

Summary: individual has deferred investment due to threshold change, and other related matters.

G'day,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to the Inquiry into Save Our Solar (Solar Rebate Protection) Bill 2008 [No. 2].

I'm a software engineer, and amateur radio operator, with a hobby in electronics and power distribution.

1. (b) effect on update, personal response,

My wife and I had planned to invest in a solar panel and solar hot water heating conversion project for our rural home near Gilgandra, within this year.

However the new means test threshold has convinced us to defer our investment. We have a combined income over \$100,000. We don't know the nature of the threshold, but as we know we're over the threshold we presume the rebate is inaccessible.

It was primarily the announcement on budget night that convinced us.

Our property has 22kV distribution feeder and a pole transformer. Country Energy charge extra for this service compared to a service in a town. The service availability charge is 65 cents per day, roughly \$240 per year. The price per kilowatt hour is 15.67 cents.

We had hoped to use a solar interactive system, feeding excess into the grid during the day, in order to offset the service availability charges. We may yet do it.

2. (k) other matters, lighting costs, mercury risk.

I note that a significant proportion of electricity is for lighting, and that the community has begun a slow conversion from incandescent lamps to fluorescent lamps.

However, I'm worried about the risk of mercury in the waste stream that this will cause.

In the same way that the operating cost of incandescent lamps is not being passed on at the time of sale, the waste costs of fluorescent lamps are also not obvious. People make decisions without knowledge.

If the rebate could be extended to also cover LED lighting systems, rewarding us for high lumens per watt, then I'd also take that up.

I note the Australian Government is also assisting BluGlass Limited, a LED technology developer spawned from Macquarie University. I heard about BluGlass on ABC Radio a few days ago. I commend them.

3. (k) other matters, rural electricity was government funded before.

The original deployment of the power grid in this area was done by the government of the day for economic and social reasons. I've heard from people who were here when it happened. It was an awesome development, and a significant change.

Later, the service was sold, as an ongoing activity that required no fundamental change. Now that fundamental change is upon us, our choices are necessarily constrained. But I do recognise the need for this change. Well done for inquiring into this.

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Submission of individual: James Cameron