

MEDIA RELEASE

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SPARK RENEWABLES ANNOUNCES PROPOSED WATTLE CREEK ENERGY HUB IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

Following an extensive market selection process, renewable energy developer and long-term owner and operator, Spark Renewables, has been selected by the University of Sydney to investigate and develop a hybrid renewable energy facility on the University's Arthursleigh property, located in the New South Wales Southern Tablelands.

The proposed site is situated approximately 12 kilometres north-east of Marulan, and approximately two hours' drive from Sydney. The proposal is strategically positioned to make use of an existing high voltage substation, located adjacent to the property, to deliver clean, renewable energy from the energy hub to the University, local electricity users and the rest of NSW.

If approved, the Wattle Creek Energy Hub could generate up to 500 megawatts (MW) of electricity from the sun and wind, providing enough clean, reliable energy to power around 170,000 households per year while offsetting the emission of around 950,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide. The proposal also includes the installation of a large-scale battery with a capacity of up to 500 megawatt hours (MWh) of electricity, which would be dispatched on command to provide a range of network support services.

A key element of the proposed energy hub is a two acre "test-bed facility", which would enable the University of Sydney to undertake research on new and emerging technologies, including further testing of innovative battery systems developed by Gelion, a company spun out from the University in 2015.

Spark Renewables and the University have also agreed to an ongoing research agreement throughout the life of the energy hub, collaborating on initiatives related to clean energy in the fields of science, engineering, business and economics. The proposed partnership will also include a work experience and placement program for undergraduate and PhD students.

The project design will ensure that the University's existing commercial research and teaching activities can continue on the Arthursleigh farm, with the wind turbines occupying a small proportion of the 6,200 hectare property and the solar farm designed to allow sheep to graze underneath the solar panels.

Anthony Marriner, Head of Spark Renewables, said: "We are honoured to have been selected by the University of Sydney to investigate and develop the proposed Wattle Creek Energy Hub. We look forward to collaborating with the University."

Spark Renewables will shortly commence consultation with local community members, Traditional Owners and other interested stakeholders.

"If approved, Wattle Creek Energy Hub will bring significant benefits for both the local community and broader region in the form of job creation, investment in the local infrastructure, and through the provision of long-term funding for local social and environmental initiatives. Our commitment includes the establishment of a substantial community benefit fund and also a separate neighbour benefit scheme which could be used to lower household electricity costs," Mr Marriner said.

University of Sydney Pro-Vice Chancellor (Research – Enterprise and Engagement) Professor Julie Cairney said: "This long-term partnership with Spark Renewables will support a research program and infrastructure for the translation of research into innovative renewable energy technologies. New clean energy products and knowledge will benefit Australia's environment and the economy. We look forward to a long and successful partnership."

The first community drop-in session for the proposed Wattle Creek Energy Hub project will be held from 2-7pm on Thursday, 9 March 2023 at the Marulan War Memorial Hall (80 George Street, Marulan, 2579). Community members will be able to talk to the Spark Renewables' team to learn more about the project and provide initial feedback.

More information can be found at www.wattlecreekenergyhub.com, and Spark Renewables can be contacted on 1300 271 419 or via email at info@wattlecreekenergyhub.com.

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About Spark Renewables

Spark Renewables is a developer and long-term owner and operator of renewable energy generation assets. Our operational portfolio comprises of the 100 MW Bomen Solar Farm near Wagga Wagga which commenced operations in 2020. Our large development portfolio includes a number of wind, solar and storage projects in the National Electricity Market.

Spark Renewables is owned by the Spark Infrastructure Group – an owner of leading essential energy infrastructure, including generation, transmission, and distribution infrastructure across Australia.

Spark Renewables is a member of the Clean Energy Council (CEC) and a signatory to the CEC's Best Practice Charter for Renewable Energy Developments.

About Arthursleigh Farm

The farm was bequeathed to the University in 1979 and is operated commercially producing Merino wool, Angus cattle and cereals while supporting a range of teaching and research.