



Pilbara
Minerals



Wednesday 19 July 2023

MEDIA RELEASE:

Strelley Community and School transitions to renewable energy with solar and lithium-battery installation

Today, Wednesday 19 July 2023, a Renewable Energy and Lithium Battery Project (**the Project**) was launched at the Strelley Community and School (**Strelley Community**) in the Pilbara region. The Strelley Community is located between Port Hedland and Pilbara Minerals' Pilgangoora Project and is home to the oldest, continually operating, independent Aboriginal community school in Australia.

The Project was jointly supported by Pilbara Minerals and Pacific Energy and was delivered in partnership with the Strelley Community.

The Project comprises a 44.2kW of solar PV (96 solar panels) and 144kWh lithium battery storage system. This new renewable power system will reduce the Strelley Community's reliance on diesel generators, allowing it to run 'diesel off' during the day using solar energy and during the night using battery energy.

This will provide the Strelley Community with significant cost savings by decreasing diesel usage and reducing maintenance costs for the ageing diesel generators. It is estimated that the savings will equate to more than 170 litres of diesel per day, this saving will be redirected and invested by the Strelley Community into its Two-way Science and On-Country Learning curriculum programs.

It is also expected to reduce the Strelley Community's carbon emissions by more than 150 tonnes per year.

Pilbara Minerals' CEO and MD, Dale Henderson, who attended the event, said the Strelley Community's remote, off-grid location meant it was required to generate its own power supply.

"Like many remote communities, the Strelley Community relies on diesel-fuelled power generators for electricity supply, which is costly and emissions intensive," Mr Henderson said.

"This solar power and lithium battery system will deliver environmental benefits and a big cost saving to the Strelley Community, freeing up funds for further education purposes, so it's a win-win all round," he continued.

"I would like to acknowledge Terry Butler-Blaxell and Ingrid Walkley from Strelley Community for their foresight and pursuit of this fantastic initiative. I am proud that Pilbara Minerals and Pacific Energy, our power generation partner at Pilgangoora, could assist them in realising their ambition."

"This project aligns with Pilbara Minerals' purpose of making a difference in the world and powering the world's transition to net zero."

Pacific Energy's Chief Executive, Jamie Cullen, said the power provider worked with the Strelley Community and Pilbara Minerals to find a custom solution that would ensure positive cost, environmental and educational outcomes.

"Keeping remote communities and sites connected is at the heart of what we do, but being involved in meaningful initiatives like this one, which will have real, tangible impacts on this small community, makes it especially rewarding," Mr Cullen said.

“The students designed some wonderful paintings that we have decorated the battery enclosure with, which we hope will instill a sense of ownership, pride and even curiosity in their new clean energy system,” he said.

“Systems like this provide cost and environmental benefits, of course, but they also provide our youngsters with first-hand opportunities to see how energy is changing in everyday applications, and expose them to science and technology innovations that they might one day be involved in developing.”

Strelley Community School Chairperson, Terry Butler-Blaxell, echoed Pilbara Minerals' and Pacific Energy's sentiments and said the effects on the school budget will improve educational outcomes.

“This superb installation, made possible through the generosity of Pilbara Minerals and Pacific Energy, will deliver immediate cost savings to this proud and strong community school. So much of our per-capita funding has, until today, been destined for the exhaust stack of diesel generators,” Mr Butler-Blaxell said.

“The infrastructure upgrade and its beneficial effect on the school budget will help us to deliver better educational outcomes. This is a great model for industry partnership with remote communities and the ongoing efforts of our valued partners at Pilbara Minerals and Pacific Energy will genuinely make a difference to the world, one community at a time”.

The new renewable, solar and lithium power system is now energised, with system optimisation underway. The system is expected to be fully operational by the end of July 2023.

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