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100th battery installed in Salisbury battery storage trial

SA Power Networks today is installing the final battery required for a unique three-year battery storage trial involving residential customers in Salisbury in Adelaide's northern suburbs.

The 100th battery is being installed in the home of Steve Hendy in Salisbury Plains. Steve already has a 3.2kW solar panel system and that is being matched-up with a Tesla battery.

"It's exciting to have reached our target of 100 battery installs in the Salisbury area," said Paul Roberts, Stakeholder Relations Manager for SA Power Networks.

"Although there is a lot of talk about 'Virtual Power Plants', this is the largest one that has actually been commissioned in Australia to date, equivalent to the deployment of a 300kVA diesel generator."

In the trial, smart battery management systems determine the best option for customers in utilising power being generated by their solar panels or stored in their battery and also allow SA Power Networks, by agreement with the customer, to tap into that energy when needed to manage network issues.

"This is a unique trial that will test the benefits of combining solar and battery storage to avoid the need to spend about \$3 million to build additional network infrastructure to meet growth in local electricity demand in an existing residential suburb," Mr Roberts said

"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 generation and combining this with battery storage."

Mr Roberts said the trial was planned to go for about three years to test how solar/battery combinations work in different scenarios, including heatwave conditions in summer, mild spring days and heavy-cloud periods in winter.

"We installed the first of these batteries in July and already are getting some valuable insights on how solar/battery combinations can influence customer use of the network. As increasing numbers of customers install these new technologies and our proportion of distributed energy sources grows in SA, this will be invaluable for us in planning and adapting our network so it supports customer choice."

Media contact: 0403 582 500