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**THE HON CHRIS BOWEN MP  
MINISTER FOR CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENERGY  
MEMBER FOR MCMAHON**

**SENATOR THE HON MURRAY WATT  
MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND WATER  
SENATOR FOR QUEENSLAND**

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

Friday, 16 January 2026

### **LABOR PILOTS NATIONAL SOLAR PANEL RECYCLING PROGRAM**

The Albanese Labor Government will pilot a national solar panel recycling program to reduce landfill, increase availability of valuable minerals and help drive the transformation to cleaner and cheaper energy.

This will mean less waste and more access to valuable metals.

We'll invest \$24.7 million over three years to deliver a national pilot for recycling solar panels and establish up to 100 pilot collection sites nationwide.

The need for this program is highlighted in a report from the Productivity Commission into circularity in Australia's economy which has been released today and specifically recommends the establishment of a solar panel recycling scheme.

The PC's report found there was scope to boost Australia's circular economy through better coordination, regulatory design and innovation - especially for high value, high risk waste streams like solar panels.

Australia leads the world in rooftop solar uptake, with more than one in three Australian homes now having solar panels installed.

Those panels contain valuable material and strategic minerals that can support the renewable energy transition, such as copper, silver and aluminium.

The program we're piloting is all about building a sustainable and effective national solution to recycling end-of-life solar panels into the future.

Only 17 per cent of solar panels are currently recycled, and increasing this could unlock up to \$7.3 billion in benefits through reduced waste and reuse of materials.

The Government will consider the findings of the PC inquiry, and work with states and territories to improve sustainable solutions.

**Quotes attributable to the Treasurer, Jim Chalmers:**

"Recycling solar panels and reusing the essential components will reduce costs and make our economy more productive and efficient.

"This means less waste and more access to valuable metals.

"Recycling solar panels and reusing our critical resources is an important part of the energy transformation and that's what this is all about."

**Quotes attributable to the Minister for Climate Change and Energy, Chris Bowen:**

"Aussie households have embraced cleaner, cheaper solar energy, with one in three of us now benefitting from solar panels on our roofs.

"This pilot is an important step in ensuring we get the most out of our energy transition. Not only do solar panels create renewable energy – now they'll be renewable themselves.

"By turning old solar panels into valuable resources, this scheme will create more local jobs, and power a future made in Australia, enticing greater investment in our booming solar industry."

**Quotes attributable to the Minister for the Environment and Water, Murray Watt:**

"Only a small percentage of end-of-life solar panels are currently recovered for recycling with most panels are either stockpiled, dumped in landfill or exported for reuse.

"But we think solar panels are made up of materials that are too valuable to throw out.

"These materials can be repurposed to support the clean energy transition and help reduce what we send to landfill, improving our natural environment."

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