

21 April 2010

MEDIA RELEASE

World Leading Solar Power Station for Alice Springs Airport

Alice Springs Airport today launched a major solar power station project, using new Concentrator Photovoltaic (CPV) technology that will supply about 28 per cent of the airport's energy needs.

Concentrator Photovoltaic (CPV) systems are an emerging solar technology offering significant potential for cost reductions in photovoltaic (PV) systems.

The first of its kind in the southern hemisphere, the installation will comprise 28 impressive SolFocus arrays, each eight metres wide and seven metres high.

"We are installing one of the largest tracking solar systems in Australia and the largest in Alice Springs," said Ian Kew, Chief Executive Officer of Northern Territory Airports.

Alice Springs will be the first Australian airport to have a large scale (over 100kW) photovoltaic system providing a direct source of renewable energy to its internal grid. It will be on display to travellers, visible from both the ground and the air.

Valued at about \$2.3 million, the project will receive \$1.132 million of funding from the Australian Government, as part of the Alice Solar City Project.

Brisbane solar energy specialists Ingenero Pty Ltd will be the principal contractor for the solar power station, to be located about 700 metres north-west of the terminal building.

"It will reduce the airport's carbon emissions by about 470 tonnes of carbon dioxide a year, the equivalent of about 70 Alice Springs households per annum," Mr Kew said.

"We are a major electricity user in Alice Springs, and this project seemed an ideal way to demonstrate our commitment to harnessing the benefits of renewable energy."

"We have also encouraged tenants to undertake their own solar installations. For example, one of the airport's tenants, Alice Springs Helicopters who were winners of the National Small Business Export Award for 2009, recently installed rooftop solar panels with support from Alice Solar City."

"We have also implemented a number of energy efficiency measures inside the airport terminal building, such as installing energy-efficient light globes, motion sensors and timers to control lights and other electrical appliances."

"These initiatives reconfirm Northern Territory Airports' commitment to sustainability. In addition to the solar project, \$100,000 will be spent making the terminal more energy-

efficient and these measures have been supported by a grant of \$25,000 from Alice Solar City,” he said.

Visitors to the airport terminal will soon be able to view an interactive display about the solar power station including the amount of energy being produced by the solar power station in real time.

“This will be a showcase project for visitors to Alice Springs and will increase the knowledge base fostered by Alice Solar City and agencies like CAT Projects and Desert Knowledge Australia, who have pioneered solar energy innovation in Central Australia,” Mr Kew said.

“We hope to see local contractors work closely with Ingenero on this project, helping to build local skills and expertise.”

The airport’s solar power station is expected to be fully commissioned and operational by August 2010 and will be visible from Roger Vale Drive. The site has been chosen to allow for future expansion of the solar power station up to four times the size.

“Our location offers a unique opportunity to become the first airport in the world to be powered 100% by solar energy and we would be thrilled if we could make this happen some time in the future,” Mr Kew said.

Media inquiries:

Fionn Muster of Michels Warren Munday
Ph: 0457 703 738

Ian Kew
Ph: 08 8920 1811