Minister for Parks and Wildlife and Climate Change Karl Hampton today announced the first ranger station to be converted to solar power.

“The NTG Government is committed through its NT Climate Change Policy to being carbon neutral by 2018,” said Mr Hampton.

“A specific aim of our policy is to become a world leader in renewable and low emission power delivery for remote areas.

“In line with this, Parks and Wildlife are moving ahead with switching our ranger stations on to renewable energy sources, while improving the energy efficiency of each site.

“I am pleased to announce today that $300,000 has been budgeted for in 2010-11 for installation of solar power at the Watarrka National Park ranger station.”

The site, consisting of seven dwellings, office accommodation and workshop facility, is currently powered by stationary diesel generators.

The project will be facilitated through the Department of Construction and Infrastructure; construction should commence late 2010.

Already the Finke Gorge ranger station has been running a hybrid diesel/battery system for several years.

“Visitor health and safety at all parks and reserves is a top priority, therefore it is important we strike a balance between maintaining reliable energy sources and improving energy efficiency,” said Mr Hampton.

“NRETAS will be closely monitoring the success of the Wararrka station with a view to rolling out the technology across other stations.

“It’s the first step, but a big one, in making our remote stations sustainable.”

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