

MEDIA RELEASE



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AUSTRALIAN SOLAR INSTITUTE FORGES STRONGER COLLABORATION WITH PRESTIGIOUS FRAUNHOFER INSTITUTE

The Australian Solar Institute (ASI) has established new ties with a leading European solar research body to accelerate solar power development.

A memorandum of understanding was signed in Canberra today between the ASI and the Fraunhofer Institute, Europe's largest research institution. Closer ties between the two institutions were initiated during Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's July 2009 visit to Germany, in talks with German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

Among the possible range of activities under the MoU, the two institutes will be able to collaborate on solar energy technology development and deployment, including sharing views and contributing to international programs on opportunities and challenges for solar energy in a global and local context.

Fraunhofer's Head of International Business Development responsible for relations with Australia, Dr. Eckart Bierdämpel, said "now with the MoU in place, we do have the right framework for a whole range of activities. It offers a good starting point for cooperation between the ASI and Fraunhofer."

There is also provision in the MoU for joint R&D projects, support for solar skills development and education in Australia and Germany through scholarships and exchanges, and information sharing. The two parties aim to expand upon the historical collaboration between Fraunhofer and Australian research institutions, and to foster new collaborations.

ASI Executive Director Mark Twidell said "the agreement will aim to maximise the synergy between solar research activity in Europe and Australia." He said, "The two institutions recognise the important role solar energy will play in reducing global greenhouse gas emissions and diversifying energy supply."

The Australian Solar Institute is key to fast tracking solar energy development in Australia. In January 2009 the Federal Government committed A\$100 million to the ASI to help fund and support the research and development of solar thermal and solar photovoltaic technologies.

The ASI will be a catalyst for industry and research collaboration and information dissemination. The ASI aims to do this by providing financial support to a number of R&D projects and encouraging links between solar researchers and industry both within Australia and overseas.

The ultimate goal of the ASI is to significantly improve the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of solar technologies and to speed up commercial deployment. This knowledge will benefit all Australians as communities around the world work to reduce their carbon emissions through alternative energy sources.

More information about the ASI is available at www.australiansolarinstitute.com.au

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BACKGROUND

The Australian Government has committed A\$4.5 billion to a Clean Energy Initiative to support research, development and demonstration of low emissions energy technologies, including solar energy.

The Clean Energy Initiative includes A\$100 million to establish the ASi, to provide support for Australian solar research and development (**R&D**) that will have an impact on the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of solar technologies and accelerate their commercial deployment.

The ASi remit includes forging international collaboration along with investment in local Solar R&D activity in Australia. The ASi announced in December 2009 the initial outcomes from the first round of funding.

The Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft is Europe's largest research institution with 17,000 employees and 60 institutes. Its annual budget is over 1.5 billion Euros, two thirds earned through industrial and public funded projects. The Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft is the legal entity signing the MoU.

The key objective of the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft is to transform scientific expertise into applications of practical utility.

The Fraunhofer-Institut für Solare Energiesysteme ISE, a specialist institute of Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft, develops materials, components, systems and processes for the following business areas: energy-efficient buildings and technical building components, solar thermal systems, applied optics and functional surfaces, silicon photovoltaics, alternative photovoltaic technology, renewable power generation and hydrogen technology.