

Hi

My wife and I are currently building a brand new house. Before we put the plans together we felt it was our duty to make sure that we included rooftop solar panels in our design. We wanted to include enough solar panels so as to completely offset our energy usage for our brand new 4 bedroom 2 storey house. We felt it was our duty to do the right thing by the environment.

After speaking to numerous solar companies we decided a 3.15kW system was required to complete this offset. This would require the installation of 18 solar panels at a cost of around \$40k. With the \$8k rebate (which we were entitled to at the time), this brought the cost down to \$32k and this was the cost included in our building contract.

In late 2007 our building plans were approved with the inclusion of the solar panels. Unfortunately for us, we weren't able to apply for the \$8k rebate until just before the panels were due to be installed, which ironically is this week. Therefore we were left with 2 choices.

1. Hand over \$8k to the builder to cover our non-eligibility for the \$8k rebate; or
2. Cancel the solar panels which would mean re-submitting council plans, applying for a new Basix assessment, and therefore work stopping on our build for an indefinite period until these new approvals are sorted out. We figured this would cost us in the region of \$4k which would include extra rent we would need to pay.

We decided to pay the \$8k to the builder and continue the build, however this has meant we cannot put that \$8k to other water saving measures which we were planning for our landscaping. In fact the loss of the \$8k was certainly not budgeted for and has caused my wife and I some financial hardship as a result.

We earn over \$100k per year, but living in Sydney, that doesn't mean much. We feel the government has got it wrong and runs contrary to the environmental platform that they were elected on. We don't understand how Australia can ratify Kyoto, yet push through a policy such as this. It is counter-intuitive and nobody we speak to can make sense of it. The excuse that the system was over subscribed should be seen as a positive and not a negative. This is a way for ordinary Australians to do their part for reducing carbon emissions, yet the government has disincentivised the public from doing so.

No one earning under \$100k can afford to put in a system like we are doing, yet we are being penalised for doing the right thing by the environment.

My one question is how much input have energy retailers had in this decision because as far as I can see, they are the only ones who will benefit from this. Maybe the inquiry should look at what sort of political donations were made from this industry?

Regards
Brandon Lewis