



## Media Release

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### Recycling associations partnership to drive renewable energy circular economy

Two major industry associations will join forces to tackle key challenges in the battle to recycle the fast-growing number of energy storage batteries and solar PV that have reached end-of-life, with many panels dumped in landfill.

The Association for the Battery Recycling Industry (ABRI) and Circular PV Alliance (CPVA) announced the partnership after discussions on plans to drive recycling in the renewable energy sector.

They call on governments to work with all parties to develop a clear strategy for achieving 100% recycling. Governments have a role to play including coordinating solutions to regulatory barriers and funding to ensure the required reuse, repurposing and recycling infrastructure is ready at scale especially in regional areas.

The industry associations plan to develop a guideline for reuse, repurposing and recycling of solar PV and batteries from large scale renewable energy developments.

It is estimated there are over 100 million solar PV panels currently installed in Australia.

Some of the first panels installed have already reached end-of-life (EOL), with a lot of these unfortunately ending up in landfill.

The volume of panels that are yet to reach EOL, represents an opportunity for Australia to transition solar energy into a circular economy.

Readying and supporting industry for this circular transition is the core focus of CPVA. This is also particularly relevant in the context of Australia's net zero targets, which could see the number of PV panels installed in Australia reach over a one or even two billion.

By 2032-33, grid scale batteries in operation will amount to over 5,000 MW or more than 83,000 tonnes. While batteries have long life spans, repairs and maintenance requirements will see some batteries come to recyclers before that date. The solar panel challenge is here today.

Decommissioned panels are still entering landfill today despite growing industry and community concern around this wasteful practice. Some e-waste recycling facilities accept PV panels and a handful of PV recycling facilities are establishing around Australia.

Batteries must be disposed of safely and quickly to minimise fire risks. Some states and territories ban them from landfill. Storing them for long periods at end-of-life is not an option as this is highly risky.

The benefits from a circular economy are substantial – recovery of critical minerals for use locally and export, development of Australian battery recycling technology for export and low emissions raw materials for new products.

ABRI Chief Executive Officer Katherine Hole said: “This is critical in light of the Australian Government’s commitment to expedite installation of renewable energy.”

“Its clear more work needs to be done to manage the increasing number of large-scale scale PV and batteries – otherwise we will be left to manage another significant environmental issue,” Ms Hole said.

Ms Hole said ABRI was delighted to partner with the Circular PV Alliance to work on recycling initiatives.

“Circular PV Alliance has a strong track record of delivering not only outcomes for its members, but in progressing recycling in the solar PV industry,” she said.

“We face similar challenges, so the partnership will assist our members progress the work that needs to be done, including advocating, where appropriate, a joint position to government.”

CPVA Co- Founder Megan Jones said: “The number of solar energy and battery storage projects is continuing to grow. Solar projects in Australia are getting bigger, with utility scale solar farms now the main driver of the industry.

“Enabling a circular economy for solar energy is increasingly as much a conversation about what to do with PV panels as it is about batteries.

“We get asked regularly about circular solutions for batteries as well as solar panels, so it makes sense for ABRI and CPVA to work together on this.”

“CPVA and ABRI are both driven to deliver value to our members, stakeholders and community.

“We believe we are stronger together and look forward to combining our collective strength and voice to progress a sustainable, circular future for our industry.”

CPVA is an apolitical, independent industry organisation, promoting innovation, high standards and a responsible approach to the renewable energy transition. CPVA supports a united industry-led approach to enable the self-determination of various stakeholders in the emerging solar energy circular economy. CPVA partners with industry to undertake research to identify practical solutions and opportunities for the circular PV economy. Most recently CPVA and The University of Queensland released the Reclaimed PV Panels Market Assessment Industry Report which has received widespread national and international attention and resulted in CPVA being a Finalist in the 2023 Clean Energy Council Awards.

More information on ABRI: <https://batteryrecycling.org.au/> and Circular PV Alliance: <https://www.circularpv.com.au/>

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