



MEDIA RELEASE

The Hon Peter Garrett MP

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts

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SOLAR KNOWLEDGE SHINES IN THE DESERT

Alice Springs' place as the solar heart of Australia is confirmed with two projects worth \$4.51 million in Australian Government funding, Environment Minister Peter Garrett announced today.

Launching the \$2.97 million Desert Knowledge Australia Solar Centre, the nation's first desert solar 'technology park', Mr Garrett said it displayed the amazing potential of solar power.

"This innovative facility, funded under the Australian Government's Renewable Remote Power Generation Program (RRPGP), supports the use of renewable generation technologies in remote parts of Australia that rely on fossil fuel for electricity.

"The technologies that will be on display here - including a range of solar photovoltaic panels, sun tracking systems and solar concentrating dishes - are being installed on station properties and in remote communities across the nation. After touring the centre, visitors can learn about how to incorporate solar power into their own homes or businesses with a visit to the Alice Solar City Smart Living Centre."

Data from the centre displays will contribute to identifying the most appropriate technologies for Australia's different climates. An interactive website will provide information about the technologies and allow access to comparative data. The centre will also offer skills training for local trades people and training for communities in how to maintain their solar facilities.

The Desert Knowledge Australia Solar Centre is one of a number of facilities in a new Alice Springs precinct dedicated to addressing sustainability in arid environments

Mr Garrett also announced \$1.54 million under Alice Solar City – to build Australia's largest roof mounted solar power system on the roof of the Alice Crowne Plaza – where he and State and Territory Ministers are attending the Cultural Ministers Council.

"More than 1320 photovoltaic panels will be installed on the roof of the hotel, generating around 530 megawatt hours of electricity per year."

Data collected from the 305 kilowatt solar rooftop project will be made available through the Solar Centre website so that its performance can be compared with the various technologies displayed at the site.

"These two projects and the experience of Alice Springs as one of Australia's seven Solar Cities combine to make Alice a significant portal for information on the application and performance of photovoltaic power systems."

For more information visit: www.desertknowledge.com.au and www.environment.gov.au