



\$435m boost for green energy ideas

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The Rudd Government is set to pump \$435 million into renewable energy projects to help make them commercially viable as part of efforts to wean the nation off fossil fuels and stimulate green industries.

Speaking in Perth today, Federal Resources Minister Martin Ferguson will unveil a scheme to help companies with embryonic green energy projects take their ideas to the next level, handing them grants of between \$50 million and \$100 million.

Mr Ferguson, who will visit Carnegie Corporation's revolutionary wave energy pilot project in Fremantle, believes the scheme will benefit a wide range of solar, geothermal and wind and wave projects across the country.

It is hoped the funds will stimulate more than \$1 billion worth of private-sector investment, with the Government providing \$1 for every \$2 invested by successful applicants.

"I am hopeful such a large level of investment will accelerate the deployment of new renewable energy technologies here in Australia and position Australian companies at the forefront of the global technology race for cleaner energy supplies," Mr Fergu-

son will say. The Renewable Energy Demonstration Program is aimed at taking pilot projects to the next stage of commercial demonstration.

Carnegie is developing a technology that uses wave power to deliver high-pressure seawater ashore, creating either zero-emission electricity or desalinated water.

Mr Ferguson will also take aim at generous feed-in tariffs for solar energy, saying they favour one renewable energy technology at the expense of others.

Environmentalists have been urging the Government to adopt a nationwide tariff which would reward people installing solar panels by paying them for the energy generated at well above the retail price.

"Artificially pricing one energy source 300 per cent or 400 per cent higher than others could divert investment from technologies that might in fact produce better environmental outcomes at lower cost," Mr Ferguson will say.

"Legislating a feed-in tariff effectively picks that jurisdiction's renewable energy of choice — and it can be very expensive.

"It is the Australian Government's objective to deliver renewable energy to Australian consumers at the lowest possible cost."