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Printable solar cells could be coated onto roofs

World-leading solar researchers from CSIRO and other research institutions are partnering with industry to develop new ways of generating zero-emission electricity, using a printing machine to produce solar cells.



Credit: Tracey Nicholls/scienceimage

The \$7.2 million 'Printing solar cells – A manufacturing proposition for Australia' project offers a potential alternative solar cell technology to more conventional photovoltaic systems, with the opportunity to commercialise and produce cells competitively in Australia.

The Australian government is supporting the project through a \$1.7 million grant from the Australian Solar Institute with matching funding from the Victorian Government.

Australia's Minister for Resources and Energy, Mr Martin Ferguson, said the project aims to develop efficient solar cells using organic materials and conventional printing methods.

'Researchers at the University of Melbourne, the CSIRO Future Manufacturing Flagship, and Monash University will work with industry partners to take their innovation beyond the lab,' says Minister Ferguson.

'Industry partners BlueScope Steel, Innovia Films and Robert Bosch will share their expertise and resources to help bring forward new opportunities for Australian solar energy innovation.

'This collaboration between researchers and industry partners will help commercialise the technology across a variety of potential applications, including for example as a coating for other material such as roofing steel.

'Using low-cost and readily available organic materials to print solar cells through established industrial processes where we already have a competitive advantage offers the potential for solar cells to be manufactured at low cost in Australia.

'Australia is a leader in solar energy research, and projects such as this will help Australia remain at the forefront of this rapidly growing industry.'

