

News Release Treasurer Tom Koutsantonis

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New testing facility to boost confidence in battery energy storage

The State Government has welcomed Australian Renewable Energy Agency's (ARENA) \$1.4 million investment in a University of Adelaide project which will see a new testing facility built that assesses the performance of battery energy storage systems.

Energy Minister Tom Koutsantonis said the new testing facility will unlock valuable information about how battery energy storage, in areas of high renewable energy generation, best stores power and helps distributors manage power networks and grids.

"When power from renewable energies such as wind and solar outstrip demand – battery energy storage systems allow that excess power to be stored and drawn on later when needed," Mr Koutsantonis said.

"These systems also help utilities to better manage supply and demand within a network or grid.

"The performance data this facility collects will be able to be shared between technology developers, end users and the public to ultimately boost confidence and accelerate investment in reliable battery energy storage technologies.

"Battery energy storage technology is expected to become a major industry within the next decade, particularly if new research infrastructure like the facility being built by the University, can help unlock its full potential.

"Innovations like this also directly contribute to South Australia's economic priority of unlocking the full potential of our resources, energy and renewable assets and supports our commitment towards Adelaide becoming a carbon neutral city."

The new mobile testing unit, about the size of a shipping container, will initially be used at a site on the SA Power Networks (SAPN) grid, but potentially could be deployed at other locations around the State or the country.

University of Adelaide Associate Professor Nesimi Ertugrul is the project's Chief investigator with 30 years of research experience in power electronics.

"Our mobile unit will be able to go on-site to test how battery operated systems are performing and integrating with energy infrastructure both on-grid and off-grid," Associate Professor Ertugrul said.

"It is expected that battery storage technologies will become a major industry over the next five to ten years, offering solutions from small domestic to very large scale applications.

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“Therefore, this unique test system will allow us to understand the technology under real operating conditions and real Australian environments, and will have the potential to offer a knowledge base for industry and system developers, while providing advanced training facilities for the nation.”

ARENA’s \$1.4 million investment towards the more than \$3 million project leverages \$550,000 in financial support from SAPN, Energy Networks Association and local company Solar Storage, along with \$100,000 from the State Government.

Mr Koutsantonis said ZEN Energy Systems and Power and Drive are also providing in-kind support.

“The University of Adelaide should be congratulated on a commercial research proposition which has strong private sector support and fosters the State’s advanced manufacturing expertise,” he said.