

Victoria energy storage

The 360MW Mortlake solar-plus-storage project in Victoria, Australia, is the latest large-scale renewable energy project to be fast-tracked for development by the state government.

The AU\$700 million (US\$480 million) Mortlake Energy Hub is being developed by US independent power producer (IPP) BrightNight, and recently secured a connection to the National Electricity Market (NEM) from the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) in July.

The project is BrightNight's first hybrid renewable energy project in Australia. It consists of a 360MW solar PV power plant and a 300MW co-located battery energy storage system (BESS), accounting for more than 1% of the state's total electricity consumption. The company plans to begin construction on the project in 2025.

A statement released by the Victoria government today (3 October) revealed that the Mortlake project became eligible for the Labor government's Development Facilitation Program pathway, an initiative to speed up the development of critical infrastructure projects in Victoria.

The Mortlake Energy Hub becomes another large-scale energy project to have been fast-tracked through the Victoria government's new scheme. As covered by our sister site Energy-Storage.news in late August, ACEnergy saw its 350MW/700MWh Joel Joel project fast-tracked, in what will be the state's "largest" BESS project.

Florida, US-headquartered BrightNight specialises in hybrid renewables-plus-storage and standalone battery storage projects. It secured a US\$440 million investment commitment from Goldman Sachs Alternatives earlier this year.

It has featured on Energy-Storage.news in recent weeks for its activities in the US, which include a utility off-take deal in Washington State for a 200MW/800MWh standalone BESS being developed in partnership with Cordelio Power, and an application to build a generation tie-in transmission line (gen-tie) for a hybrid project in Arizona, also with Cordelio.

Victoria is making great progress towards its renewable energy generation targets. The state aims for renewable energy to make up 40% of its electricity generation share by 2025. Currently, the share of renewable energy in the state's energy mix has grown from 12.2% in 2013-14 to 37.8% in 2022-23.

Victoria already has over 1GW of utility-scale solar PV capacity in operation, with over 5.3GW of capacity approved and an additional 190MW of capacity currently under construction.

The Mortlake project will contribute to the state's energy storage goals. The government aims to



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install 6.3GW of energy storage capacity by 2035, and according to the planning documents submitted by BrightNight to the Victorian government, the Mortlake project will meet up to 11% of the state's 2030 storage capacity target and up to 5% of the state's 2035 storage capacity target.

Lily D'Ambrosio, Victoria's minister for energy and resources, emphasised the Mortlake project's potential to provide grid stability while promoting renewable energy in the state's electricity mix.

The Victorian Big Battery, a 300MW / 450MWh lithium-ion battery energy storage system (BESS) in Australia, has been officially opened by the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change for the state of Victoria.

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