



## JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

*Australian Government Minister for the  
Environment, Heritage and the Arts*

*Premier of South Australia  
Minister for Sustainability and Climate Change*

**Peter Garrett**

**Mike Rann**

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### **\$7.1M SOLAR POWER PLANT FOR COOBER PEDY**

Australia's largest off-grid solar power station is set to be built at remote Coober Pedy in South Australia's far north.

Australian Environment Minister Peter Garrett and South Australian Premier Mike Rann announced the \$7.1 million project at the 3rd International Solar Cities Congress in Adelaide today.

"This is a groundbreaking solar project – a spectacular example of the Rudd Labor Government's commitment to a clean energy future," Peter Garrett said.

"There will be 26 dishes, each one 14 metres high and tracking the arc of the sun – an Australian design, delivering the nation's most efficient solar power station.

"When it's completed at the end of 2009, it will generate about 1860 megawatt hours a year – 13 per cent of Coober Pedy's total electricity requirements.

"And it will cut diesel consumption by up to 520,000 litres a year, saving 1,500 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions."

The Australian Government is providing \$3.55 million under its Renewable Remote Power Generation program, which helps Australians who live outside of our major cities and towns and who are not connected to the main grid, to gain access to renewable power supplies.

"This project will consolidate South Australia's reputation as a leader in renewable energy initiatives," Premier Rann said.

"It reinforces our willingness to collaborate and invest in practical solutions to climate change in our communities.

"South Australia already provides nearly half of the nation's wind power, more than 45 percent of the nation's grid-connected solar power, and is home to more than 80 percent of all geothermal exploration activity in Australia.

"And this announcement comes just days after South Australia passed the nation's first solar-feed-in laws which will see consumers get double the retail price for surplus power they feed back into the grid."

Coober Pedy has been chosen because it is not on the electricity grid, and currently gets all of its power from diesel generators.

Each dish will concentrate the received sunlight by 500 times onto an array of high efficiency photovoltaic cells that directly convert sunlight into electricity.

The State Government is providing funding of \$635,000 for the project, which has been developed in partnership with Solar Systems Pty Ltd, the District Council of Coober Pedy and Wesfarmers subsidiary Energy Generation Pty Ltd (enGen).

With this funding package in place, the partners can now finalise the necessary contractual arrangements.

For more information on renewable energy in South Australia: [www.climatechange.sa.gov.au](http://www.climatechange.sa.gov.au)

For information on the Australian Government's Renewable Remote Power Generation program: [www.environment.gov.au/renewable/rpgrp](http://www.environment.gov.au/renewable/rpgrp)