



Media Release

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ARENA's new investment priorities to help Australia transition to reliable, affordable and low emission energy

The Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA) has launched its new Investment Plan outlining the investment priorities which will guide almost \$800 million of funding over the coming years.

ARENA will broaden its focus to address the challenges facing the energy system as Australia transitions to a low emission economy.

"As Australia shifts from fossil fuel generation to a low emission energy system with more renewables and more distributed energy resources, we need to make sure energy is secure, reliable and affordable," ARENA CEO Ivor Frischknecht said.

The plan, titled *Innovating Energy*, sets out four new priorities:

- Delivering a secure and reliable electricity system
- Accelerating solar PV innovation
- Improving energy productivity
- Exporting renewable energy

"We are looking for new ways to adapt our electricity grid to increase productivity, make the grid more flexible and better integrate renewable energy so it can be stored and shared when and where it is needed," Mr Frischknecht said.

"As part of this focus, we will be looking at a range of flexible capacity technologies and mechanisms from storage to demand response that will allow us to match electricity supply and demand at all times," he said.

"ARENA will also look for technologies that control voltage or frequency to make the grid more stable, or capture real-time data to detect and respond to power issues.

"We want to demonstrate how renewable energy can add value to the electricity system while also minimising costs and maintaining security and reliability," he said.

Innovating Energy builds on the success of ARENA's previous work, which has seen successes such as driving down the cost of large scale solar through 12 new solar farms, and the breaking of 14 world solar efficiency records.

Today ARENA also launched A-Lab, a series of innovation and collaboration laboratories bringing together energy players - from start-ups to major grid companies and energy providers - to help develop these projects.

ARENA will also focus specifically on research and development of solar PV.

"Australia has some of the best solar researchers in the world, and we plan to support them so they can continue making solar PV more competitive and affordable," he said.

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As part of a global effort, ARENA is aiming to substantially reduce the cost of solar PV.

“By funding further innovation, we could see solar power produce 30 per cent of Australia’s electricity within 20 years,” Mr Frischknecht said.

For the first time, ARENA will also turn its attention to making energy use more productive.

“We are aiming to reduce emissions and energy costs across the building, transport and industrial sectors by making energy use more productive,” he said.

ARENA aims to help Australia to meet - and show the potential to exceed - the National Energy Productivity Plan goal to improve energy productivity by 40 per cent by 2030.

“We want to show the benefit of adopting different technologies and approaches - such as energy efficiency, electrification and fuel switching to renewable energy sources,” he said.

Beyond improving Australia’s own energy supply, ARENA will also look to ensure Australia is at the forefront of exporting renewables in the future.

‘Australia is a major energy exporting nation, and we have vast renewable energy resources. As the global economy transitions to low emissions energy, Australia will be ideally positioned to export renewable energy as primary energy (for example as hydrogen or ammonia) or embodied in processed raw materials.’

“With the right investment and innovation, Australia can be a world leader in providing low emissions energy to countries with limited resources of their own,” Mr Frischknecht said.

From 1 May 2017, all applications for funding will be assessed under the new priorities. Existing submitted applications will be assessed under the former priorities.

To coincide with the new priorities, ARENA has launched a new website. For further information, visit [ARENA’s new website](#) and read the Investment Plan.

About ARENA

On behalf of the Australian Government, ARENA is working to accelerate Australia’s shift to affordable and reliable renewable energy. We collaborate with industries and innovators to make renewable energy affordable and reliable for all Australians. Our role is to support the development of local renewable energy technology by helping bring the best ideas to life. We provide funding to researchers, developers and businesses that have demonstrated a pathway to commercialisation for their technologies and projects. Our funding helps find good renewable energy ideas and gets them to market. We build and support networks, and share the knowledge, insights and data from our funded projects to help people and organisations learn from one-another. Our success can be measured by a better energy system, cost effective technologies and an invigorated economy powered by a reliable supply of renewable energy to all Australians. For more information, visit www.arena.gov.au.