



MEDIA RELEASE

SOLAR PANEL RECYCLING PILOT A TIMELY INVESTMENT IN AUSTRALIA'S CLEAN ENERGY FUTURE

Friday 16 January 2026

The Australian Council of Recycling (ACOR) welcomes the Australian Government's announcement of a national pilot program for solar panel recycling as a timely and important step in supporting Australia's clean energy transition.

The pilot program, which will invest \$24.7 million over three years and establish up to 100 collection sites nationwide, recognises the growing challenge posed by end-of-life solar panels as Australia's solar fleet continues to expand.

Australia leads the world in rooftop solar uptake, with more than one in three homes now fitted with solar PV. Yet only a small proportion of end-of-life panels are currently recycled, despite containing valuable materials including aluminium and critical minerals such as silver and silicon.

"Solar panels are too valuable to landfill," said ACOR CEO Suzanne Toumbourou. "They contain materials that are essential to Australia's future manufacturing capability, resource security and clean energy supply chains."

"The intrinsic value of clean energy waste streams presents a significant opportunity for the Australian economy. Supporting a circular supply chain for solar panels will reduce waste and emissions while building confidence for investment in the recovery and re-use of these materials here in Australia."

The pilot provides an important opportunity to develop a nationally consistent approach to solar panel recycling, building on existing capability within Australia's recycling sector.

"Technologies for recycling end-of-use solar panels already exist in Australia, demonstrating that high-quality recycling outcomes are both feasible and achievable," Ms Toumbourou said. "As the pilot is developed, it will be important to ensure it supports genuine recycling processes here in Australia."

Strong transparency, clear governance and meaningful engagement with recyclers will be essential to ensure the program delivers lasting environmental and economic benefits.

"Well-designed and properly governed recycling and product stewardship frameworks can help ensure end-of-life solar panels are responsibly collected, processed and reintegrated into the economy," Ms Toumbourou said. "ACOR looks forward to working with the Australian Government to support the success of this pilot and to help pave the way for a sustainable, circular future for solar panels in Australia."

"Done well, this initiative can support households and businesses across our vast country, strengthen Australia's recycling sector, and ensure Australia's energy transition is clean from start to finish." said Ms Toumbourou.

Media contact: Suzanne Toumbourou, ACOR CEO | 0423 407 467 | ceo@acor.org.au

About ACOR:

The Australian Council of Recycling (ACOR) is the preeminent industry forum for resource recovery, recycling and remanufacturing, leading the transition to circular economy in Australia. ACOR represents a growing industry that contributes almost \$19 billion in economic value, generating broad social and environmental benefits. Our sector collects, sorts and reprocesses material, and makes new products with recycled content, creating more jobs for Australians. acor.org.au