

Our Zero Cost Energy Future

Energy is one of our biggest costs – with more than 220 gigawatt hours consumed in 2016-17 to power the treatment and transportation of drinking water and sewage.

By investing in technology, we are creating a zero cost energy future with the aim to achieve zero net electricity costs from 2020-21.

Improving our energy management and reducing our energy costs will help us provide reliable services and manage long-term prices for our customers to keep them as low and as stable as possible.

We are looking to install approximately 152 megawatts of solar photo-voltaic generation and 35 megawatt hours of energy storage by 2020.

Distributing generation and storage capacity across approximately 80 of our sites around the state will reduce our electricity operating costs and deliver new revenue.

Solar photovoltaic panels

'Photovoltaic' refers to the process of converting light (photons) into electricity (voltage). Photovoltaic panels are also known as solar panels or solar PV panels.

To meet Australian guidelines, solar panels are designed to withstand all weather conditions.

Solar panels are dark-coloured (usually black or blue) and covered with anti-reflective coatings. They are designed to absorb light, but occasionally in some situations they can produce a momentary a glint of bright light.

Solar installations

In a solar installation, you will generally



find solar panels attached to a mounting structure, connected to a row of piles in the ground. This may look a bit different depending on the technology being used.

Some systems have fixed panels and some have panels that move to track the sun throughout the day. Both systems are designed to capture the most energy

from the available sunlight at that site.

There is a substation on the site to house technologies that connect the electricity generated from the solar installation to a nearby electricity network transmission line.

Designing solar installations

Every site is unique and the layout adjusted to accommodate a number of factors. We carry out extensive assessments to ensure the design minimises visual impact as much as possible. For example, we may choose to plant low-lying vegetation along the border as a visual buffer. All sites will be fenced for a number of reasons including security and public safety. The fence type will vary depending on the site and location.

Timeframes for installing solar panels

Planning and approval processes can take about 12-18 months. Construction times will depend on the size of the solar installation, but we anticipate most sites will take approximately 4-8 months to complete.

Managing potential community impacts

As with any project of this nature, there may be some impact to the local community and the natural environment during construction.

We are committed to minimising construction impacts. Heavy vehicle movements, noise from machinery, and possible dust and mud from truck movements and excavation may be experienced.

Our contractors will implement Environmental Management Plans to minimise potential impacts on the

community and the environment from construction work. This may include regular clean-ups of local roads, dampening areas likely to generate dust, site signage, and traffic management.

Ongoing management of solar installations

We may clean the solar panels and trim vegetation growth several times a year, depending on the local conditions and climate. Maintenance on the electrical equipment typically occurs once a year.

Sometimes farmers will let their sheep graze underneath the solar panels which is a win-win for all as the sheep get some protection from the sun while they keep the vegetation at bay.

Solar installations may have a dedicated access road so we can access the sites for planned or unplanned maintenance without disturbing neighbouring landowners.

More information

We will work together with local community to keep them updated as works progress.

For more information or to discuss our plans for a zero cost energy future please email project@sawater.com.au or call us on 1300 SA WATER (1300 729 283).

