



15/08/08

Senate Standing Committee on Environment, Communications and the Arts

Inquiry into the Renewable Energy (Electricity) Amendment (Feed-in-Tariff) Bill 2008

Committee Members,

A national Gross Feed in Tariff (FIT) is a progressive step in achieving a long term competitive renewable energy market within Australia, by contributing a significant environmentally sustainable energy input to our current, and futures energy security portfolio. All of the existing incentives have stimulated growth in the Renewable Energy sector and, now its time to join the rest of the planet and embrace a self sustaining, although regulated and reviewed, financially incentive driven market with environmental outcomes.

It is suggested that an amendment be made to the Bill, for retrospectively including all of the existing PV systems as “qualifying generators,” currently and previously installed under the guidelines from the Federal Governments Rebate schemes PVRP, and SHCP. Information for these systems would be easily sourced, as they would have been installed correctly, complying with current standards, and regulations, and details recorded. It would most likely be that the current technical standards and requirements will be used for the new “Qualifying generators” included in this Bill.

Customers who are currently generating renewable energy have made long term financial decisions with the environment and the possibility of FIT (financial pay back) in mind. It would be unfair to penalise these renewable energy pioneers,

Encouraging more Micro renewable energy generation plants such as these existing PV systems can help the economy, by reducing the extra costs associated with expansion of the electrical distribution network and the need for extra power generation plants, bought on by population growth and the recent uncontrolled load demand bought on by luxury appliances such as air conditioners.

It should be considered that currently the total amount of small renewable generating units installed, is nothing compared to population and industry growth that Australia is currently experiencing, and therefore any threat to the network power condition and fluctuations should be totally ignored. The current Means testing based on households total income, for the SHCP rebate has ensured that new renewable energy systems installed, remain small and relatively long term ineffective. A gross FIT would encourage larger scale innovative household and small business renewable energy system installations.

Knowing that government rebates are also sourced from a non-renewable pool of tax payers funds; it makes sense that Gross FIT legislation should be implemented.

Not to have a national FIT would blunt, and finally finish off any hopes that Australian renewable energy industry had, of contributing to our energy security, economy and environmental future.

Regards

David Phillips