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Redeployable solar to be trialled on shopping centres

The Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA) has today announced funding for an Australian start up Solpod Pty Ltd (Solpod) to trial installing redeployable rooftop solar on commercial and government buildings.

Solpod has developed an innovative new way of fixing solar panels to roofing by using a re-deployable racking and mounting system, offering the ability to quickly remove the panels to be deployed elsewhere. This innovation allows commercial tenants to access rooftop solar.

The \$5 million project will see Solpod's redeployable solar panel systems installed at 25 sites across Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland totalling nearly 2.5 MW capacity, with each site possessing up to 100 KW of solar PV. On behalf of the Australian Government, ARENA is committing \$975,000 towards the project.

In partnership with ERM Power, Solpod will be trialled at shopping centres, commercial and government buildings - owned by property owners including GPT and Property NSW, who will each install 10 pods.

ERM Power sourced and contracted the property owners and is administering the delivery of the demonstration program for these customers including billing the Solpod power purchase agreements.

Solpod's system involves manufacturing prefabricated commercial scale solar panels raised on aluminium pods which are fixed with industrial strength adhesive to the roof surface. Solpod's "pods" are manufactured in Melbourne, and can be installed within hours.

Solpod's pods will be able to be rolled out in any size configuration, helping building tenants benefit from rooftop solar PV where they otherwise wouldn't be able to.

ARENA CEO Darren Miller said Solpod's innovative redeployable solar system opens up new markets for rooftop solar installation.

"Solpod's new way of installing solar will pave the way for businesses who were previously locked out of rooftop solar to take up renewable energy solutions and options under shorter term power purchase agreements.

"This Australian start up will help to accelerate solar PV innovation and allows for renewable energy alternatives in niche markets, providing a cost-competitive alternative to standard methods of fixed mounting for delivering rooftop grid connected solar PV," Mr Miller said.

Solpod founder and CEO James Larratt said: "Despite rooftop solar being cheaper and more sustainable than the grid, many businesses have made the rational decision to not adopt solar because of other factors such as length of commitment, disruption on site and damage to buildings. Solpod is the game-changer that removes these barriers and enables businesses to capture the savings in energy costs."

"Solpod's solution can adapt to meet individual business needs. For businesses that rent their premises, Solpod can offer short-term contracts to match lease terms. For landlords, Solpod allows flexibility for changing site use and will not damage the roof," he said.

ERM Power CEO Jon Stretch said Solpod and ERM Power are set to revolutionise the way large scale commercial solar energy is rolled out in Australia and the rest of the world.

"Solpod's innovation in commercial solar installation is ground breaking. Commercial buildings, logistics and large scale industrial operators can purchase pods or lease them, and enjoy the benefits of significantly lower solar installation costs, slash their power bills and have the ability to take the Solpod installation with them anytime in the future," Mr Stretch said.

ARENA media contacts:
0410 724 227
media@arena.gov.au

For more information
arena.gov.au