



The Hon. Stephen Robertson MP

Member for Stretton

**Minister for Energy
and Water Utilities**

Media Release

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QUEENSLAND SOLAR BONUS SCHEME DELIVERS SAVINGS AND JOBS

The Bligh Government's Solar Bonus Scheme has exceeded all expectations in delivering affordable solar energy and jobs for Queenslanders.

Energy and Water Utilities Minister Stephen Robertson told Parliament today independent analysis of the scheme showed it was making solar power more affordable and stimulating growth and jobs in the solar industry.

"Queensland's solar photovoltaic (PV) panel capacity has skyrocketed since we began the Solar Bonus Scheme on 1 July 2008," he said.

"Before the scheme, Queensland had just 3.2 megawatts of installed solar PV capacity and 1200 Queenslanders connected to solar.

"Today, more than 72,000 Queenslanders are participating in the scheme and we have 149 megawatts of installed residential solar PV capacity.

"Participating customers receive 44 cents per kilowatt hour for surplus energy generated by their household solar PV system that is exported to the electricity grid.

"The average customer operating a 1.5 kilowatt solar system could save over \$450 per year on their electricity bill just by using less electricity from the grid.

"That means they are saving money on their electricity bills as well as improving energy conservation."

Mr Robertson said the Solar Bonus Scheme has also helped stimulate significant industry and jobs growth.

"For example, in March 2008 there were only 78 accredited solar installers in Queensland. Today there are approximately 690 installers.

"Strong demand for solar panels is also driving jobs growth in the solar panel installation and design sector, with a growing workforce of labourers, technicians, sales, marketing and administrative staff.

"Increased competition has seen the cost of the average solar PV system slashed by half; making solar more affordable for Queenslanders."

Mr Robertson said the Queensland Solar Bonus Scheme was one of the most successful schemes of its type in Australia.

"For all its success, the government intends making one change to ensure the scheme remains cost-effective.

“The solar bonus will be retained at the current rate of 44 cents per kilowatt hour.

“However, we intend limiting the size of eligible individual solar PV systems to 5 kilowatt capacity and to just one system per premises.

“The scheme is financed by all Queensland electricity consumers so we need to ensure it continues to provide value for money and doesn’t force up electricity prices.

“Most participating solar PV systems have a generating capacity well below 5 kilowatts and are used by homeowners simply to generate power for household use.

“Recently, however, we have seen growing numbers of people invest in monster rooftop solar PV systems up to 30 kilowatts simply to make money from the Solar Bonus Scheme.

“This money comes straight from the pockets of other Queensland electricity customers.

“This practice is not in the spirit of the Scheme.

“That’s why we’ll apply a cap on the size and number of new systems eligible for the solar bonus commencing in four weeks time,” he said.

More information about the Solar Bonus Scheme is available at: www.cleanenergy.qld.gov.au

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