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First Solar Commences Construction on Australia's First Utility-Scale Solar Farm

Project to support local business and boost economy

Geraldton, Western Australia, Nov. 7, 2011 - First Solar Inc. (Nasdaq: FSLR) today announced that construction has commenced on the 10-megawatt AC Greenough River Solar Farm, located 50km south of Geraldton. Once completed, the solar farm will be the first utility-scale photovoltaic (PV) project in Australia and will bring significant investment to the local community through a partnership with local civil contractor WBHO Civil - the company awarded the Phase 1 construction contract for the project.

The construction program is scheduled to take place over a period of approximately nine months. Following civil work, which commenced on Friday (Nov. 4), the project will progress to on-site construction of structural supports and the completion of above ground electrical works. The installation of First Solar PV modules is anticipated to begin in March 2012, with the solar farm expected to be fully operational by mid-2012.

Western Australian state-owned power utility Verve Energy and GE Energy Financial Services each own 50 percent of the Greenough River Solar Farm, with the WA Government providing A$20 million including A$10 million from the WA Royalties for Regions program.

First Solar will supply the project with over 150,000 of its advanced thin film PV modules and provide engineering, procurement and construction services. Through the partnership with local contractor WBHO Civil, and in the sourcing of local products, the project is expected to generate millions of dollars for the City of Greater Geraldton's economy. Up to 150 people will be onsite at any one time throughout the construction phase, with jobs lasting for up to nine months.

"First Solar aims to maximise local hiring and enable the project to make a meaningful and lasting contribution to regional communities," said Jack Curtis, Vice President, Business Development & Sales for First Solar. "We are also building our in-country supply chain network by procuring as many materials as possible from local suppliers at all stages of the construction process.

"Increased localisation is critical to the development of a sustainable large-scale solar industry in Australia. Developing a local capability to install utility-scale solar projects, together with stable government policy, will greatly improve the industry's long-term outlook," Curtis added.

WBHO Civil will play a pivotal role in providing site preparation services, underground electrical services and civil works. The company's local expertise and extensive network across WA will ensure that the Greenough River Solar Farm is built to the highest possible standards.

"This is an exciting project for the Midwest and we are very proud to be working with First Solar, who has a reputation for the delivery of world class renewable energy projects internationally," said Michael Librizzi, General Manager - Midwest for WBHO Civil. "The project mitigates harm to the environment and is a sustainable energy resource, and this fits perfectly with our internal mantra of being an environmentally-friendly corporate citizen."