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AER to build \$8m wind, solar farm in Mid-West for GMA Garnet

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🕒 Friday, 30 June 2017 12:11PM



AER's Mt Barker wind farm.

Advanced Energy Resources will build an \$8 million, 3MW wind and solar farm at Port Gregory 60km south of Kalbarri for GMA Garnet.

The project, which includes a battery storage component, will supply almost 70 per cent of the mine's electricity requirements, allowing GMA Garnet to reduce its carbon footprint by about 5000 tonnes of carbon dioxide a year.

The project will generate enough electricity to power 1700 Australian homes each year.

The project's wind turbines have already arrived in Perth and project approvals are underway, with commissioning expected early in 2019.

GMA Garnet's chief financial officer Grant Cox said the wind and solar farm would allow the company to reduce its input costs.

Located 120km from the nearest substation and at the fringe of the network, the mine is supplied by highly constrained electricity distribution infrastructure that is prone to frequent faults.

AER's 2.8MW battery inverter will perform electricity output smoothing during times of variable wind and cloudy weather, while providing uninterrupted electricity supply to the mine during network outages.

AER's managing director Luca Castelli said the company had proven through past projects that embedded renewable energy generation was cheaper than traditional fossil-fuelled generation.

AER said it expected to announce a number of new projects in the coming months.

The project will be the first grid-connected wind and solar farm with battery storage in WA and was announced at the Energy and Mines Australia Summit in Perth yesterday.

AER, which was founded in 2006 as part of the Castelli Group, owns and operates a portfolio of renewable energy generators including the 2.4MW Mt Barker wind farm.

GMA began mining sand near Port Gregory for garnet 30 years ago and have since developed the project into the biggest and most advanced garnet mining and processing operation in the world.

Garnet is used as an abrasive in sand paper, sand-blasting and water cutting.

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