



Media Release

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Historic day for Australian solar as 12 new plants get support

Twelve new large-scale solar PV plants are set to be constructed across Australia, tripling the amount of energy produced from big solar.

The 12 projects have been chosen as part of the Australian Renewable Energy Agency's (ARENA) multi-million dollar large-scale solar round. They are expected to unlock almost \$1 billion of commercial investment and boost regional Australian economies.

ARENA CEO Ivor Frischknecht said Australia's big solar industry was coming of age thanks to ARENA support, ensuring large-scale solar was a competitive, sustainable energy option.

"ARENA is working to accelerate Australia's shift to a sustainable, affordable and reliable energy future and our work supporting the development of Australia's large-scale solar industry is central to this vision," Mr Frischknecht said.

"Six plants in Queensland, five plants in New South Wales and one plant in Western Australia are slated for funding, in a major milestone that's expected to triple Australia's large-scale solar capacity from 240 MW to 720 MW.

"They will provide enough energy to power 150,000 average Australian homes and deliver one tenth of the new capacity required to meet Australia's 2020 renewable energy target.

"Regional economies will benefit massively from the growing big solar industry, with 2,300 direct jobs and thousands more indirect jobs expected to be created by this round.

"It is now up to successful companies to deliver these projects in line with ARENA's requirements, which could see all plants built by the end of next year. This is an aggressive timetable to lock in financing, off take arrangements, connection agreements and required approvals.

"Several are seeking debt financing for projects through the Clean Energy Finance Corporation's complementary large-scale solar program."

Mr Frischknecht said since it was established in 2012, ARENA had been a driving force in bringing down costs and accelerating the commerciality of large-scale solar in Australia.

"ARENA has carried out a multiyear plan to build capacity in Australian supply chains and expertise over successive large-scale solar projects," Mr Frischknecht said.

"As a result of our efforts, the ARENA funding ask for big solar projects has dropped significantly from half of total project costs to just 10 per cent on average. This means that every dollar of ARENA funding is leveraging \$10 from other sources in this round.

"ARENA support and knowledge sharing activities have also slashed the locally determined costs of developing and building plants by more than half.

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“We made a point of working with developers and network companies to design our large-scale solar round and identify where ARENA’s support would have the most impact.

“When we announced the round in September last year we expected \$100 million of grant funding would enable around 200 MW of new projects. We’ve achieved more than double that through this round with \$92 million funding supporting around 480 MW in total.

“This competitive tender approach could be adopted to speed up the commercialisation of other renewable energy technologies such as battery storage, concentrating solar thermal and bioenergy.

“ARENA is not just focussed on building more solar. We want to bring down costs faster, fuel growth in Australia’s industry and give the next tranche of projects a head start.

“The projects delivered through the ARENA funding round will build on current expertise and generate new knowledge for the burgeoning large-scale solar sector including co-location of solar and wind.

“Australia’s big solar revolution is tantalisingly close and, as more home-grown businesses step up to provide construction, engineering and financial services, this newest tranche of ARENA-supported projects is well positioned to take the sector even closer to commerciality.”

Applicant	Project name	Size (MW AC)	ARENA funding	Total project cost	Nearest town
Origin Energy	Darling Downs Solar Farm	110.0	\$20 million	\$216.7 million	Dalby, QLD
Whitsunday Solar Farm	Whitsunday Solar Farm	58.1	\$9.5 million	\$122.4 million	Collinsville, QLD
Neoen Australia	Parkes Solar Farm	50.6	\$7.5 million	\$107.9 million	Parkes, NSW
Genex Power	Kidston Solar Farm	50.0	\$8.9 million	\$126.2 million	Kidston, QLD
Manildra Solar Farm	Manildra Solar Farm	42.5	\$10.9 million	\$109.3 million	Manildra, NSW
RATCH Australia Corporation	Collinsville Solar Power Station	42.0	\$9.5 million	\$95.9 million	Collinsville, QLD
Neoen Australia	Griffith Solar Farm	25.0	\$5.0 million	\$54.6 million	Griffith, NSW
Canadian Solar (Australia)	Oakey Solar Farm	25.0	\$2.2 million	\$47.5 million	Oakey, QLD
Neoen Australia	Dubbo Solar Farm	24.2	\$5.5 million	\$55.6 million	Dubbo, NSW
APT Pipeline (APA Group)	Emu Downs Solar Farm	20.0	\$5.5 million	\$47.2 million	Cervantes, WA
Goldwind Australia	White Rock Solar Farm	20.0	\$6.0 million	\$44.5 million	Glen Innes, NSW
Canadian Solar (Australia)	Longreach Solar Farm	15.0	\$1.3 million	\$28.7 million	Longreach, QLD
TOTAL		482.0	\$91.7 million	\$1,056.4 million	

About ARENA

ARENA was established by the Australian Government to make renewable energy technologies more affordable and increase the supply of renewable energy in Australia. Through the provision of funding coupled with deep commercial and technical expertise, ARENA provides the support needed to accelerate the development of promising new solutions towards commercialisation. ARENA invests in renewable energy projects across the innovation chain and is committed to sharing knowledge and lessons learned from its portfolio of projects and information about renewable energy. ARENA always looks for at least matched funding from the projects it supports and to date has committed \$1.1 billion in funding to more than 270 projects. For more information, visit www.arena.gov.au.