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**Approval paves way for another solar farm in Parkes**

The Department of Planning and Environment paved the way for a new solar farm in the State’s Central West which will create 100 local jobs and inject $130 million into the local economy.

Located in Parkes, Goonumbla Solar Farm Pty Ltd plans to construct and operate a 70 megawatt solar plant, including a grid connection, on the 385 hectare site.

With an initial capacity of 70 megawatts, the project will generate up to 168,000 megawatts of clean electricity per year, which is enough energy to power 28,000 homes and save up to 141,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions each year.

The Goonumbla Solar Farm would be located adjacent to the proposed Parkes Solar Farm, which was approved by the Department earlier this year.

The Department delivered an efficient assessment process for the Goonumbla Solar Farm project, following a streamlined and collaborative approach with the relevant public authorities.

Clay Preshaw, Director of Resource Assessments, said the proposed solar farm would contribute to Australia’s renewable energy targets while minimising the potential impacts on surrounding residents and the environment.

“After a comprehensive assessment the Department found the project would assist in transitioning the electricity sector from coal and gasfired power stations to renewable energy sources and would have minimal potential impact on the surrounding land users and the environment,” Mr Preshaw said.

“The project is part of continuing efforts towards securing a reliable, affordable and clean energy future for NSW.”

“In assessing projects, we have to balance the economic, environmental and social aspects. For Goonumbla there were no objections to the project during the six-week public exhibition,” he said.
The Department has also required that a detailed research program of a significant Aboriginal heritage site is undertaken, which will provide significant educational, scientific and cultural benefits in the locality.

The Department’s approval comes with other strict conditions including:

- upgrading and maintaining local roads
- establishing, enhancing and maintaining a vegetation buffer along Henry Parkes Way and Pat Meredith Drive to reduce the visual impacts of the project
- rehabilitating the site within 18 months of the cessation of operations.


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