

Innovation gets a boost in solar sector

\$21.5 million funding has been allocated through the Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA) to 12 new R&D projects in solar photovoltaics, solar thermal and solar storage.



Credit: Stefan Moore

Through one project, the [University of NSW](#) is seeking to develop an innovative tandem solar cell using the mineral, perovskite, which can be paired with silicon to produce solar panels that may be cheaper and more efficient than silicon-only panels.

In another project, [CSIRO](#) plans to leverage its solar thermal know-how to design a heliostat mirror and control system that would enable cost-effective deployment of central-tower solar thermal installations, potentially opening a new domestic market.

Elsewhere, the [ANU](#) is working with Australian solar cell manufacturer Tindo Solar to optimise solar modules for Australia's unique and demanding conditions, providing a competitive edge in the domestic market.

At the [UTS](#) researchers are developing improved renewable energy storage using lithium-sulfur batteries, currently the most promising and cost-effective technology for large-scale energy storage.

'ARENA is not in the business of investing in research for the sake of research – there is a direct correlation between the research projects we fund and the application of 21st century renewable energy technologies,' says ARENA CEO Ivor Frischknecht.

'ARENA's investment is being matched by substantial contributions from domestic and international partners, resulting in projects totalling more than \$70 million.

'These projects will extend Australia's world-leading research position in solar R&D and deliver economic benefits by generating Australian-owned IP in potentially game-changing technologies.'

Source: Australian Renewable Energy Agency

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