

## MPF Makes Bright Spark

**T**he federal government has awarded Spark Solar Australia Major Project Facilitation (MPF) status for a planned \$60 MM solar manufacturing facility. Locations being considered for the facility include Adelaide, Geelong, Wollongong, Queanbeyan and Canberra.

The MPF programme is designed to facilitate and support private sector investment proposals through the approval processes of federal and state/territory authorities. It also assists with the early

identification of impediments to greater private sector investment.

Anthony Albanese, Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, said the facility has the potential to be “the largest supplier of solar cells in the Southern Hemisphere”.

Spark will produce screen-printed solar cells on silicon wafers using equipment from Germany. It anticipates the operation will initially produce more than 10 MM solar cells each

year (40 MW), enough to power about 9,000 Australian homes.

“Australia is a world leader in solar technology. But sadly, the small manufacturing base that exists here means that a lot of really excellent talent and research has gone overseas in the past. We want to change that”, said Spark Interim CEO Dr Michelle McCann.

Building of the facility is planned to start in late-2009, with the first cells to be produced in late-2010. ■