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Mildura solar power station finally complete

Australia's largest concentrating photovoltaic (CPV) solar power station in Mildura, Victoria, has begun operation **seven years after it was first announced**. The 40 CPV dish systems in the demonstration facility are now feeding renewable energy into the national electricity grid.



Credit: Silex Systems

The plant was proposed and built by Solar Systems Pty Ltd, which became a subsidiary of Silex Systems Ltd after Solar Systems ran into earlier financial problems. The project was able to be completed with a contribution of \$10 million from the Victorian State Government plus additional funding from the Federal Government.

The 1.5 megawatt (MW) demonstration facility is providing enough electricity – under a power purchase agreement signed with Diamond Energy in 2012 – to power up to 500 average-sized homes.

The commercialisation strategy for the 'dense array' CPV technology used in the facility involves operation of the Mildura (and other) demonstration facilities over the next 12 months to validate performance efficiency, energy yields and reliability. Stage 2 would involve construction of a 100 MW plant.

Silex Systems says planning for the utility-scale, 100 MW Mildura facility is now underway. Construction is expected to begin in late 2014, subject to securing of a power purchase agreement and to the finalisation of funding arrangements, including:

\$75 million from the Australian Federal Government under the Low Emissions Technology Demonstration Fund (now under the Australian Renewable Energy Agency – ARENA); and

\$35 million from the Victorian State Government's Energy Technology Innovation Strategy Fund.

Source: Silex Systems