

## Solar Feed-in Tariff Review

The review of Solar Feed-in tariffs presents an opportunity to advance Tasmania's development as a 100 % renewable energy state free from the need to import power or fossil fuels by providing feed-in tariffs that encourage the uptake of solar power by house holders.

As a householder with solar panels I was dismayed to discover recently that the metering system used in Tasmania means that I can be charged for the use of my own solar electricity. The solar output is connected to either Tariff 31 (light and power) or tariff 41 (heating and hot water). So for example, if I have my solar output connected to tariff 31 but I am using Tariff 41 to run heating, I will be charged even though the electricity is from my own generation! This is quite unjust and in need of revision. It is definitely a disincentive to installing solar cells.

The introduction of new and more sophisticated metering could resolve the problem outlined above. It could also make possible the use of home solar and storage to meet peak demand as has been achieved at Bruny Island recently. This would help contribute to Tasmania's energy security, reduce the need for more infrastructure and reduce electricity prices. Solar power is produced at 240 Volts and is used at or close to source. Thus it does not require transformers or an extensive system of poles and wires. The cost of such infrastructure should not be unfairly reflected in the new feed-in tariffs.

We run an electric plug-in hybrid car, powered by our solar cells. We can run entirely on electricity for our local transport needs. Tasmania is at the end of a very long transport chain for the delivery of its petroleum supply and Australia has not been observing its requirement to keep three month's supply of fuels on hand. An all- electric transport system in Tasmania should be the obvious aim to ensure our energy security and economic wellbeing. Thanks to hydro, solar and wind power we are in the ideal position to achieve this very quickly but incentives to install solar and wind power are an important component.

An all- electric Tasmania would be a very positive step in reducing greenhouse gases, particularly carbon dioxide. The deleterious effects of our warming world are being felt worldwide with increased extremes of weather and increasingly severe human and financial costs. These aspects should be kept in mind when calculating the true value of installing more renewables versus continuing with imported coal power or using diesel generation.

Those who cannot afford to install their own solar panels should continue to have access to interest free loans. The Darebin Solar Savers scheme in Victoria provides a good model for making solar accessible and equitable. Solar is installed on houses by the council and the cost is repaid via council rates. Repayments are less than the savings from solar so there is

no upfront cost to owners. New housing should be required to have renewable energy sources installed.

The suggested future feed-in tariff (FIT) of around 9 cents is not an incentive for house holders to install solar panels. It would appear rather to benefit Aurora and TasNetworks. The FIT should reflect the value of the electricity produced including its contribution to the health of the population (by avoiding use of polluting coal , gas or diesel) , its value in reducing CO2 levels, its savings in terms of infrastructure costs and its contribution to Tasmania's energy security.

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