

Monday, 28 July 2008

Dear Committee Secretary

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

I wish to make a submission to the above Inquiry. I realise that this is late and may not be accepted, however I only recently learned of the existence of the Inquiry.

I am the recipient of solar panels rebate. My application was made just prior to the recent federal Budget announcing the means test. My family would not be eligible for the rebate under the means test threshold and we would not have proceeded with grid-connected solar photovoltaic panels had the rebate not been available.

You might assume that I am therefore strongly in favour of the continuation of the rebate not means tested, however that is not the case, and I strongly support the Government's decision in this matter, with the additional comment that they should have had the courage to remove the rebate entirely.

Putting current technology solar PV on domestic rooftops is just about the most expensive way one could think of to reduce carbon emissions. I don't have the precise figures but it would be in the hundreds of dollars per tonne of carbon. This is absurd, and a complete waste of taxpayers dollars. There are far more cost-effective ways of moving towards a low-carbon future for electricity generation.

Those who support the scheme are self-interested or foolish, either looking for short-term popularity with middle-income voters, or not willing to make important decisions about how to adjust to a resilient future economy. The money would far more sensibly be spent on removing electric hot water heaters from houses, or subsidising genuine renewable energy (not 'clean' coal) research, or a myriad of other opportunities.

The so-called solar industry that is suffering from this decision is mythical. Installing solar panels requires basic electricians skills, it does not require engineering or research and development capacities. As there is already full demand for electricians across Australia, there will be no net economic impact in this industry. These panels are largely imported due to wasted opportunities to support the industry in the 1990s, and there are better ways to support the industry, if it needed it.

I trust you will consider my brief submission, and will push the Government to abolish the solar rebate program, and replace it with sensible, strategic plans to reduce our reliance on fossil fuelled electricity.

Yours sincerely

Wil Blackburn