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SA Power Networks to conduct nation-leading trial of combined solar and batteries

SA Power Networks will deploy about 100 Tesla Energy and Samsung batteries in Salisbury in Australia's largest trial of combined solar and energy storage in an established suburb.

The unique trial will get underway in June and will test the benefits of combining solar and battery storage to avoid the need to build additional network infrastructure to meet growth in local electricity demand in an existing residential area.

The trial will be formally launched this afternoon at the Energy Networks 2016 conference being held in Adelaide.

"In the next few years we will need to act to meet localised demand growth in Salisbury. We want to work with customers to avoid the need to invest in new poles and wires. Instead of building a new power line, we would like to see whether we can defer or avoid that by tapping into local solar PV generation and combining this with energy storage," said Paul Roberts, Manager Stakeholder Relations.

"The trial will look at the customer and network benefits of teaming up energy management software provided by Reposit Power, with battery technology and solar PV. The Reposit software has the smarts to determine the best option for customers in utilising power being generated by their PV panels or stored in their battery," he said.

"We believe we need about 100 customers in the area to take up the offering to enable us to defer this network investment. The savings from deferral and Demand Management Incentive Scheme funds will be used to provide significant incentives for customers to get involved in the trial and to invest in battery technology."

A targeted group of customers in Salisbury will receive letters in the next few weeks inviting them to register their interest and confirm their eligibility to participate. In a once-only offer, eligible customers will receive significant financial assistance in purchasing batteries (and solar panels if required), and also are guaranteed a minimum \$500 per annum in savings on their electricity bill.

Mr Roberts said the trial was an excellent example of SA Power Networks' desire to broaden its regulated energy services to take advantage of emerging customer and network technology for the benefit of customers.

"Combinations of solar PV, battery storage and grid connections are the future of energy provision. With the right settings and approach they will provide benefits for customers and to us as managers of the network and also help contain long-term network costs for customers," he said.

"We are excited about the future and the opportunities due to advancements in solar and storage technology. We think our distribution network will be a vital component in helping our customers and our State to derive the greatest benefit from investment in these technologies. The trial gives us an opportunity to explore the customer, technological and capability impacts on our regulated network business."

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