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MEDIA RELEASE

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NSW PROJECT TO REVOLUTIONISE SOLAR CONSTRUCTION

Australia's solar industry is set for a major boost thanks to research involving a startup company and UNSW Sydney, supported by the NSW Government to embed solar panels into building materials.

Minister for Energy Matt Kean said the project with startup Solspan Pty Ltd - supported through the NSW Government's Boosting Business Innovation [Program](#), aimed to integrate solar panels into sheet metal for use on building roofs and walls.

"It's fantastic to see more grants going to innovative renewable energy technology.

"I encourage our entrepreneurs, engineers and scientists to think big about our future energy needs. It's innovation like this, that will make energy more affordable, reliable and clean and will shape our 21st century grid," Mr Kean said.

Small Business Minister Damien Tudehope said the \$18 million Innovation Program was all about helping businesses tap into the top-notch research of the State's universities and the CSIRO to develop new products and services.

"Bringing together great business and academic minds gives our entrepreneurs confidence to invest in their ideas and support to help them succeed."

Solspan managing director Wade Blazley, a builder for 40 years, said a matching \$15,000 TechVoucher [grant](#) under the Boost program helped him work with UNSW to integrate solar photovoltaic cells into his 'Solspan' sheet metal building panel.

"Our integrated solar building panels would be used to construct roofs and even walls on buildings, making the separate installation of solar panels unnecessary."

Associate Professor Anita Ho-Baillie from UNSW's School of Photovoltaic and Renewable Energy Engineering said researchers had successfully integrated thin film silicon solar cells into Solspan's sheet metal panels.

"Now we need to make the solar building panels weatherproof by putting a transparent and flexible protective layer on top, and ensuring they are structurally sound to get building approval to Australian standards."

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