



## MEDIA RELEASE

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### WORLD ENERGY BODY CORRECT TO EXPECT MORE FROM AUSTRALIA ON SOLAR POWER

The International Energy Agency's call for Australia to take on a bigger role in developing solar energy technology proves we are not doing enough to exploit this abundant source of renewable energy, Modern Solar Managing Director Ron Bayley said today.

The agency's chief economist, Fatih Birol, said in Paris this week that Australia's location and past experience with solar power meant it could play a leading role in its development as an alternative energy source to oil and nuclear power.

"Australia receives more sunshine than any other inhabited continent on Earth," Mr Bayley said.

"Yet despite this natural advantage, only 1% of our energy comes from solar. About 80% of our energy still comes from burning coal, which sends massive greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere and contributes to global warming.

***"Australia lags behind countries such as Germany which has half as much sunshine as we do, yet now has the capacity to produce 200 times as much solar energy as Australia.***

"That's because Germany has invested in genuine incentives that have made it easier for consumers and small businesses to switch to solar-generated electricity."

Germany is one of more than 40 countries that introduced a payment called a gross feed-in tariff (GFIT) to electricity customers who installed renewable energy systems in their homes.

"If you have a rooftop solar energy system, a GFIT pays you for every kilowatt hour of electricity that system produces," Mr Bayley said.

"The GFIT is so successful in Germany that their renewable energy sector is about to overtake the automotive industry as the country's biggest employer.

"Imagine if we could have that kind of job growth in clean, green industries here."

Mr Bayley said most Australian states have introduced a **net** feed-in tariff, which only pays consumers for the excess solar electricity that's fed back into the main grid – a much less attractive incentive than is available in Europe, the US and Asia.

"Australia needs a national gross feed-in tariff scheme if we are to boost the take-up of solar energy in this country and develop thousands of clean, green jobs and expertise."

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*Modern Solar is part of The Modern Group - an Australian company employing around 1000 people nationally. Its solar power photovoltaic (PV) systems convert sunlight directly to electricity using solar panels or solar cells mounted on rooftops.*