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# FARMING THE SUN

## Solar project worth \$1m to local firms

By **MAT NOTT**

ENERGY Minister Stephen Robertson will turn the initial sod on Queensland's first community-owned solar farm project in Hervey Bay today.

The event will mark the start of construction on the \$2.7m State Government-funded project.

Although the tender has been awarded to a Brisbane-based company, WBW estimates \$1 million will be spent with contractors and suppliers on the Fraser Coast.

Solar company Ingenero has been awarded the contract to build the 396 kilowatt solar farm on

Hebblewhite Rd, Hervey Bay, as part of Wide Bay Water Corporation's operations.

It is understood there was only one Fraser Coast-based company that submitted a tender.

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# Community solar farm under way

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Mr Robertson said yesterday the Fraser Coast Community Solar Farm was a pioneering development in the solar energy sector in Queensland.

“It’s also the first time in Queensland a stand-alone solar farm has been integrated with a major commercial and industrial sector business.

“The solar farm is part of the Bligh government’s commitment to invest \$4 million in solar energy projects for Hervey Bay.”

The other \$1.3m of that \$4m funding stream is designated for a solar project at Hervey Bay Hospital.

While concern was expressed yesterday by local solar energy companies that the tender had not stayed local, it is understood that documents worked up for the project indicate a solid local spend.

This includes contracting for slip lanes, fencing, earthworks, concreting and erection of piers.

Money will also flow to Ergon for transformers.

People close to the tender process said that the winning tender had been subject to a probity review and an audit by a second engineering firm to ensure it met State Government criteria.

Work on the solar farm is expected to be completed by mid- to late-January.