

Minority Report from the Australian Greens

Inquiry into Save Our Solar (Solar Rebate Protection) Bill 2008 [No. 2]

The Australian Greens:

- Believe that the Committee report downplays the strong concerns expressed by the photovoltaic industry and gives too much credence to the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts data showing that rebate applications increased after the introduction of the means test. This increase in demand is very likely to be a short-term effect generated by the considerable media coverage surrounding the introduction of the means test. Until then many would not have known that a rebate existed.
- Share the Committee's concern about the anecdotal evidence suggesting that the average size of the installation has fallen since the introduction of the means test, thus effectively increasing the money the Government spends per unit of installed solar PV installed. We believe that the Committee Report should emphasise that this is further evidence that the Government did not adequately assess the implications of the means test prior to its introduction.
- Support the Save Our Solar Bill on the basis that the administration of the Solar Homes and Communities Plan quite clearly requires the scrutiny of the Senate. Further we consider the Committee's objections to the Bill to be weak and motivated by politics rather than a concern for good governance.
- Maintain our position that the decision to means test the rebate should be immediately reversed and that the Government should, by the next budget, commit to phasing in a national gross feed-in tariff to replace the rebate. The most damaging effect of the means test is that it reinforces the stop start stop nature of government support for solar technology. A gross feed in tariff will provide the certainty that the investment community needs and will facilitate business planning.

Senator Christine Milne
Australian Greens

Senator Scott Ludlam
Australian Greens

