



Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association

Member of the National Farmers' Federation and Cattle Council of Australia

Media Release

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Solar energy experts from the Asia Pacific region have been hearing about how to power up Territory style at a conference in Sydney.

Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association project manager Ian McLean addressed the International Solar Energy Society Conference last week, sharing the story of how people living in some of the remotest parts of Australia are making the transition from diesel generators to renewable energy systems.

The focus of the presentation was the work the Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association is doing to develop an evaluation process that will help smaller properties looking at introducing a Remote Area Power Supply System make confident and fully-informed decisions on the best renewable energy system for their situation.

"Northern Territory cattle stations have to be self-sufficient in many areas, including power generation," Mr McLean said.

"Around 15 per cent of stations have renewable energy systems in place at the moment, with the remainder reliant on diesel generators.

"The process being developed by the NT Cattlemen's Association is a simple step-by-step method that will give stations all the information they require to make an informed decision on whether a solar power system would be suitable for their needs.

"The solar hybrid systems are quite complex compared to their existing diesel generators, and, being hundreds of kilometres from their nearest service centres, stations need to be comfortable that the technology is reliable and easy to maintain.

"There is also a significant capital outlay with the solar hybrid systems, which can cost the stations more than \$100,000. This process will help stations assess their outlay and the cost savings from the new system compared to the cost of their existing system over time.

"Each station's energy requirements are different but by installing renewable energy systems most stations realise cost savings in around five years, without putting any value on having 24-hour power."

Mr McLean said the presentation, on November 26, was well received and people seemed very interested in the insight it gave them into life on a remote cattle station.

"It generated interest amongst delegates, with some seeing the potential to adapt the process for other users of renewable energy, such as the use of urban roof-top solar panels," he said.

The process presented at the conference is being developed as part of one of two NTCA projects to increase the use of renewable energy in the NT. The projects are funded by the Australian Government through the Renewable Remote Power Generation Program and administered by the Department of Regional Development, Primary Industry, Fisheries and Resources of the Northern Territory Government.

The process is being trialled with some stations and with input from them, and suppliers, will be finalised early next year.

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