

# **MEDIA RELEASE**

17<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2009



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **AUSTRALIAN SOLAR INSTITUTE (ASI) TO TURBOCHARGE SOLAR ENERGY DEVELOPMENT THROUGH ITS FIRST ROUND GRANTS**

The Australian Solar Institute (ASI) announced today it would support a number of innovative solar research and development (R&D) projects to accelerate development of solar energy and to reinforce Australia's leading solar research capabilities.

The projects include a 30% more efficient lower cost photovoltaic cell, thermionic devices that could generate electricity direct from heat and nanotechnology to capture light. Research is also being done on organic photovoltaic solar cells that can be incorporated into building materials and solar thermal units to power steam turbines.

Around \$11 million will be made available (subject to satisfactory negotiation of the terms and conditions of funding) to help fund five (5) R&D projects valued at around \$31 million which are under development at several universities around the country and at the CSIRO.

The Chair of the ASI, Jenny Goddard said, "The ASI is delighted to provide funding support to these 5 excellent projects. They offer significant potential to reduce the cost of solar energy by accelerating the development of photovoltaic cells and concentrating solar thermal technologies."

She said, "These projects will help ensure Australia's world class solar researchers remain at the forefront of developments in this field."

The ASI Board has authorised further discussions in respect of several other promising projects arising from the first round of applications. Further announcements will be made pending the outcome of commercial-in-confidence discussions with the relevant applicants and their collaborative partners.

ASI Executive Director, Mark Twidell said "the ASI was very impressed by the high standard of the 87 funding applications received by the October 2009 deadline. It was a highly competitive funding round which reflects the strength and breadth of solar R&D activity in Australia".

"Our 3 foundation projects announced in January 2009 aimed to develop key infrastructure for research into solar concentrating and photovoltaic technologies. The projects announced today build on these technologies and also include research in the area of organic solar, where the potential to generate electricity from simple low cost chemical processes has long term potential."

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Mr Twidell said “a further R&D funding round is expected to be announced in the first half of 2010. The ASI will work proactively with potential R&D project proponents to encourage excellence, collaboration and to maximise commercial investment and development.”

The ASI welcomes investment in its funding program from organisations interested in promoting increased use of solar energy.

The Australian Solar Institute is supported by the Australian Government through the \$4.5 billion Clean Energy Initiative (CEI). The Clean Energy Initiative includes the \$1.5 billion Solar Flagships Program, the \$2.4 billion Carbon Capture and Storage Flagships Program, the \$560 million Australian Centre for Renewable Energy and the \$100 million Australian Solar Institute.

Further information on the successful projects is attached.

A factsheet detailing the Round 1 process and more information about the ASI is available at [www.australiansolarinstitute.com.au](http://www.australiansolarinstitute.com.au)

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## Project Summaries.

- University of New South Wales: Development and Commercialisation of High Efficiency Silicon Solar Cell Technology. \$3.972m funding to support a \$12.75m core funded research project.
- University of Newcastle: Fabrication of Thermionic Devices Using Directional Solidification / Sintering Processes for High Temperature Concentrating Solar Thermal Applications. \$515,000 funding to support a \$700,000 basic research project.
- CSIRO and the Australian National University: Advanced steam generating receivers for high concentration solar collectors. \$4.084m funding to support a \$9.7m core funded research project.
- Australian National University: Plasmonics for high efficiency Photovoltaic Solar Cells using nanotechnology to capture more light. \$1.67m funding to support a \$5.84m applied research funded project.
- University of Queensland: New Materials and Architectures for Organic Solar Cells - Beyond the Shockley-Queisser Limit. \$945,000 funding to support a \$1.945m basic research funded project.