

**The Chair: Environment, Communications and the Arts Committee.  
The Senate  
Australian Parliament House.  
Canberra  
ACT  
Eca.sen@aph.gov.au  
Chair,**

**Re: Save Our Solar: Solar Rebate Protection Bill 2008 No2.**

**Please accept the below as a submission to your committee for consideration.**

**I am concerned about the costs imposed on consumers by ‘the market’ as they relate to the installation of energy saving devices and in particular as these costs relate to the levels of government [taxpayers] subsidies provided on these items.**

**In particular I am concerned with the subsidies provided for solar hot water, solar panels for electricity generation and LPG [vehicles] systems.**

**I wish to bring to your attention the following facts:**

- 1 I purchased a 250L solar hot water system in Tianjin China in 2005 at a cost of \$750. This system has ASO and ISO certification. I bought this system with me on my return to Australia in early 2006. I made subsequent enquires and ascertained that the price of exactly the same system in Australia would cost in excess of \$6000. A price difference that staggered me and I contend that this is an instance of profit gouging. Five of the systems I priced were made in China with no, local, components.**
- 2 Also in 2005 I purchased a solar electrical system including an inverter at a cost to me of \$7500. This system also had ASO and ISO certification. This was a 4000W system. In Australia the identical system was quoted to me as \$29000. If I purchased suitable batteries there would have been an extra \$1500. The On my price in Australia was over \$3000.**

**3 On my return to Australia I purchased 1.6l Terros 4WD. I was quoted a price of \$1900 for a suitable LPG system. I did not make a decision to purchase. However, when the government subsidy was announced coupled with the increase in petrol price I again approached the supplier who quoted me \$4200 for an exactly same system. When the question was asked the owner responded with the statement that I would not be out of pocket as the government was bearing the cost.**

**My point is that there should be some form of control over profit gouging. If suppliers who received a government subsidy they should be restricted to a reasonable profit. If this is not done not only is the government being subjected to a form of fraud the working family can never aspire to installing such systems. I would strongly suggest that retailers should be forced to quote the factory price which would enable the consumer to compare profit margins. It should be government policy to ensure that the consumer receives value for money and that the benefits of government subsidies should not flow to the business but to the consumer.**

**If prices for the above systems were as they should be then I would expect that the majority of consumers would seriously consider installation of all of these with a major reduction in greenhouse emissions. This would be of more practical benefit than a number of other schemes currently under submission.**

**Yours truly,**

**Robert Maher**