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Big solar boom kicks off in SA with completion of 6MW Whyalla project

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By Sophie Vorrath on 17 January 2018

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Source: SSE Australia

South Australia's is set to make its big solar debut this month, when the state's first utility-scale project to be completed – a 6MW solar farm in the rapidly greening steel city of Whyalla – will be officially "switched on."

The Whyalla Solar Farm – which will be formally opened by SA Premier Jay Weatherill on January 23 at 3pm – is stage one of what will ultimately be an 18MW battery-ready PV project, developed by SSE Australia in the Whyalla industrial zone.

The opening marks one small step in what is set to be a massive year for large-scale solar in the state, which, as Giles Parkinson noted here, has led the world on the integration of wind and PV into the grid, with the notable exception of large-scale solar farms – it's all been made up of wind farms and rooftop solar to date.

All that is set to change however, starting next week. Following on from the Whyalla Solar Farm will be a raft of large-scale solar projects, including a 4.9MW project in Peterborough, north of Adelaide; and the first 220MW of the 300MW Bungala solar farm, which is currently being built by Spanish company, Elecnor, near Port Augusta.

In the development pipeline are a 140MW solar farm north of Whyalla that has been approved for construction by Indian energy giant Adani Group; the 100MW Equis-Snowy Hydro joint venture, Tailm Bend, about 100km south-east of Adelaide; the solar farm being built to power Whyalla steel; and DP Energy's wind-solar hybrid hub, among others.

"While South Australia has led the country in policy and support for renewable energy, this is the first utility scale solar project to commence construction and be commissioned," said SSE Australia major projects director Colin Gillam in comments this week.

"We are delighted to have the Premier back again to see us deliver on our promise to be part of the solution to South Australia's energy future."

SSE's project is located will combine 17,280 solar panels and 180 SSE solar inverters, and will export power direct to the South Australian electricity network.

SSE said it expects the plant to generate 10GWh, enough to power 1,400 homes and reduce carbon emissions by 7,500 tonnes per annum. Space on site has been allocated for a battery expansion in the future.

"We now look forward to continuing construction of the next projects in Whyalla and SA," added Gillam. "By the end of 2018 we plan to complete another four similar projects in the region."

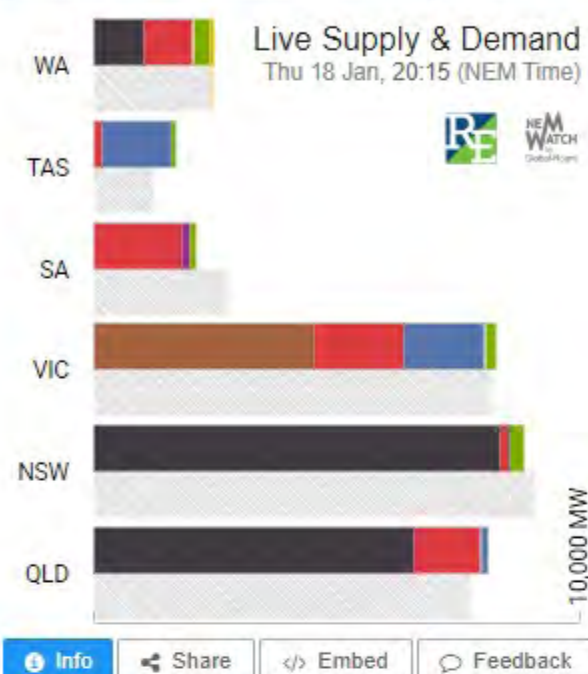
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