

Media Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Under-utilised New York City real estate converted into battery storage hubs

Aware Super has invested USD 30 million in SER Capital Partners' New York City microgrid projects, to repurpose under-utilised real estate such as parking lots, alleyways, and rooftops into battery storage hubs.

The new developments will have the capacity to generate 120 megawatt-hours of energy, supporting the stability of New York City's grid and powering up to 6,300 homes.

The projects, which will support a cleaner grid with lower carbon intensity, collectively offer similar capacity to Tesla's original big battery.

SER Capital Partners, a US-based private equity firm specialising in sustainable investments, has been managing New York City and other urban area microgrid projects for two decades and offers significant expertise in control and acquisition of land in the notoriously thin and complex market.

The project will see nine lithium-ion battery facilities dispatch locally-generated energy through the grid at peak periods and recharge during off-peak times. Locations have been strategically chosen to support weak points in the grid, and will also support New York City's goals of achieving 100% carbon-free electricity generation by 2040.

The microsites will harness the existing design of their original locations to create multi-level facilities, storing grid-connected batteries on the top floor, while electric-vehicle charging stations can be based at ground level.

A similar project is being rolled out concurrently in Texas. Aware Super has invested another USD 10 million to support 60 megawatt-hours of energy to power 1,600 homes in the Lone Star State, where on-shore winds will help charge the batteries via the grid when demand is low.

Texas faces major energy transition risk with the closing down of ageing coal-fired power plants and a need to rapidly dispatch alternative energy at peak hours in place of coal power.

Aware Super Chief Investment Officer Damian Graham said these projects supported the Fund's commitment to invest at least \$150 million per year in renewable energy and new technologies.

He said while the projects were in the US, the Fund hoped to use the learnings from these innovative developments to help pave the way for similar investments in Australia.

'Our involvement in battery storage projects like this helps Aware Super to protect our members long-term financial future by reducing the carbon footprint of our portfolio as we work towards our goal of net zero emissions by 2050,' Mr Graham said. 'Through investments such as this we are delivering for our members in terms of sustainable long-term returns, while also doing good in the global community.'

'Developments like this also help us to better understand the return profile of the sector and consider the potential for similar investments in Australia in future.'

'The recently-announced Victorian Big Battery, slated for roll out near Geelong, shows the emerging interest in battery storage capability domestically.'

'We also know the cost of lithium-ion is decreasing around 15 per cent every year thanks to increased uptake of electric vehicles and the like, which makes battery storage investments even more viable.

'This, coupled with compelling incentives for investors, such as that being offered in the New York project in particular, show the investment potential of this sector.

'With the right partners and incentives, we would welcome the opportunity to invest in similar projects in Australia,' Mr Graham said.

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Note to Editors:

Previously known as First State Super we changed our name to **Aware Super** in September 2020.

Aware Super is a name that reflects our members and what we stand for. It echoes the strengths of our past, aligning to our purpose to be a force for good in superannuation, retirement and advice, driving better outcomes for our members, their families and communities.

First State Super's been the fund for people who value community since 1992, we're now one of Australia's largest funds and we're continuing to grow. We merged with VicSuper and WA Super this year and we now manage more than \$135 billion in savings for in excess of 1 million members located across the country.

Our members work in roles that breathe life into their communities and they expect us to do the same. So, we invest in assets that we believe will make a positive difference today - improving our communities, building a more a sustainable economy and supporting employment both locally and globally at the same time as providing strong long-term returns.

Discover how we're helping members do well financially while doing good in the world: Visit aware.com.au.