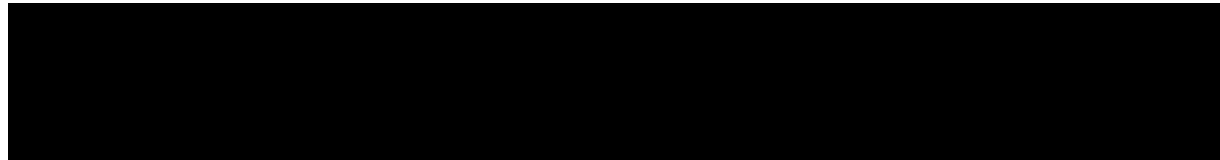


Solar power hopeful says Pilbara's potential ignored

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Energy Minister says subsidies are not justified.

Green power hopeful Pilbara Solar has questioned a national report on Australia's energy future, claiming it failed to recognise WA's solar-rich regions.

A report last month by the Australian Energy Market Operator to the Council of Australian Governments claimed coal-fired power plants would still deliver the cheapest electricity for the next 20 years.

Pilbara Solar director Richard Finlay-Jones said the report did not recognise energy-intensive regions such as the Pilbara.

"With the right support from all levels of government, the Pilbara has the potential to become a 100 per cent renewable, zero emissions zone within a decade," he said.

"Renewable energy deployment has been driving down the wholesale price of power, and wind and solar energy is now cheaper than coal and diesel.

"The AEMO report to COAG actually states that Bloomberg New Energy Finance estimates about 90 per cent of the \$88bn forecast spent on adding power capacity in Australia will be outlaid on clean energy."

Mr Finlay-Jones said current investment in renewable energy had never been stronger in Australia, and the power source never cheaper.