



Renewable energy: Murdoch University's Caroline Minton and vice-chancellor John Yovich with the \$200,000 solar grid on the main library's roof. Picture: John Mokrzycki

Solar panels boost Murdoch's green uni claims

MICHAEL HOPKIN

Murdoch University has installed Perth's largest grid-connected solar panels in a bid to increase its use of green power.

The \$200,000 solar array, on the roof of the university's main library, will provide 26 kilowatts of power to university buildings — enough to power 25 homes.

The installation, made up of 192 solar panels, is Perth's biggest

grid-connected solar array, meaning it is hooked up to supplement the university's grid power supply.

The solar array is in addition to the 15 per cent of the university's power that already comes from the wind. Murdoch's vice-chancellor John Yovich said the university aimed to expand its use of green power.

Professor Yovich said the university was committed to investing in green power. "All

universities are under funding pressure, but whenever you have a good initiative like this, you try and prioritise the funding," he said.

Murdoch's environmental programs manager Caroline Minton said the solar panels would eventually pay for themselves. With power prices about to rise, the panels would take less time than previously expected to repay their cost, she said.

Demand for similar installations

was growing each year, said Kieron D'Arcy, chief executive officer of Solar Unlimited, which installed the panels. "The whole goal is to make solar power affordable," he said.

Mr D'Arcy's business partner Sven Stenvers said the installation would hopefully lift public demand for solar power. Anyone with an unshaded roof could install solar panels, and if they generated enough surplus electricity, could sell it back to power companies at a profit.