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# Energy Renaissance to build new \$28 million battery manufacturing facility at Tomago



**Matthew Kelly**



Energy Renaissance, Australia's first lithium-ion battery manufacturer, has chosen the NSW Hunter as the location for its new \$28 million battery manufacturing facility.

Managing director Mark Chilcote said the company hoped to start construction on the first stage of its business at Tomago before the end of the year.

Battery production could start by the middle of 2021.

The 4,000 square metre purpose-built facility, known as Renaissance One, will have an initial battery production capacity of 66 megawatt hours per annum, with plans to scale its Australian operation to 5.3 gigawatt hours of energy storage per annum with an additional investment of more than \$200 million.

The plant will directly employ 1700 people when it reaches full capacity in about five years. Another 6500 indirect jobs will flow from the project.

"At the moment it is financed by our current investors and some of our initial customers. As we grow it will be financed from our own balance sheet. We are currently in discussions with the federal government and we are optimistic about gaining funding to accelerate the fulfillment of the facility," Mr Chilcote said.

"Our current deployment plan is over 10 years we can bring that forward to five years if we accelerate the jobs growth and the upstream benefits."



The company settled on the Hunter because of the highly skilled workforce, tertiary education and research facilities and proximity to a deep water port.

"Obviously Tomago ticked all of those boxes," Mr Chilcote said.

Batteries produced at Renaissance One will be used to power infrastructure, buildings, businesses and homes.

It's expected that more than half of the plant's batteries will be exported through the Port of Newcastle to south-east Asia.

"Access to the Port of Newcastle will allow us to ship our batteries to Southeast Asia while working with highly-skilled talent from CSIRO's Energy Centre and graduates from the University of Newcastle," Mr Chilcote said.

Patron Senator for the Hunter Region Hollie Hughes said when the project reached capacity it would be able to provide - in the space of a year - enough batteries to power every public school, hospital, fire station, SES unit and new homes built in Australia.



Patron Senator for the Hunter Region Hollie Hughes and Mark Chilcote breaking ground at the company's new Tomago site on Tuesday. Picture: Marina Neil

"That's reassuring because Australia will be able to rely on its own source of renewable energy in the very near future," she said.

Hughes said that the company's investment in the local economy would support the Hunter Region and help lead Australia's economic recovery.

"I would like to encourage other manufacturers to move to the area to create a renewable energy manufacturing hub," she said.

"Solar is only so good when the sun is shining and wind is only so good when the wind is blowing. Battery storage is going to ensure that renewable energy has an increased ability to contribute to the energy mix."

"Tomago smelter is next door. It is absolutely reliant on baseload power. We need to make sure that that mix is there and that at all times industries like the aluminium smelter have security and are not put at risk."



Managing Director of the Advanced Manufacturing Growth Centre Dr Jens Goennemann said Energy Renaissance would leverage Australia's abundance of natural resources by adding value to raw materials, building onshore capability and exporting into global markets.

This in turn would generate significant local manufacturing jobs and boost prosperity for the nation while giving Australia a significant foothold in the growing energy storage sector.

"The Federal Government's Technology Investment Roadmap has singled out the potential for Australia to be a world leader in the investment for renewable energy," he said.

"Batteries produced by companies such as Energy Renaissance will make electricity clean and more affordable in Australia."

The Federal Government provided a [co-funded grant of \\$246,625](#) through the Advanced Manufacturing Growth Centre to Energy Renaissance. This has been used to accelerate research and development as it starts to manufacture batteries locally.