisade Renewable Energy Fund (PREF). PREF has a mandate to invest in Australian-based renewable energy assets, building out a portfolio of wind and solar assets.

ESCO Pacific's Managing Director, Steve Rademaker, said: "We are delighted to be working with our new equity investor Palisade to drive the development of the Ross River Solar Farm forward. Palisade's experience in the funding of renewable energy assets will be invaluable as we progress with the project."

Palisade CEO, Roger Lloyd, said: “Ross River Solar Farm is an excellent opportunity to develop a standout project in northern Queensland. This delivers on our strategy to diversify our current renewables portfolio of existing wind assets.”

The project’s PPA forms part of EnergyAustralia’s recently-announced initiative to procure approximately 500 megawatts of power from new wind and solar energy projects across eastern Australia.

EnergyAustralia Managing Director, Catherine Tanna, said: “Customers rightly expect access to reliable, affordable and cleaner supplies of energy and as an owner of big coal-fired power plants EnergyAustralia has a responsibility to lead change. That’s why we’re proud to support development of the Ross River Solar Farm as a great example of the projects that will underpin the future of energy supply in Australia.”

In December 2016 ESCO Pacific announced it had received planning consent for three new solar farms in Queensland, with a total installed capacity of 320MW.

“We are on track to achieve our 1GW development goal by 2020,” Mr Rademaker said.

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**About ESCO**

ESCO Pacific is an Australian developer of utility scale solar farms founded in 2015 to capitalise on a narrow window of opportunity to develop renewable energy assets under the recently revised Australian Renewable Energy Target (‘RET’). ESCO Pacific is backed by a group of high net worth investors and managed by an experienced team with relevant and proven track record in delivering utility scale solar to market.

For more information see: <http://www.escopacific.com.au/>

**About Palisade Investment Partners**

Palisade is a specialist, independent infrastructure manager that provides institutional investors with access to Australian infrastructure projects through tailored portfolios and co-mingled funds.

Palisade’s multi-disciplinary and experienced team focuses on attractive mid-market assets that are essential to the efficient functioning of the communities and economies they serve.

For more information see: <http://palisadepartners.com.au/>

## **About EnergyAustralia**

EnergyAustralia is one of Australia's largest energy companies, servicing the energy needs of over 2.6 million accounts and approximately 1.7 million customers nationally. EnergyAustralia owns and operates a multibillion dollar energy generation portfolio, including coal, gas and wind assets.

For more information, see: <https://www.energyaustralia.com.au/>