



# MEDIA RELEASE

## The Hon Peter Garrett MP

*Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts*

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### **GREEN LIGHT FOR CENTRAL VICTORIA SOLAR CITY**

A further achievement in Australia's comprehensive response to combat climate change was realised today with the sealing of Australia's fifth Solar City agreement, Environment Minister Peter Garrett, said.

Supported by \$14.9 million from the Australian Government, the Central Victoria Solar City is a \$41 million project jointly driven by Bendigo Bank, Origin Energy, PowerCor, a number of local municipalities and the Central Victorian Greenhouse Alliance and its commercial arm, ZCO<sub>2e</sub>.

"The agreement is the latest milestone in the Australian Government's \$94 million Solar Cities initiative which is integrating solar technologies, energy efficiency and large-scale community engagement to tackle climate change," Mr Garrett said.

"The Central Victoria Solar City covers one fifth of Victoria and involves 14 municipalities, industry, businesses and local communities working together to rethink the way energy is produced and used.

"Together with the Australian Government, the consortium is aiming to discover local energy solutions to help achieve reductions in greenhouse gas emissions of more than 13,000 tonnes per year.

"It's encouraging to see different communities in central Victoria working so well together to find better ways of generating and using energy to protect the environment and save money," he said.

Led by ZCO<sub>2e</sub>, the Central Victoria Solar City will include a unique community-investment model to test the viability of a community-owned renewable energy business.

Two large solar parks, each generating 300kW, will be built in Ballarat and Bendigo, with locals able to support solar power without having a photovoltaic system on their roof.

Mr Garrett said other elements of the Central Victoria Solar City project include energy audits and connecting solar hot water systems and photovoltaic systems to smart meters with in-home displays to trial the community's response to innovative electricity pricing.

"The data provided by the Central Victoria Solar City will contribute to our national knowledge base and help inform how we manage energy into the future," he said.

"National benefits will emerge over the longer-term from the knowledge, innovation and vision that this, and Australia's other Solar Cities, will generate."

Australia's other Solar Cities are Adelaide, Alice Springs, Blacktown, Moreland, Perth and Townsville.

For more information about the Australian Government's popular Solar Cities program visit [www.environment.gov.au/solarcities](http://www.environment.gov.au/solarcities)