

\$20 million boost for clean energy

Australia has taken a step closer to becoming the clean energy hub of the Asia Pacific with the announcement 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,” says Industry Minister Kim Carr. “By providing a range of business improvement services, the centre will capitalise on export opportunities, boost productivity and encourage 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. Energy Minister Martin Ferguson has welcomed the news. “Investment in clean energy is an investment in Australia’s future. Renewable energy is a growing sector with enormous employment potential,” he says. Enterprise Connect is a national network of centres offering practical assistance to help firms become stronger by focusing on innovation, creativity and excellence.

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