

Media Release

The Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP

Minister for Energy

Minister for the Environment and Climate Action

Minister for Solar Homes



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INVESTING IN NEW WAYS TO RECYCLE SOLAR PANELS

The Andrews Labor Government is calling on innovators to develop new ways of recycling solar panels, boosting Victoria's nation-leading transition to renewable energy, cutting waste and creating jobs.

Minister for Solar Homes Lily D'Ambrosio today launched Breakthrough Victoria's \$10 million Solar Waste Challenge, setting out to invest in innovative solutions to reduce solar panel waste.

As Victorians take up the Labor Government's offers for solar panels at record speed, solutions need to be found for solar panel waste — with more than 187,000 tonnes of solar panels expected to enter Victoria's waste stream by 2035.

Currently, there are limited options available for managing and recycling solar panel waste, but there are increasing opportunities to recover valuable materials from panels that can no longer be used and develop new products and markets for them.

Through the Challenge, innovators are invited to apply for investment funding to support the development of new or improved technology to recycle or reuse solar panels, that would otherwise become waste. This is a first step in the development of a commercially viable solar panel recycling system in Victoria.

Since it began in 2018, the Labor Government's \$1.3 billion Solar Homes Program has helped almost 200,000 Victorian households install solar panel systems.

This investment has already cut Victoria's carbon emissions by 1.6 million tonnes – the equivalent of taking nearly 400,000 cars off the road – while supporting 4,500 clean energy jobs. Household solar is expected to generate 12.5 per cent of Victoria's 40 per cent renewable energy target by 2025.

This financial year, there are 64,000 Government rebates available for solar panel systems.

The Challenge is funded by the Labor Government's \$2 billion investment in the Breakthrough Victoria Fund, which invests in innovative companies and founders looking to solve complex problems.

Read more about the Breakthrough Challenge here: breakthroughvictoria.com/breakthrough-victoria-challenge.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Solar Homes Lily D'Ambrosio

"Our Solar Waste Challenge is an example of how we are working with industry and innovators in our nation-leading clean energy transition, while proactively addressing potential environmental impacts."

"We've helped 200,000 households and businesses to install solar – driving down power bills and emissions – and now we're creating more jobs and new industries as we boost Victoria's recycling to meet our clean energy transition."