

28 August 2020

SUMMARY

- The Shire of Exmouth is seeking to expand the existing PV system to further enhance the social, environmental and economic performance of the Ningaloo Centre.
- The Shire, together with funding partners, Minderoo Foundation and the State Government have funded a solar panel upgrade at the Ningaloo Centre to the value of \$1.16 million.
- The Shire of Exmouth has contributed \$290,000 to the upgrade which will account for an estimated 61% of total energy needs of the Centre and annual savings of \$168,000 will be achieved.

SOLAR ENERGY UPGRADE FOR THE NINGALOO CENTRE ON TRACK

The Ningaloo Centre is a \$32m research, education, tourism and community facility officially opened in September 2017. Included in its original construction the Ningaloo Centre has a 25kW AC / 37.2kWp solar PV system with solar smoothing and zero export to the main energy grid. This system accounts for 9% of current energy requirements at the centre.

To decrease the Shire of Exmouth's ongoing annual expenditures and lower the ecological footprint Council contributed \$290,000 to the \$1.16 million project. The project is co-funded between the Shire of Exmouth (25%), the Minderoo Foundation (50%) and the State Government (25%).

Shire officers released a request for tender (RFT) for the project and received two compliant tenders addressing technical performance, return on investment, quality, social impact and environmental impact.

An important social aspect of the RFT was to maximise the local content in terms of the goods used and services engaged for completion of the project. Perth-based contractor Balance Utility Solutions will ensure local labour of at least 50% will benefit from the installation and maintenance of the upgrade.

The Solar Energy Upgrade will commence as soon as possible.



**COMMENTS ATTRIBUTED TO THE SHIRE OF EXMOUTH – MATTHEW BIRD
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR COMMERCIAL AND COMMUNITY.**

"The current solar energy system supplies approximately 9% of the Ningaloo Centre annual energy consumption and based on known assumptions the preferred contractor will increase this to over 60% achieving an annual operational saving of an estimated \$168,580. This decreases our ongoing annual expenditures and lowers our ecological footprint significantly."

"The co-funded solar energy upgrade project, together with Minderoo Foundation and the State Government, is a major milestone, developing the Ningaloo Centre, including the Shire offices, into a sustainable world-class visitor attraction."

"This approach has always been a strong focus for our community and offers a fantastic return on investment at the same time."

**COMMENTS ATTRIBUTED TO CEO OF MINDEROO FOUNDATION'S
FLOURISHING OCEANS INITIATIVE, TONY WORBY.**

"As we embark on our journey as a new and long-term tenant at the Ningaloo Centre, Minderoo Foundation is proud to play our part in reducing the carbon footprint of the facility by making a financial contribution for the installation of solar panels."

"Sustainability is a key driver for the Minderoo Foundation, and the Minderoo Exmouth Research Laboratory will continue to partner with the Shire in making Exmouth a leader in the clean energy space."

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