



# MEDIA RELEASE

## MARTIN FERGUSON

Minister for Resources and Energy  
Minister for Tourism

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### LAUNCH OF SOLAR INSTITUTE GRANTS PROGRAM

The Minister for Resources and Energy, Martin Ferguson AM MP, has welcomed the launch of the Australian Solar Institute's solar energy grants program, an important part of the Australian Government's renewable energy strategy.

Minister Ferguson yesterday met the Board of the Australian Solar Institute (ASI) in Newcastle at their inaugural Board meeting, which endorsed the program guidelines circulated to stakeholders on 30 June 2009. The Board formally opened the first round of this program, with applications closing on 16 October 2009.

Minister Ferguson said: "The solar expertise in Australia puts us at the forefront of research and development in this field.

"Australia has the potential to be a world-leader in the development of solar energy. As well as benefitting the environment, there are huge business opportunities and significant export earnings.

"Supporting research and development in both photovoltaics and concentrating solar thermal is fundamental to building Australia's expertise and capacity in this industry. ASI activities will play a significant part in improving solar industry capacity and accelerating the development of solar technologies which could assist in meeting the Government's renewable energy target of 20 per cent by 2020.

"The potential of concentrating solar thermal technology is particularly important for Australia because of the urgent need for investment in baseload capacity over the next decade and beyond."

The Government's \$100 million investment in the ASI will encourage collaboration between Australian researchers as well as with international solar researchers and institutions.

Applicants can apply for first round grants of up to a maximum of \$5 million for applied research and \$1 million for basic research grants. Doctoral or postdoctoral awards may be given as part of the research program. A priority outcome for the research is to reduce the cost of deploying solar technologies, making them more competitive with other stationary energy sources.

The ASI is part of the Government's \$4.5 billion Clean Energy Initiative (CEI), which includes the Solar Flagships initiative. The CEI complements the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme and Renewable Energy Target by supporting the research, development and demonstration of low-emission energy technologies, including solar energy, that will help transform Australia into a low-carbon economy.

Further information is available at: [www.australiansolarinstitute.com.au](http://www.australiansolarinstitute.com.au)

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