

The Secretary  
Senate Standing Committee on Environment, Communications and the Arts  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House

CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Madam/Sir,

Apologies for this late submission. I only became aware of your enquiry today. I hope you can still take on board my concerns.

Re your terms of reference:

1. Save Our solar (Solar Rebate Protection) Bill 2008 [No. 2], together with the following matters:

- a. the impact of the means test threshold of \$100,000 on the \$8,000 solar rebate per household on the solar industry;

The means test has adversely affected us. As a family, we were contemplating installing solar panels on our house, but we would now be over the threshold and it is not viable for us. By targeting the very group of people likely to have enough spare funds to install solar panels (i.e. those with family incomes over \$100K), the government is hugely winding back take up of this important initiative. The Australian Government should be doing everything possible to *encourage* this, not *limit* its uptake.

If the required cuts in greenhouse gases are to be met Australia needs to put in place real incentives to install panels backed by a national feed in system such as operates in Germany. People will happily switch if given the right incentives. At the moment there is a hodge-podge of incentives with some States providing rebates as well as some councils. We happen to live in a State which does not provide rebates and neither does our Council (Kingborough) though the adjacent (Hobart) Council does (for solar hot water).

This illogical and inequitable situation needs to be fixed, this can best be done by the Commonwealth working with the States and local councils. There is no better time with all States and the Commonwealth Labor. This is why many people voted for Labor, to provide leadership on climate change with clear simple action. We are not getting this at present!

I recommend the Australian Government, in association with the States (perhaps 50:50 matching funding) put in place rebates that

- a) bring solar powered water heating to at least within twice the cost of a standard electric or gas hot water heater; and

b) Reinstate the solar rebate for panels as well as instituting a better buy back price for solar electricity based on the German model.

My thanks to the Senate for pursuing this matter.

I urge all Senators to apply all possible pressure on the Government to act on this critical, litmus test issue.

Yours sincerely

Tim O'Loughlin