New maps identify opportunities for renewable energy investment

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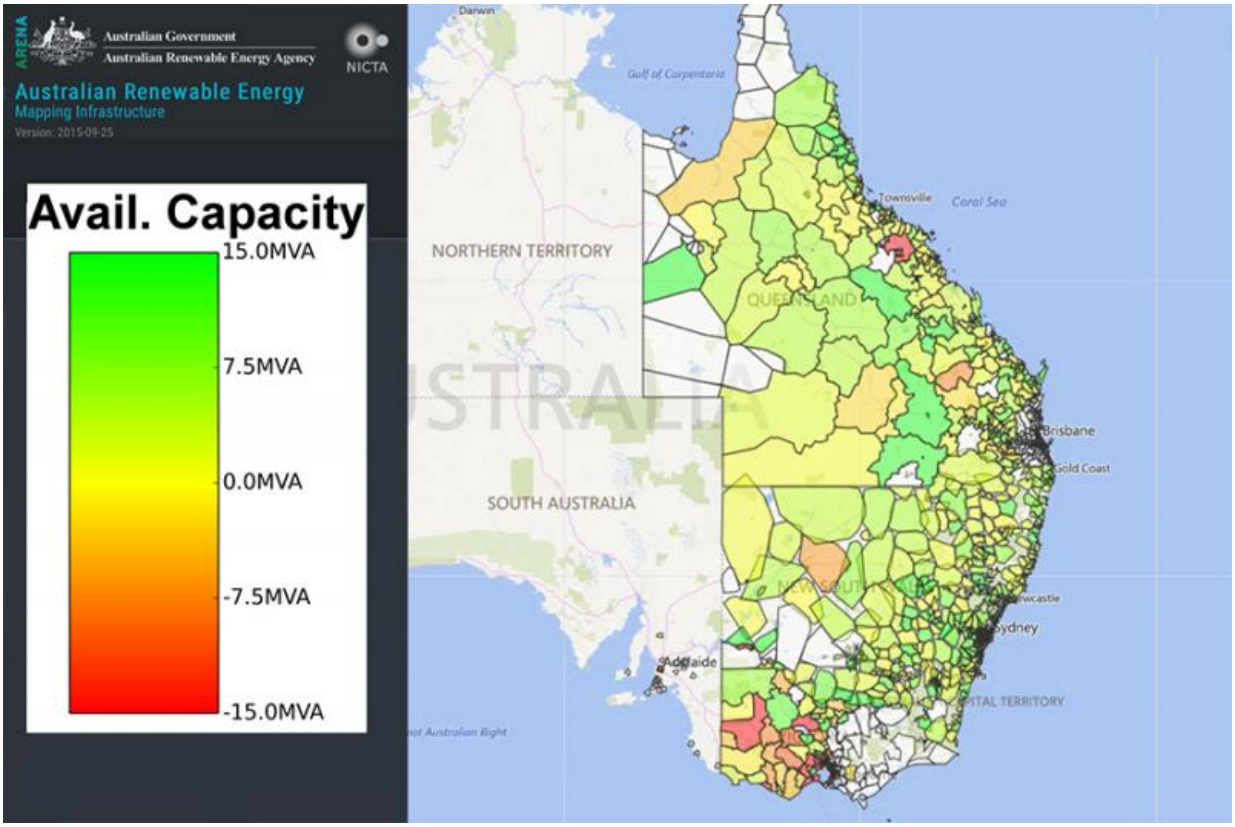

The interactive maps show where capacity-related constraints exist (orange and red) where investment will be needed to ensure reliable electricity supply. Picture supplied.

Interactive maps of Australia's electricity grid released today will help

identify the most valuable locations to invest in renewable energy and demand management within the grid.

The online resources, developed by the Institute for Sustainable Futures (ISF) at the University of Technology Sydney, fill an information gap by providing clear, consistent and timely information on where alternatives to building new electricity network infrastructure deliver the greatest economic benefit.

"Making this information freely and publicly available will help to build the market for decentralised energy resources, optimise grid infrastructure investments and thereby work to lower electricity bills," ISF Research Director Chris Dunstan said.

The Hon. Greg Hunt, Federal Minister for the Environment, said it was critical that we make the best, most efficient use of renewable energy.

"Investing in technology to map the most valuable locations to invest in renewables will drive further investment in renewables innovation.

"This Government is delivering more renewable energy and lower electricity bills. This important work by UTS, supported by the Australian Government through the Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA), is a step towards reducing peak electricity demand and showing where renewables can add the most value," Mr Hunt said.

These first maps present sample data provided by electricity network service providers on network constraints, planned investments and the potential value of decentralised energy resources in networks across the Australian National Electricity Market (NEM).

These will allow providers, their customers, and proponents of non-network alternatives to develop a common understanding of the potential

value of reducing peak electricity demand in different parts of the network.

ARENA is providing $453,000 funding to ISF to support the $1 million project.

The mapping data is hosted on the Australian Renewable Energy Mapping Infrastructure (AREMI) platform, which is also being developed with funding support from ARENA.

Acting ARENA CEO, Ian Kay, said the maps could encourage increased renewable energy investment by showing where renewables can add the most value in the NEM.

"The inclusion of the maps on the AREMI platform will complement other energy resource and infrastructure datasets. This is a clear demonstration of how our support facilitates knowledge sharing to eliminate barriers and accelerate the uptake of renewable energy," Mr Kay said.

The Hon. Anthony Roberts, Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy, said, "The NSW Government is proud to support this innovative measure, which will help to support a thriving renewable energy industry in NSW and reduce costs for electricity consumers."

The sample maps are now available via the project webpage.

ISF is inviting feedback, from stakeholders via a survey to refine the sample maps for the first full map iteration, which will include complete data from all network service providers, and will be made available in May 2016.