

Northam Solar Farm set to be a 'game changer', says Carnegie Clean Energy boss

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📷 Carnegie chief executive Michael Ottaviano.

🐦 [NORTHAM Solar Farm is scheduled to open mid-year in a partnership first' between Perth Noongar Foundation, Indigenous Business Australia and Carnegie Clean Energy.](https://twitter.com/home?status=https://www.communitynews.com.au/northam-solar-farm-is-scheduled-to-open-mid-year-in-a-partnership-first-between-perth-noongar-foundation-indigenous-business-australia-and-carnegie-clean-energy) (HTTPS://WWW.COMMUNITYNEWS.CO

📘 [Carnegie chief executive Michael Ottaviano says the model is a](https://www.facebook.com/sharer/sharer.php?u=https://www.communitynews.com.au/northam-solar-farm-is-scheduled-to-open-mid-year-in-a-partnership-first-between-perth-noongar-foundation-indigenous-business-australia-and-carnegie-clean-energy) (HTTPS://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/SHARER/SHARER.PHP?U=HTTPS://WWW.COM

🍏 [potential game changer for WA communities.](https://plus.google.com/share?url=https://www.communitynews.com.au/northam-solar-farm-is-scheduled-to-open-mid-year-in-a-partnership-first-between-perth-noongar-foundation-indigenous-business-australia-and-carnegie-clean-energy) (HTTPS://PLUS.GOOGLE.COM/SHARE?URL=HTTPS://WWW.COMMUNITYNEWS.C

If all goes according to plan, the 10MW solar farm in Northam will be a template for local people and industry to utilise a renewable resource in a future where everyone is a winner.

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Carnegie Clean Energy retains a 50 per cent stake in a deal with co-equity investors Indigenous Business Australia (IBA) and the Perth Noongar Foundation to deliver electricity to about 3000 households throughout the 25-year project.

Carnegie chief executive officer and managing director Michael Ottaviano is hopeful that where his company leads, others will follow.

“What we’re really doing is taking engagement a step further and rather than just engaging the community at our whim, it’s about getting Indigenous people around the table to own and co-own projects; that’s never been done before,” he said.

“I think Northam could be a template for other companies to adopt in the sense that this is a way of not just community engagement where it’s the company coming in and dictating all terms, this is about working directly with the local community and with indigenous capital and owners to collectively drive change in these communities.”

The renewable energy project is breaking new ground for Carnegie and its indigenous partners.

“Part of our partnership agreement with IBA and the Perth Noongar Foundation talks about a whole range of requirements and obligations and part of that is engaging and employing indigenous people, contractors and businesses,” he said.



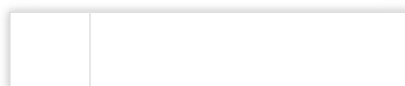
Artist impression of the Northam Solar Power Station.

“It’s a potential game changer; if you can give indigenous people equity in these projects then you’re creating an income stream for these groups, in this case for at least 25 years.”

Dr Ottaviano said people in Northam embraced the idea of a solar farm in their neighbourhood.

About 30 people will be employed during the construction phase and for the most part, they will be electricians and mechanical fitters.

“Solar farms don’t need much in the way of maintenance and you don’t even have to clean the panels.”



“The design element is being done at our Belmont HQ; it’s this sort of project that keeps us here in WA where we’re the biggest renewable energy employer.”

Carnegie is also on track to build the first microgrid in WA for the naval base on Garden Island.

The clean energy provider specialises in standalone solar projects, wave energy and hybrid – a complex energy mix, which Dr Ottaviano said is where the world is going.

Until recently, a 10MW would be considered large but on the east coast of Australia, solar farms are underway up to 10 times the size.

“Globally now we’re seeing projects approaching 500MW and 1000MW farms, which are really extraordinary and incredibly disruptive for the power section,” he said.

“To put it into perspective, a typical coal power station might be between 200MW and 500MW and now we’re seeing solar plants at that order of magnitude.”

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He said that unlike other states, WA and NSW do not have renewable energy targets at a time when more consumers are putting solar panels on their roof to generate their own power.

“Australia has gone from having no roof top solar ostensibly five years ago to having more roof top solar per capita than any country in the world,” Dr Ottaviano said.

“We’ve got the best combination of solar, wind and wave; really we should be leading the world.”

He listed Denmark as among the top European countries approaching 100 per cent renewable power.

“Australia tends to be a technology taker rather than a technology maker, which is a shame because we’ve got great engineering skills and the world’s best renewable resources, but we consistently fail to see it as an opportunity,” he said.






“We sort of revert back to what is safe and conservative and easy, which is dig up the coal and gas and burn it.”

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