

**PRIME MINISTER  
MINISTER FOR RESOURCES AND ENERGY  
MINISTER FOR CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENERGY  
EFFICIENCY**

11 May 2010

## **AUSTRALIA'S BIGGEST EVER RENEWABLE ENERGY ROLL- OUT**

The Australian Government will commit a further \$652.5 million over four years to establish a **Renewable Energy Future Fund** to support Australia's response to climate change.

The Fund will provide additional support:

- for the development and deployment of large and small scale renewable energy projects, for example further investments in geothermal, solar and wave energy; and
- to enhance take-up of industrial, commercial and residential energy efficiency, helping Australian businesses and households reduce their energy consumption.

The Fund will include partnerships between the Government and the private sector to make critical early stage investments to leverage private funds to support the commercialisation of renewable technologies.

This Fund will form part of the Government's expanded **\$5.1 billion Clean Energy Initiative**, which includes the \$2 billion Carbon Capture and Storage Flagships Program and the \$1.5 billion Solar Flagships Program announced in last year's budget.

It will also complement the existing support provided through the Government's expanded Renewable Energy Target of 20 per cent by 2020.

This additional funding brings the Government's total investments in renewable and clean energy and energy efficiency to over \$10 billion.

The Renewable Energy Future Fund will be delivered through a number of departments and agencies, with the Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency coordinating Fund priorities and progress.

Details of the specific commitments under the Fund will be announced shortly.

All funding resulting from the deferral of the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme, as well as some existing departmental funding from within the Climate Change and Energy Efficiency portfolio, will be used to offset the cost of this Fund.

Today the Government is also announcing decisions to invest a further \$110.5 million from existing renewable energy programs in the following projects:

**Australian Centre for Renewable Energy funding for solar projects under the Renewable Energy Demonstration Program**

- \$32 million for CS Energy to build a 23MW<sup>1</sup> solar boost to coal-fired turbines at Kogan Creek, near Chinchilla in western Queensland; and
- \$60 million for N.P. Power Pty Ltd (Whyalla Solar Oasis consortium) to build a 40MW concentrated solar thermal demonstration plant at Whyalla, South Australia, using Australia's own "Big Dish" technology.

**Australian Solar Institute (research into advanced solar energy technologies)**

- \$5.0 million for a project run by the University of New South Wales to overcome the performance limitations of commercial solar cells;
- \$2.25 million for a project run by BT Imaging Pty Ltd to improve the performance of photovoltaic manufacturing;
- \$4.95 million for an Australian National University led applied research project in collaboration with industry to help develop the next generation of solar cells;
- \$2.25 million for a project run by Sapphicon Semiconductor Pty Ltd to develop a high-efficiency, integrated solar module on a transparent substrate; and
- \$4.0 million for a project run by CSIRO and the Australian National University to develop advanced solar thermal energy storage technologies.

**\$1.5 billion Solar Flagships Program**

Eight projects have been shortlisted under round one of the Solar Flagships Program.

The shortlisted projects announced below will now share up to \$15 million in feasibility funding.

- **Solar photovoltaic**
  - AGL Energy proposes a multi-site project using thin film cadmium telluride solar photovoltaic technology generating up to 150MW at multiple sites across Australia including ACT, NSW, Victoria, Queensland, and South Australia;
  - TRUenergy proposes a single site near Mildura, using thin film cadmium telluride solar photovoltaic technology to generate up to 180MW;
  - Infigen/Suntech's crystalline silicon solar photovoltaic technology would be deployed at up to three sites in New South Wales or Victoria to generate up to 195MW; and
  - BPSolar proposes a single axis tracking photovoltaic system to generate 150MW from plants constructed at several locations in New South Wales.

---

<sup>1</sup> MW - megawatt

- **Solar thermal**
  - ACCIONA Energy Oceania proposes to generate 200MW using solar thermal parabolic trough technology at a single site in either Queensland or South Australia;
  - Parsons Brinckerhoff proposes to construct a 150MW solar thermal parabolic trough power station at Kogan Creek in Queensland;
  - Wind Prospect CWP proposes to use linear fresnel technology at Kogan Creek in Queensland to construct a 250MW power plant; and
  - Transfield proposes to convert the Collinsville coal-fired power station in Queensland into a 150MW solar thermal linear fresnel power plant.

The Government intends to announce the two final successful applicants – one solar thermal and one solar photovoltaic – for Round One of the Solar Flagships Program in the first half of 2011.

In addition, the Government is announcing the appointment of the **Board of the Australian Centre for Renewable Energy (ACRE)** as follows:

- Chair – Professor Mary O’Kane. Professor O’Kane is the NSW Chief Scientist and Scientific Engineer;
- Dr Bruce Godfrey, Chair of the Australian Solar Institute Research Advisory Committee and a member of the AusIndustry Climate Ready Committee;
- Mr Steve MacDonald, CEO of Transfield Services Infrastructure Fund and a member of the Clean Energy Council Board;
- Ms Amanda Heyworth, CEO of the Playford Capital technology seed fund;
- Dr Brian Spalding, a Commissioner of the Australian Energy Market Commission;
- Dr Beverley Ronalds, Group Executive, Energy, at the Commonwealth Scientific and Research Organisation (CSIRO) and a member of the Board of Innovation Australia; and
- Mr Richard Bolt, Secretary of the Victorian Government Department of Primary Industries.

ACRE was legislated in March 2010 to be the Australian Government’s central agency for renewable energy technology research, development and demonstration programs.

### **Boost for Geothermal Energy Exploration**

In a huge boost for **geothermal energy exploration**, the Government’s new tax plan announced on 2<sup>nd</sup> May includes a new resource exploration rebate (RER), within the company income tax system, from 1 July 2011.

For a company in a tax loss position that spends \$1 million on exploration, the RER will provide an immediate cash benefit of \$300,000.

## **Australia's World-Class Renewable Energy Resources**

Australia has one of the best renewable energy resource bases in the world – in geothermal, wind, solar, ocean and bioenergy.

For the first time, ABARE and Geoscience Australia have mapped and compiled a comprehensive assessment of the nation's rich energy resource endowment, including both renewables and non-renewables.

The recently published *Australian Energy Resource Assessment* is now available for download, free of charge, at [www.ga.gov.au](http://www.ga.gov.au) and colour printed copies can be purchased from Geoscience Australia.

## **Support for International Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Initiatives**

Australia is also participating in international efforts to accelerate the development and deployment of both renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies to support the global response to climate change.

Australia joined the **International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA)** in June 2009 and has committed \$5.6 million over 4 years to support this forum.

Today in Washington, Australia will also become a full member of the **International Partnership for Energy Efficiency Cooperation (IPEEC)**, an initiative of the G8 Energy Ministers' meeting in May 2009.

The Australian Government is contributing \$150,000 per annum to this forum.

Membership of IPEEC will offer a flexible international forum for Australia to engage exclusively on energy efficiency initiatives as part of the global climate change response.