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National energy storage to increase 33% through new global ZEBRE agreement

Australia's current 3 gigawatts (GW) of energy storage capacity will grow by up at least a third (1 GW) following the creation of a new battery and solar investment platform by ZEN Energy and HDRE, a \$1.3bn Taiwan-listed renewable energy company.

Starting with Solar River 256MW BESS and 210 MW solar farm north of Adelaide, the new battery energy storage system (BESS) platform, ZEBRE, includes scope to expand quickly and deliver an additional GW of energy storage, as well as 400 megawatts (MW) of solar generation across projects in four states.

The Solar River BESS and solar hybrid project was successful in the first funding round of the expanded Capacity Investment Scheme in September. As part of the creation of ZEBRE, ZEN has also entered into a tolling agreement for Solar River to ensure the project moves quickly to financial close and construction.

ZEBRE is 70 per cent owned by HDRE, with ZEN retaining 30 per cent.

The ZEBRE name is derived from ZEN, BESS and HDRE. The ZEN/HDRE collaboration will focus on developing storage assets here in Australia, as well as in Taiwan and potentially other countries such as Japan.

The ZEBRE partnership follows ZEN and HDRE signing a \$43m equity transaction in early November this year.

Current forecasts by the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) show Australia will need at least 22GW of storage by 2030 – a more than 700 per cent increase in capacity in the next six years. AEMO's latest 2024 Integrated System Plan identified that storage capacity will need to increase from 3 GW today to 49 GW by 2050.

Quotes attributable to Anthony Garnaut, CEO of ZEN Energy:

"Long duration battery storage, as well as the significant benefits of deep storage that pumped hydro provides, is the critical ingredient to ensuring a reliable, firmed supply of power as Australia's transitions away from fossil fuels.

"Securing Australia's place at the head of the rapid world-wide shift to clean energy and realising the economic opportunities of becoming a renewable superpower depend on having global partnerships.

"ZEN is excited and thankful that, together with HDRE, we are building our portfolio of renewable energy investments and contributing to our collective safety and prosperity as well."

Media enquiries: Paul Sheridan, 0410 516 656, paul.sheridan@zenenergy.com.au.