

# The Solar Revolution in **RICHMOND**

In such a sunny country, solar just makes sense. In recent years, more and more Australians have turned to solar as a way to take control of their power bills and generate clean energy from the sun. However, uncertainty created by the Federal Government-commissioned Warburton Review of the Renewable Energy Target has seen investment plunge – putting jobs, growth and investment at risk.

## **SOLAR DEPOT, ADELAIDE**

Troy Ryan has worked in the solar industry for more than two decades, including the last 10 years running his Adelaide-based business, Solar Depot.

“We used to do a lot of domestic installations, but now we do a lot of commercial ones - especially rural stand-alone jobs like sheep and cattle stations, and road houses.”

“We grew 30% every year from 2005-2008, even though our market share was decreasing. Now, it’s the opposite - even though our business is declining our market share is increasing, because so many have closed their doors. We count ourselves lucky to still be here.”

– Troy Ryan, Solar Depot

## **THE RICHMOND ELECTORATE:**



**15,710**  
solar homes



Generating  
**40.4MW**  
of clean energy



Investing  
**\$65.5m**  
in solar power



Saving  
**50,554**  
tonnes of CO2



Saving  
**\$8.8m**  
on power bills



**RICHMOND  
NOW RANKS**

 **33**

out of Australia's 150 electorates

**NOTE ON FIGURES:** These figures are estimates, based on an average 2.5kW system size and Clean Energy Regulator, SunWiz and Australian government data.



# GROWING JOBS AND INVESTMENT

## THE RENEWABLE ENERGY TARGET

A strong renewable energy goal of at least 50% by 2030 will create at least **20,000** new, ongoing jobs

The Renewable Energy Target has been a successful piece of public policy that has, until recently, enjoyed full bipartisan support. The Target has helped almost 1.4 million<sup>1</sup> Australian households go solar and take control of rising power bills - these days more than 5 million Australian homes have solar panels or solar hot water on their rooftops.

What's more, the renewable energy industry has seen investment grow to over \$20 billion and more than 24,000 jobs have been created so far. But the Federal Government's Warburton Review of the Target has driven continuing uncertainty in the industry. This led to an 88% decline<sup>2</sup> in investment in large-scale projects in 2014 and confidence in the industry has crashed.

The popularity of renewable energy remains sky-high, with 89% of Australians supportive of maintaining or increasing the Renewable Energy Target<sup>3</sup>. Australia has the chance to take the lead and grow a thriving renewable energy sector. Thousands of ongoing jobs and enormous growth in investment are possible with the support of forward-thinking public policy to expand renewable energy.

## AUSTRALIAN RESIDENTIAL SOLAR PV: VOLUME INSTALLED AND PRICE TRENDS OVER TIME

(Average size installed = 5 kW)



“Families living in lower income suburbs are much more likely to install solar than families living in wealthier suburbs.”<sup>6</sup>”

– Ric Brazzale, President of the REC Agents Association

# SOLAR MAKES SENSE

## HELPING SMALL BUSINESS THRIVE



Helen and Bernie Williams run a busy service station and workshop in sunny Nuriootpa, about an hour’s drive north of Adelaide. After four years of enjoying the benefits of a solar PV system on their home - which Helen says helped them generate more power than they could use - the couple decided to install solar on their business. This has helped them reduce their electricity bills, a significant chunk of their operating expenses.



Helen says: “We installed a 20 kW system, and based on our current savings the system will pay for itself in only 5-6 years - and we’ll be in business a lot longer than that. Several of our friends who are in business have solar systems installed and are happy with the savings.”

## POWER FOR THE PEOPLE



Solar owners have been described as “champagne sippers and the latte set”<sup>4</sup> but this couldn’t be further from the truth. In fact, people in lower income and regional areas around Australia are most likely to put solar on their roofs.<sup>5</sup>

Tina, who lives on the Sunshine Coast in Queensland, says: “I always wanted solar power, but we couldn’t even consider it because of the costs. Then in 2009, with the state and national incentives available for low-income earners, we were able to install solar for only \$2-3,000.”

“Keeping our costs down is allowing us to tread water and not fall behind.”

– Tina Fry





# A SUNNY FUTURE

## The Sunshine State delivers

Brian and Anitra Hobby were early adopters of solar, installing a 1.4kW system in 2008, on their Stafford Heights home in sunny Queensland. “We get great generation from our system - it’s made a noticeable difference to our electricity bill,” Brian says.

A passion for solar runs in the family - Anitra’s parents who live in WA also have solar and the Hobby’s 11-year-old son keeps asking when the family can get batteries to store the power they generate. Brian, an electrical engineer, is also keeping close watch on rapidly changing developments to storage technology.

“We are fortunate to have some of the best renewable resources on the planet but we are currently doing very little with them.”

– Brian Hobby

The Hobbys boosted their investment by adding another 1.6kW in panels and a solar hot water system in subsequent years, but Brian finds what’s happening to Australia’s renewable energy industry a source of nothing but frustration. “We have the capability to lead the world but are languishing in the doldrums,” he says.

**Australia is in danger of missing out on the renewables boom that is happening around the globe.**

Our nation needs strong leadership for a solar and renewable energy future, to grow jobs, restore investment and help people take control of their power bills. That’s why we’re calling on all political leaders to Stand Up For Solar and commit to:

1. A strong solar and renewables goal: at least 50% by 2030
2. A fair go for solar owners
3. Help for households with soaring power bills.

The Australian Bureau of Resource and Energy Economics (BREE) predicts that solar PV is set to achieve the lowest unsubsidised cost of all new electricity generation sources before 2040.<sup>7</sup>

**Now is the time to act in the interests of millions of Australians who want to see a bright, sun-powered future.**

Find out more at [standupforsolar.org.au](http://standupforsolar.org.au)

#### REFERENCES:

- 1 SunWiz Consulting analysis of Clean Energy Regulator and Australian government data
- 2 <http://www.smh.com.au/environment/climate-change/australias-largescale-renewable-investment-dives-in-2014-20150112-12mbis.html>
- 3 <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/dec/02/almost-90-of-australians-support-renewable-energy-target-says-poll>
- 4 <http://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/queensland/solar-users-the-champagne-and-latte-sipping-set-tim-nicholls-20140605-zrz9f.html>
- 5 <http://reneweconomy.com.au/2014/rooftop-solar-uptake-still-highest-in-low-income-australia-63263>
- 6 <http://www.recagents.asn.au/media-release-solar-homes-study-shows-lower-income-families-are-building-australias-solar-future-2/>
- 7 BREE (2013)  
The Australian Energy Technology Assessment 2013: Update  
<http://www.industry.gov.au/industry/Office-of-the-Chief-Economist/Publications/Pages/Australian-energy-technology-assessments.aspx>



Level 14, 338 Pitt St,  
Sydney, NSW 2000

For more information, please contact  
[info@solarcitizens.org.au](mailto:info@solarcitizens.org.au)