

MEDIA RELEASE

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Australian Solar Institute Invests \$18.45 Million in Solar Research

The Australian Solar Institute (ASI) has today announced funding for five solar research and development projects of \$18.45 million.

Taking into account contributions from research, industry and State government project collaborators the total leveraged value of these five projects is \$67.7 million.

ASI Executive Director Mark Twidell said, "This funding brings the total ASI investment portfolio to \$44.5 million, helping to fund thirteen R&D projects with a total leveraged value of around \$131 million."

"We are delighted to support these projects, which bring collaborative partnerships between industry and research to reduce the cost and increase the efficiency of solar energy," Mr Twidell said.

The ASI invests in research and development to accelerate to market innovation in Photovoltaic (PV) and Concentrating Solar Thermal (CST) technologies, which have the potential to significantly reduce the cost of solar energy compared to existing energy sources.

ASI Board Chair Jenny Goddard said "the ASI is pleased with the leverage industry and other funders are providing to these important projects which will support more than 100 of Australia's leading solar researchers over the next 4 years."

The five funded projects announced today are:

- **University of New South Wales: Overcoming the Fundamental Performance Limitations of Commercial Solar Cells.** \$5.0m funding to support a \$24.16m applied research project in collaboration with Suntech Power and Silex Solar.

The project targets the delivery of a 25% performance increase with a corresponding 15-20% reduction in solar cell costs in \$/watt.

- **BT Imaging Pty Ltd : Inline Inspection Tools for Photovoltaic Manufacturing.** \$2.25m funding to support a \$5.43m applied research project in collaboration with Q-Cells, REC Wafer, ANU & CSIRO.

The project looks to develop an inspection tool to find micro-cracks in silicon wafers and cells during their manufacture and an inspection tool that delivers process and quality control, and sorting of multi-crystalline and mono-crystalline silicon blocks.

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- **Sapphicon Semiconductor Pty Ltd, a Silanna Group Company: A High Efficiency, Integrated Solar Module on a Transparent Substrate.** \$2.25 million funding to support a \$15.65m applied research project.

The project aims to deliver significant improvements in the efficiency, cost and robustness of concentrating photovoltaic systems through the development of novel, high efficiency, single-crystal silicon solar cells.

- **CSIRO and the Australian National University: Development of Advanced Solar Thermal Energy Storage Technologies for Integration with Energy Intensive Industrial Processes and Electricity Generation.** \$4.0m funding to support a \$9.0m core funded research project.

The project will develop cost-effective thermal storage systems to generate solar electricity after dark. This is required for solar thermal energy to make a significant contribution to Australia's electricity market.

- **Australian National University: Next Generation of Solar Cells.** \$4.95m funding to support a \$13.5m applied research project in collaboration with Transform Solar (an Origin Energy Joint Venture).

The project looks to significantly increase SLIVER cell efficiency and simplify the cell fabrication process to lower fabrication costs, while also allowing improvements in cell yield.

The funding announced to date by the ASI for all projects is subject to grantees acceptance of the terms of the ASI funding agreement.

The ASI recently called for proposals for Round 2 funding, with a closing date for expressions of interest of 21 May 2010.

The Australian Solar Institute is supported by the Australian Commonwealth Government through the \$4.5 billion Clean Energy Initiative, which also includes the \$1.5 billion Solar Flagships Program and the Australian Centre for Renewable Energy.

For more information see the ASI website www.australiansolarinstitute.com.au.

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