

Media Release

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Large scale solar manufacturing for Victoria

Solar Systems has announced \$32 million investment in solar power production

Melbourne based Solar Systems is making another major step towards mainstream solar power today with the announcement it will invest in two facilities: a high-tech solar manufacturing plant in Melbourne and a regional large scale Research and Development facility.

Australian Minister for Industry, Tourism and Resources Ian Macfarlane and Victorian Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Innovation Gavin Jennings participated in the announcement held at Solar Systems manufacturing facility in Hawthorn.

Solar Systems has developed high performance solar power station technology over the last 16 years and is now gearing up to install large scale, grid connected power stations.

Solar Systems' new headquarters and photovoltaic module manufacturing facility will have an annual capacity of 300MW of photovoltaic (PV) modules, making it one of the largest in the world (six times Australia's current manufacturing capacity). Operation of the new facility will commence in the first quarter of 2009.

"This is another major step towards affordable mainstream solar power," said Dave Holland, Managing Director. "The \$22 million facility will be located in metropolitan Melbourne and will directly employ approximately 150 people. Instead of making traditional PV modules, the factory will produce modules specifically for Solar Systems' solar concentrator systems. Solar Systems' PV modules produce 1500 times more electricity per square metre than traditional PV modules.

“The modules will initially be deployed by Solar Systems in a number of power stations across Australia including the \$420 million North West Victorian power station announced late last year with the support of the Australian and Victorian Governments, and a number of projects in international markets.

“Solar Systems will apply sustainability principals throughout the design and construction of the facility to ensure that a leading-edge, green building asset is developed for Melbourne.”

In addition to the new manufacturing facility, a \$10 million Research & Development facility will be constructed near Bendigo in Victoria. The 35-hectare R&D centre will be used to optimise and further develop the company’s technology. “It is the first step in the optimisation phase of Solar Systems’ large-scale HCPV technology (that will be used in the north-west Victorian project). This represents the next generation of Solar Systems’ technology. We have already begun work on this project at a temporary location and will begin operations at the test facility in 2008.

“Developing viable new solar technologies means more than just research, more than isolated project announcements. It is about making technology breakthroughs and deploying them commercially. When the project in north-west Victoria was announced, it was a strategic part of a program to do just that.

“Today’s announcements are two more important steps and demonstrate Australia’s ability to lead in research and development, commercialisation and manufacturing of renewable energy technologies,” Holland said.

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