



MEDIA RELEASE

SENATOR THE HON. KIM CARR

Minister for Innovation, Industry,
Science and Research

THE HON. MARTIN FERGUSON MP

Minister for Resources and Energy
Minister for Tourism

SHARON GRIERSON MP

Federal Member for Newcastle

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CLEAN ENERGY GETS \$20 MILLION BOOST WITH NEWCASTLE CENTRE

Australia took a step closer to becoming the clean energy hub of the Asia Pacific with the announcement today that Newcastle will house the \$20 million national Enterprise Connect Clean Energy Innovation Centre.

Enterprise Connect will partner with Newcastle Innovation – the commercial arm of the University of Newcastle, the Australian Institute for Commercialisation and the Western Australian Sustainable Energy Association to deliver hands-on assistance to small and medium enterprises operating in the clean energy sector.

"This centre will assist firms in the clean energy sector to tap into expertise, research and technologies through partner organisations and their networks," said Senator Kim Carr, Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research.

"By providing a range of business improvement services, the Centre will capitalise on export opportunities, boost productivity and support Australia's transition to a low-carbon future."

Central to its services are free onsite business reviews, conducted by expert business advisers, for eligible businesses in the clean energy sector. Businesses can then apply for matching grants of up to \$20,000 to make improvements identified in the review.

The Minister for Resources and Energy, Martin Ferguson, welcomed the news.

"Investment in clean energy is an investment in Australia's future. Renewable energy is a growing sector with enormous employment potential," Mr Ferguson said.

Federal Member for Newcastle Sharon Grierson said Newcastle was an ideal location for the Clean Energy Centre.

"Locating this centre in Newcastle will build on the city's rapidly growing reputation as Australia's clean energy technology and research hub," Ms Grierson said.

"By working in partnership to strengthen the critical clean energy sector, this Rudd Government initiative will also help create jobs in these tough times."

Enterprise Connect is a national network of centres offering practical assistance to help firms become stronger by focusing on innovation, creativity and excellence. For more information on Enterprise Connect, visit www.enterpriseconnect.gov.au or call the hotline on 131 791.