

EXAMINER NEWSPAPER

SPECIAL LIFT OFF MARCH 26TH 2009

Power grows on PV Tree

A visually stunning, 20m steel "PV Tree" that produces free electricity will be up for grabs as six switched on Councils in Perth's southeast go head-to-head in an innovative environmental initiative designed to help their residents save money and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Amid rapidly rising electricity prices and urgent calls to combat Climate Change, the new **PV+** project from the award-winning *switch your thinking!* (*syt!*) program adds some fun and reward to the serious business of promoting the uptake of renewable energy technologies and sustainable living.

Delivered across the Cities of Armadale, Belmont, Gosnells, South Perth, Serpentine Jarrahdale Shire and Town of Victoria Park in partnership with program sponsors Greenday Today and Solco, **PV+** will see Councils working with their communities to maximise the installation of solar power systems - photovoltaic (PV) systems - on local residential dwellings.

The project has been specifically designed to take advantage of:

- the current \$8,000 Federal Government rebate (*Solar Homes & Communities Plan*) which expires on 30 June 2009, and
- the \$800 *syt!* rebate available from program sponsor Greenday Today through the *Rebates 4 Residents* project.

Residents lucky enough to be eligible for both rebates - that is, they live in a participating *syt!* Council and their combined household taxable income is less than \$100,000 - can get a 1kW grid connected PV system installed by Greenday Today for just \$3790*.

Terms and conditions apply.

Those with a combined household income of more than \$100,000 currently receive no



rebate and might be best to postpone purchasing a solar PV system until the new financial year when the Federal Government's *Solar Credits* program will be phased in (see inside for more details).

PV+ is also generating friendly competition between *syt!* Councils to see who can get 100 solar PV systems on residential rooftops first.

Being a friendly competition, everyone's a winner.

In an Australian first, the Council whose residents help it to be the first to reach 100 PV systems installed will win a 4kW "PV Tree" worth \$100,000.

A mixture of public art and renewable energy demonstration, the 20m steel tree will feature 4kW worth of PV panels on its branches. The tree will also feature a commemorative plaque displaying the names of the 100 residents who participated in the **PV+** project, and helped Council win the tree.

The other five competing *syt!* Councils win a 3kW solar PV system installed on a community building of their choice.

Participating Councils and their residents will be able to keep track of their progress in the **PV+** competition by logging on to www.greendaytoday.com.au and viewing the leader board, which will be updated on a weekly basis.

South East Regional Energy Group (SEREG) Chairperson Councillor Pat Hart said, "The PV Tree will become an iconic landmark for the region, and especially for the winning Council".

"Besides looking great, the PV Tree will also help provide financial and greenhouse savings to the winning Council, as it will provide free solar electricity to the community building where it is installed, with any excess electricity fed

Go solar
and your
council
could
win one



Above: An artist's impression of the WA PV Tree which one of the participating Councils could win with its residents help.



The PV Tree has solar panels arrayed at the top of its branches to generate energy from the sun. Residents who purchase a **PV+** system through **PV+** will not only save money, they could also help their Council win a 4kW PV Tree worth \$100,000.

back into the grid", she added.

"The educational value of the PV Tree and the other PV systems can't be underestimated, and that's one of our most important tasks at SEREG - raising peoples' awareness of climate change and renewable energy."

Importantly, **PV+** also has a humanitarian component to the project. In light of the recent bushfires tragedies in country Victoria,

project partners Greenday Today have committed to donating \$100 from the sale of each 1kW solar PV system through **PV+** to the Red Cross' Victorian Bushfire Appeal.

Greenday Today's Director, Barry McCarthy, was personally affected by bushfires some 20 years ago while living in rural WA and received burns to almost 50% of his body. Barry and the team at

Greenday Today and *syt!* Councils are hoping that the **PV+** project can help raise \$30,000-\$50,000 to help re-build those communities affected by 'Black Saturday'.

Federal Member for Hasluck Ms Sharryn Jackson was delighted to hear of plans to launch the **PV+** project and congratulated the six participating *syt!* Councils for their innovation.

"This is a great example of local governments sharing resources and working together on a regional basis, to achieve common goals", she said.

"The **PV+** project not only helps educate the community on this great new technology, it offers them the opportunity to install a discounted PV system on their rooftop, in a time of economic uncertainty and rising electricity prices."

Now is the time to act if you've been thinking about installing a solar PV system!

If you're a resident of a participating Council, and you want to switch to solar electricity, take advantage of the great rebates on offer and help your Council win the PV Tree, contact Greenday Today directly on 9249 3423 and mention **PV+** to book an appointment for a free in-home quotation and site assessment.

PROUDLY SUPPORTED BY:



The South East Regional Energy Group

The Cities of Armadale and Gosnells and the Serpentine-Jarrahdale Shire work together as the South East Regional Energy Group (SEREG) to develop partnerships with business, industry and residents. Our aim is to encourage energy efficient and waterwise behaviour, with the goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions from our region.

SEREG was formed by the three Councils to research and encourage implementation of greenhouse emissions reduction measures across the south east

metropolitan region. SEREG is a small group of dedicated Councillors and Council Officers, with two full-time employees.

In recent times the *switch your thinking!* (syt!) program has been expanded to other Councils and is now delivered across seven Councils in total including the Cities of Perth, South Perth, Belmont and Town of Victoria Park

Amongst the strengths of the syt! program are our successful partnerships with state and federal government agencies, funding bodies and corporate sponsors. Since the program's inception seven years ago, SEREG and its project partners have helped reduce greenhouse emissions by more than 250,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent.

switch
your thinking!

a small change can make a big difference.



A Familiar Face?

The *switch your thinking!* (syt!) brand was developed to help SEREG Councils deliver community-focused initiatives like PV+ under a recognisable and consistent brand.

Other projects we've run include *Switched on Business & Industry*, *The Green House*, *Green Light Schools Fundraiser*, the *5-Star Rated Display Village* at Newhaven Estate in North Forrestdale and many more.

When we conducted a survey in September 2005, 1 in 4 households said they were familiar with the syt! brand, and knew that it related to energy and resource efficiency, and greenhouse gas reduction. Have you seen our brand before?

Councils extend *Rebates 4 Residents* project

Local residents can continue to save money and the environment thanks to the extension of the *Rebates 4 Residents* scheme being extended.

The popular local rebate scheme will now end on 30 June 2009.

Councils participating in the award winning *switch your thinking!* (syt!) program - Armadale, Belmont, Gosnells,

Perth, South Perth, Victoria Park and the Serpentine Jarrahdale Shire - are helping residents save energy, water and money through the *Rebates 4 Residents* scheme.

Residents living in the above-mentioned Councils can access rebates of up to \$800 on solar PV systems (solar energy), Solar Hot Water Systems, Insulation, Rainwater Tanks and Pool Covers from syt! program partners. What's more, these rebates

are in addition to any state or federal government rebates that residents may also be eligible for.

SEREG Chairperson Cr Pat Hart said 'We are very excited to be extending the hugely popular *Rebates 4 Residents* project.'

'The rebate scheme is bigger and better than ever before with the recent addition of ceiling insulation and insulation paint to those products attracting a rebate.'

The extension of the *Rebates 4 Residents* scheme comes at an ideal time for local residents with electricity, gas and water prices set to rise in the immediate future.

The rebate scheme is easy to take advantage of. All residents need to do is follow three easy steps:

1. Phone the supplier directly,
2. Mention the syt! Rebate Scheme (*Rebates 4 Residents*), and

3. Organise for an in-home, no obligation quotation from a customer service representative.

Energy Efficient Homes Package

For Information on the Federal Government's new insulation and solar hot water system rebates of up to \$1600 phone

1800 808 571

switch your thinking!
a small change can make a big difference.

Rebates 4 Residents
save money and help the environment!

Our energy efficient and waterwise rebates are now available on an even bigger range of products!

- UP TO \$300 CASH BACK Solar Hot Water Systems Call Solahart 1300 721 984
- UP TO \$800 CASH BACK Solar Energy (PV) Systems Call Greenday Today 9249 3423
- 10% OFF RRP Roof and Wall Insulation Paint Call Insulpaint 9402 7488
- 10% OFF RRP Pool Blankets Call Daisy 1300 551 811
- 15% OFF RRP Rainwater Tanks Call WA Poly Tanks 1800 928 265
- 10% OFF RRP Ceiling Insulation Call BGC 9334 4990

Available UNTIL 30th JUNE 2009

Available only for limited time to residents of councils participating in the *switch your thinking!* program. For more information call your local council or go online: switchyourthinking.com

ARMADALE BELMONT GOSNELLS PERTH SOUTH PERTH VICTORIA PARK SERPENTINE-JARRAHDAL

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Solar Credits

The new *Solar Credits* program will commence on July 1 2009 and will replace the current *Solar Homes and Communities Plan*.

The *Solar Credits* system will work by allowing owners of solar panels to earn five times the current level of Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs) for each mega-watt hour (e.g. 1000 kWh) of electricity produced by their solar PV panels.

As RECs can be assigned to solar equipment suppliers, the value of the certificates can be offered as a point of sale discount of up to \$7,500 for purchasers of solar PV systems.

Minister for the Environment Peter Garrett stated the solar credits multiplier will be provided for new micro-generation systems up

to 1.5 kilowatts during 2009/10 and would phase down from then to 2015/16.

Other important elements of the *Solar Credits* program include:

- The credits will represent the equivalent of up to \$7,500 in price reductions on a 1.5 kilowatt solar power system.
- The *Solar Credits* program will not be means tested.
- It will be open to everybody - home owners, small businesses and community groups.
- The scheme applies up to a level of 1.5 kilowatt hours rated systems. Householders, businesses and community groups will be able to install larger systems, but the credits will only apply to the first 1.5 kilowatts.
- The *Solar Credits* program will also apply to wind power and micro hydro systems



Feed-in Tariff for grid-connected solar systems

What are Feed-in tariffs?

A Feed-in tariff (FIT) is a premium rate paid for electricity fed back into the electricity grid from a designated renewable electricity generation source like a rooftop solar PV system or wind turbine. At present, FIT regulations for renewable energy exist in over 40 countries around the world. The premium is designed to financially attract households to becoming renewable energy generators.

In WA today, households pay 12.67c per kWh of electricity. Household-produced renewable energy (e.g. solar electricity) fed into the grid is purchased by Synergy for 12.67c per kWh. Change in this scenario is anticipated, whether at a State or national level. As Australia currently has no nationalised FIT program, though, there's a different story in every Australian state.

Here's an at-a-glance look at state arrangements.

State	Current status	Max Size	Rate Paid	Program Duration	Model
WA	Little activity since election commitment	TBC	Expected to be up to 60c/kWh	Likely 2 - 9 years	Gross
VIC	Commences in 2009	3.2 kW	60c	15 years	Net
SA	Commenced in July 2008	10 kW	44c+	20 years	Net
ACT	Commenced March 2009	Under 10 kW - premium rate; Over 10kW - 80% of premium rate; Over 30 kW - TBC	50.05c/kWh up to 10kw capacity and 40.04c / kWh up to 30kW capacity	20 years	Gross
TAS	Commenced	TBC	20c	TBC	Net
NT	Incentive is available for 225 rooftop PV systems in Alice Springs.	TBC	45.76 c/kWh. Capped at \$5 per day, then reverts to 23.11c per kWh.	TBC	Net
QLD	Commenced in July 2008	10 kW	44c+	20 years	Net
NSW	Under review, to commence in 2009	TBC	Not yet specified - may be approx 60c/kWh	TBC	TBC

Net Vs Gross Feed-in Tariff (FIT)

A net FIT (also known as export metering) - pays the PV system owner only for surplus energy they produce; whereas a gross FIT pays for each kilowatt hour produced by a grid connected system. It's a very important difference.

At the moment WA currently has no FIT - we have net export metering at a 1:1 ratio. That is, residents currently receive 12.67c per unit (1kWh) of solar electricity that is not used on site and is fed back in to the grid (i.e. the current cost of purchasing 1 unit of electricity from Synergy). This will of course increase proportionately with the increasing cost of electricity - up 25% by 1 July 2009.

WA's gross Feed-in Tariff

In the lead up to the last state elections, both major parties committed to a FIT. However, since that time very little information has been available regarding the progression of rolling out a program. It is hoped that a decision will be made sometime during the 2009/10 financial year.

Which is Better?

Existing Rebate (e.g. SHCP)

Vs

Future Rebate (e.g. Solar Credits)

For households with incomes UNDER \$100k ... the current \$8,000 SHCP rebate represents your best value, so ACT NOW!

Based on current pricing, there will be a shortfall of around \$4,000 on a 1 kW system and \$2000 on a 1.5 kilowatt system when you compare the *Solar Credits* program to the current *SHCP* rebate. As such, we encourage all interested residents who fall into this category to order a system **well before 30 June 2009** as there will certainly be a rush in the lead up.

HOWEVER...

For households with incomes OVER \$100k...the *Solar Credits* program represents your best value, so **WAIT UNTIL 1 JULY!**

Under the current *SHCP* program, these households are not eligible for any financial assistance from the government. The impending *Solar Credits* program will not be means tested, meaning it's probably better to wait until 1 July 2009. In addition, businesses will also be eligible for the first time to receive financial assistance to install PV systems.

How does the Solar Credits program work?

A Renewable Energy Certificate (REC) multiplier system will be the basis of the *Solar Credits* program.

A single REC is equivalent to one megawatt hour of electricity generation (also equals 1 tonne of greenhouse gas emissions). RECs are currently issued with qualifying solar hot water systems, solar PV systems, and wind power systems and can be traded for cash. The value of a REC is dependent on market conditions.

Under the new *Solar Credits*

system, one REC will be initially multiplied by 5, therefore offering five times the dollar value. The 5x multiplier will be in place between the start of the program in July 2009 to the end of the financial year in 2012. After that, the multiplier rate will gradually drop according to the following timelines:

2012-13 - 4x

2013-14 - 3x

2014-15 - 2x

2015-16 onwards, no multiplier

How do I cash REC credits?

Relax :) While the program may seem a little confusing, your Greenday Today consultant will make things super-easy for you!

While you can claim the cash value of the RECs yourself, that means you'll need to pay the full price of the solar PV system up front and then have the paperwork hassles, followed by the wait.

However, **PV+** can offer you a **point of sale discount** if you assign the credits to Greenday Today. They take care of the rest, saving you a substantial amount in initial financial outlay and the bother of red tape!

Energy Certificates under the *Solar Credits* program.

For example, if you received the \$8k rebate on a 1kW installation, you won't get the multiplier RECs on the upgrade to 1.5kW under the *Solar Credits* program; but you will still receive the standard number of RECs.

Will I be able to 'double dip' by buying now and upgrading later?

The legislation is yet to be completed, however the current view of the Federal Government is that the multiplier Renewable Energy Certificates will only be allowed ONCE per installation and will not be able to be claimed in the event that the address has received other prior grants, including additional Renewable

Why do we need Feed-in Tariffs?

Residential solar power is disadvantaged in Australia. The market fails to take into account the true value and many benefits to the electricity network which arise from the adoption of renewable energy technologies embedded within the electricity grid.

Solar PV, like other renewable energy sources, provides environmental benefits through reduced greenhouse gas emissions, and social benefits through industry development and job creation (e.g. through the installation of grid connected solar PV systems).

When electricity is transmitted over a distance, some is lost through what's called 'line loss'. By installing rooftop solar PV systems on houses, the electricity can

supply not only the house on which it's installed, but the surplus can feed other houses close by.

During the summer months, it's also becoming increasingly common for blackouts to occur due to an overload of the mains grid due to peaking demand - usually for air conditioning. It's during these months that solar power installations can make their greatest contribution.

A FIT for grid connected systems redresses these systemic market failures and threats and rewards the generation of solar electricity for its true value to the electricity market and wider society, by providing a financial incentive for the adoption of renewable energy.

Solar Energy: Important things to know

Electricity prices will increase by 10% on 1 April and a further 15% on 1 July 2009. Unfortunately, similar sized price increases are expected on an annual basis for the next few years until the price of electricity reflects the cost of producing it. The Office of Energy recently announced that this could be as much as 116% over the next 3-years!!

By installing your own solar PV system you will become a privately-owned energy generator and help buffer your household from the effects of rising electricity prices. Once the system has been installed, electricity is generated for the next 20-30 years from a free source – the sun!

YOUR solar electricity will NOT go up in price but the remaining proportion you buy from the grid will continue to go up in price. Better still, your solar electricity is generated without emitting greenhouse gases, so you'll be helping the planet at the same time!

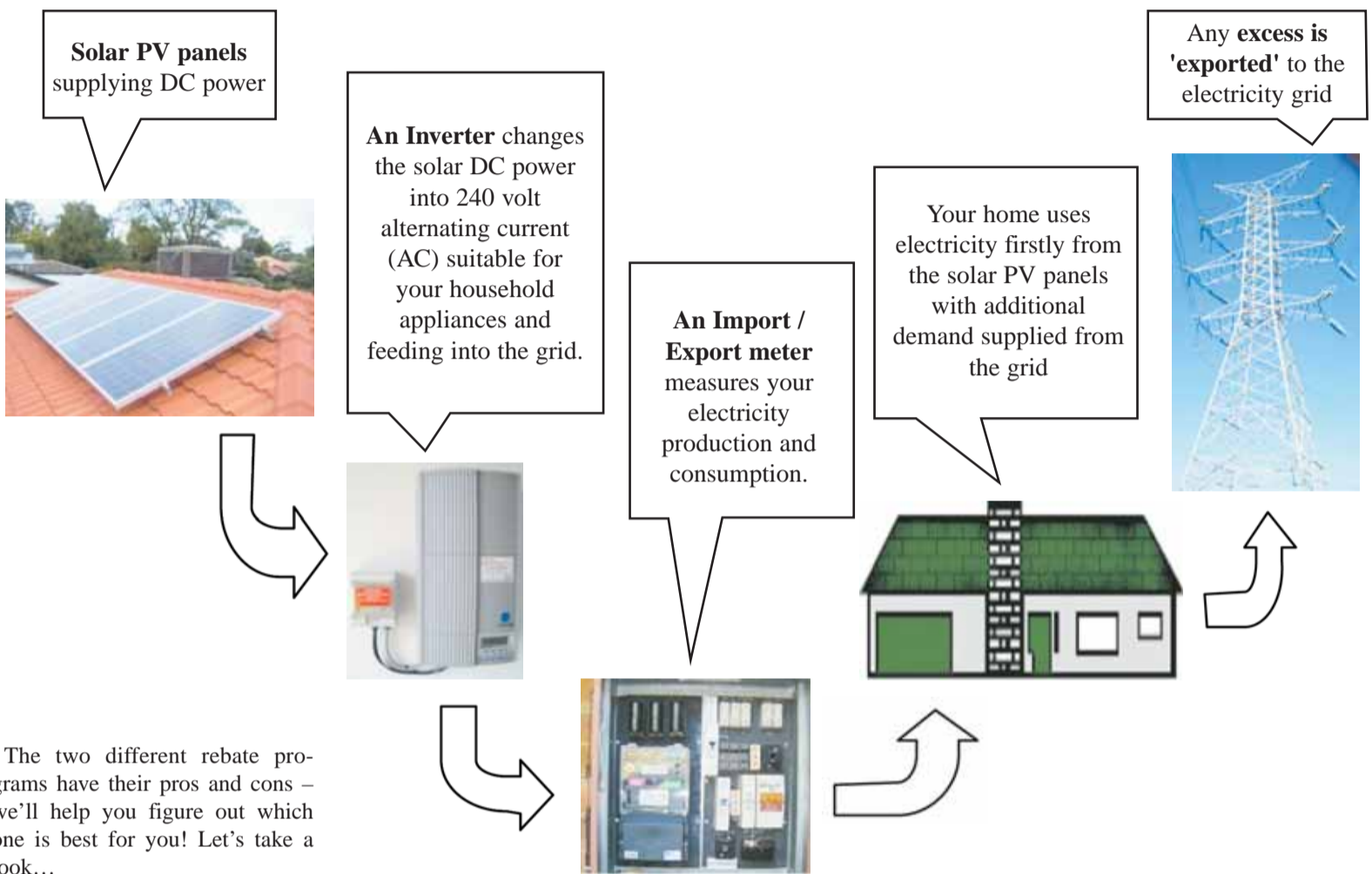
The Australian Government recently announced a new way of supporting solar PV systems on rooftops of Australian homes.

The *Solar Credits* program will replace the *Solar Homes and Communities Plan* as the government's primary means of supporting the installation of household solar power systems.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

A grid connected solar PV system is an array of photovoltaic solar panels connected via an inverter to provide power for your home, with excess production feeding into the grid. At night, when the solar modules are not producing electricity, the electricity comes to you from the grid. If you export enough energy during the day, it will balance or exceed the amount of electricity you draw from the grid at night.

Get a 1kW solar PV system installed before 30 June 2009 for just \$3790* by calling Greenday Today directly on 9249 3423 and mentioning PV+. *Terms and Conditions apply.



Australia's Existing and Future federal government solar PV incentive programs ... what you need to know

Solar Homes & Communities Plan (up to \$8000)

Until 30 June 2009 the Australian Government is providing up to \$8,000 in cash rebates to households that install a grid connected solar PV system under the *Solar Homes and Communities Plan* (SHCP formerly known as PVRP). As of 1 July 2009 a new program called *Solar Credits* will be launched.

The bottom line is that householders eligible for the current rebate should act now! Please be aware that under the new *Solar Credits* program you will receive **thousands of dollars less** in financial assistance on a 1 kW grid connect solar PV system - so get in quick!

As with many government rebates there are some conditions attached, namely:

- The rebate is capped at \$8000 (e.g. \$8 per watt), meaning if

you want to buy a system bigger than 1kW, such as a 2kW system, the 2nd kW will not attract any rebate support.

- The rebate only applies if you install the system at your principal place of residence.
- Since May 2008, the rebate has

been means tested for residential connections and only households earning less than \$100,000 p.a. in taxable income (Taxable income is all income earned in one household minus deductions) can receive the rebate.

Nevertheless, this still allows a large percentage of residents across

Perth's southeast to access the rebate, and in conjunction with other available incentives (e.g. \$800 *syt!* rebate available through the *Rebates 4 Residents* project and the sale of your Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs)), **you can have a 1kW grid connected PV system installed for just \$3,790*!**

Don't qualify?

If you don't qualify for the \$8,000 rebate, all is not lost - you can still benefit from point of sale discounts such as the \$800 *syt!* rebate and RECs that accompany a system. Also, as of 1 July 2009, the new *Solar Credits* program will be rolled out by the government and will offer up to \$7500 off a solar power system – this incentive will not be means tested!

Live in an apartment complex?

If you live in an apartment complex you are also eligible to apply for the \$8000 rebate. In order to be eligible you must satisfy the following three additional criteria:

- Applicant must be an owner occupier of an apartment within the apartment block
- You must have permission from body corporate
- You need to provide proof that the panels are owned by you (Greenday Today can help you with this).

