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Press release

4GW Walcha Energy Project in NSW powers ahead

- **Vestas acquires a majority stake in first wind development by Walcha Energy – Winterbourne Wind Farm Project**
- **Walcha Energy submits scoping report to NSW Department of Planning & Environment for 700MW Salisbury Solar Farm, 100MW/150MWh BESS and Uralla RE Hub**
- **Dungowan Dam PHES - feasibility studies commence**

The Walcha Energy Project, a wind, solar and pumped hydro energy storage project of up to 4GW in total, is situated around the town of Walcha in the New England tablelands, approximately 55km south of Armidale, NSW. It is in a region that benefits from complementary renewable energy resources, with night-time wind and day-time solar.

. Walcha Energy is a partnership between MirusWind and Energy Estate.

- **Vestas – Winterbourne Wind Farm**

Global wind energy leader Vestas has acquired the Winterbourne Wind Farm from Walcha Energy. Winterbourne Wind Farm, which has a potential capacity of up to 700MW, is the first stage of the wind component of The Walcha Energy Project. The Vestas investment will accelerate development of the Winterbourne Wind Farm and will help unlock the considerable renewable energy potential of the wider New England region.

Vestas has acquired a majority stake of the Winterbourne Wind Farm and will lead the development of the project, which is located to the north east of Walcha. A small percentage of the project is owned by community stakeholders. Walcha Energy will assist Vestas with land, community engagement and grid strategy. Vestas' development of the Winterbourne Wind Farm continues to demonstrate its commitment to growing renewable energy in Australia.

“Vestas’ acquisition of Winterbourne is a giant step forward for The Walcha Energy Project and evidences strong support and respect for the local Walcha community. We are fortunate to be working with Vestas as the world’s leading wind OEM to unlock the clean energy potential of Walcha, to foster responsible develop in the REZ and to enable new economic development opportunities in regional NSW in collaboration with the local community,” said Vincent Dwyer, Principal of Energy Estate.

“A key feature of The Walcha Energy Project is the unique community benefit model, including an ownership interest in the Winterbourne Wind Farm. We’ve been engaging with the Walcha community for more than 14 years and continued engagement, benefit sharing and responsible development are core values for our team. Vestas is perfectly aligned with these core values and to this commitment,” said Mark Waring, Director at Walcha Energy.

The development team has worked closely with the surrounding community and designed innovative arrangements that seek to balance the interests of the key landholders, their neighbours, the community and other stakeholders.

The next stage of the development of the Winterbourne Wind Farm will focus on preparation of an environmental impact assessment to support a development application in 2020. Subject to obtaining the necessary approvals, the wind farm is planned to commence operations in 2022.

- **Salisbury Solar, BESS and Uralla Hub scoping report lodged with DP&E**

Walcha Energy is pleased to announce that it has lodged the scoping report for the Salisbury Solar Farm, a 700MW solar farm to be located on the Salisbury Plains south east of Uralla, with the NSW Department of Planning & Environment. The scoping report also includes a 100MW/150MWh battery energy storage system, a new 330kV substation which will operate as a new grid 'hub' supporting the development of the New England Renewable Energy Zone (the Uralla RE Hub), and associated transmission infrastructure.

The proposed site for the Salisbury Solar Farm has been chosen after consultation with the landowners and neighbours, taking into account any impact on visual amenity, the grid connection potential, landowners preferred parts of their land suitable for solar development and minimising the areas containing sensitive and natural heritage features. The impact on any incompatible land areas and woodland areas has also been reduced within the project sites.

The Uralla RE Hub, to be located 30km south of Armidale, will serve as the connection point for the first stage of The Walcha Energy Project. A distinguishing feature is that the Uralla RE Hub would be available as a connection point for other developers in this part of the New England REZ, helping to deliver system strength and flexibility to NSW and to reduce system costs by providing a single connection point at this critical point in NSW's transmission network. The Uralla RE Hub is aligned with the concepts for the region outlined in Transgrid's 2018 Transmission Annual Planning Report and in the Transgrid / Powerlink 2018 PSCR Report into Expanding the NSW-QLD transmission transfer capacity which is part of the RiT-T process for a new interconnect between NSW and QLD.

- **Dungowan Dam PHES – feasibility studies commence**

In November 2018, Tamworth Regional Council signed a memorandum with the developers of The Walcha Energy Project and Arup to explore the option of Dungowan Dam, owned by the Council, forming part of a new pumped hydro energy storage scheme. Arup is recognised as one of the leading designers of PHES systems globally and is working on several other schemes in Australia including the innovative Cultana seawater PHES in South Australia.

Walcha Energy has now commenced work on the next phase of the feasibility study of building a PHES around the existing 6.4 megalitre Dungowan Dam. This work will be completed over the next 3-4 months and involves a trade-off analysis of upper and lower reservoir options.

In view of the continuing drought in NSW and the pressures on water supply for the Tamworth/Peel Valley, the feasibility study will also assess how the water security can be enhanced through the design of the PHES scheme and expanding the existing catchment.



About Walcha Energy



Walcha Energy is a partnership between Energy Estate and Mirus Wind to develop nearly 4,000MW of wind, solar and pumped storage hydro in the New England REZ. The Walcha Energy Project is the largest single renewable energy project being developed in the NEM.

The project is situated around the town of Walcha, located approximately 55km south of Armidale on the New England Tableland, in New South Wales, Australia.

For more information please visit: <http://www.walchaenergy.com/>

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