

Kidston project closer

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Funding should be settled in first quarter

THE final piece to getting a job-generating project started could fall into place within the next three months.

Genex Power is finalising a new arrangement for the funding of its hydro-energy Kidston project about 400km southwest of Cairns.

Chief executive officer James Harding said he was confident a deal with Energy Australia would be reached in the first quarter of this year.

This will allow financial

closure on the project and bring with it potentially 1000 construction jobs.

On the Kidston site, Genex has already built a 50MW solar farm. The project's next stage, which is being negotiated now, is a 250MW pumped-storage hydro scheme based on the pits of what was once Australia's largest gold mine at Kidston.

Genex also plans a larger solar farm, to be built during

the same construction period as the hydro scheme. Feasibility studies into a 150MW wind farm are also being done.

Late last year Genex was close to financial close on the project but Energy Australia was unable to reach a positive investment decision on the project by the end of the year.

Mr Harding admitted the delay was disappointing as Genex was close to finalising the finance and starting con-

struction at the end of last year.

"At the last minute the Energy Australia board ... were unable to agree to the structure as it was at the time," he said.

"The good news is we have been working well with Energy Australia and all the other stakeholders—the Queensland Government and Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility on a new structure."

Mr Harding said the new

agreement was "progressing very well".

"We did announce that we are intending to move forward with the project and reach financial close and start construction this year, and that's still the plan and we're on track for that," he said.

Mr Harding said it was hoped an agreement for the project would be secured in the first quarter.

"We're looking to get that

clear line of sight by the end of the first quarter and that will mean that we will be able to move through the conditions and formalities of completing the deal structure and getting the financial close a bit later this year," he said.

Mr Harding said although there had been delays in the project, the plans had not changed, which was good news for the region.

Including the transmission line, the project is worth \$1 billion and has the potential to create up to 1000 jobs.