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Robe battery to absorb the network shocks of a growing town

SA Power Networks has today officially launched a new community battery in Robe, marking an important step in preparing the town's electricity network for future growth and peak holiday demand.

Delivered as part of a state-wide trial with the Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA), the battery is designed to support the local network during periods of high demand - helping smooth pressure on infrastructure as Robe continues to grow.

The Robe High Voltage (HV) network support battery is one of eight community batteries SA Power Networks is constructing across South Australia under a partnership with ARENA, designed to trial new ways of supporting the electricity network and local communities.

The eight-battery program represents a total investment of \$10.6 million, with almost half funded through an ARENA grant and the remainder funded by SA Power Networks. The Robe HV battery alone represents an investment of \$3.86 million.

Launching the battery at the Robe substation site, SA Power Networks CEO Andrew Bills said the project will demonstrate how innovative energy solutions can efficiently deliver benefits for regional communities across Australia.

"This community battery is about helping the electricity network cope with pressure, rather than replacing the main power supply into Robe," Mr Bills said.

"You can think of it like a shock absorber on the network - it smooths out spikes in demand during busy periods and takes pressure off the long power line, helping us plan for future growth and avoid unnecessary, costly upgrades, that ultimately customers would need to pay for in their electricity bills."

Mr Bills said the project also plays an important role in building knowledge and capability for future deployments across Australia.

"ARENA's support allows us to trial different use cases and learn how community batteries can be integrated into the network at scale," he said.

"Those learnings will help us roll out similar solutions more quickly and cost-effectively across South Australia in the future."

The HV battery, a 2.5 megawatt / 3 megawatt-hour system will be operational in March - the first of the 8 batteries to be energised. It will demonstrate how electricity demand and voltage on the local network can be efficiently managed, helping to defer costly infrastructure upgrades to the high voltage network.

Robe is the only location in the program to receive two batteries, with a second battery to support fast electric vehicle charging to also become operational in 2026.

While the battery is required to support the local electricity network only on rare occasions - its remaining capacity can be used to participate in energy markets, helping improve the overall business case for community batteries and reduce long-term costs.

As a key partner in the project, District Council of Robe Mayor Lisa Ruffell welcomed the launch, highlighting the importance of reliable energy for the town's future.

"Robe continues to grow as a place to live, work and visit, and supporting that growth is essential to both our local and visitor economies," the Mayor said.

"This community battery is a great example of how collaboration between local government and industry can deliver practical benefits for our community while supporting cleaner energy solutions."

The launch event brought together representatives from SA Power Networks, ARENA, The District Council of Robe, adjoining landowners and local community representatives, to celebrate the project and its role in supporting Robe's long-term resilience.