



Save Solar Tasmania

Media release – Embargoed to midday Thursday 11 April 2013

Tasmanians call for action on feed-in tariffs

A new alliance of businesses, householders and community groups today calls on the State government to act urgently to safeguard Tasmania's opportunities in small and medium scale renewable energy projects.

"The government is rushing headlong into the privatisation of Aurora but has been conspicuously non-committal on the future of feed-in tariffs." said Jack Gilding, a spokesperson for the group Save Solar Tasmania.

"Media speculation, driven by the lack of clarity from the government, is resulting in customers cancelling orders and risks businesses closing or laying off staff. Tasmania cannot afford to lose these jobs and investments." said Mr Gilding. *"The Minister needs to assure Tasmanians who sign up prior to the government legislating new arrangements that existing arrangements will apply to their purchases."*

David Fry from Launceston solar installer Grant Chugg Plumbing said *"The government's lack of direction on maintaining existing feed-in tariffs for domestic and business customers is damaging and potentially catastrophic for solar businesses and consumers alike. Many Tasmanians (and many older Tasmanians) have purchased systems to 'future-proof' their energy needs on the basis that they would be paid 'like for like' for the electricity they have created. They have invested on the basis of current government and Aurora policy. We call on the Tasmanian government to maintain the current 'like-for-like' feed-in tariff. They have a unique opportunity to do so, before signing any contracts with private power retailers."*

Launceston based installer John Thirgood is so concerned about possible changes he has set up a [website](#) and [Facebook page](#).

"The 10,000 Tasmanian households who have invested thousands of dollars in solar PV systems are entitled to continuation of the tariff on which they made those investment decisions." said Mr Gilding.

It's not just about solar

"This is not just about solar panels on houses." said Mr Gilding. *"Tasmania has the potential to be the renewable energy powerhouse of Australia. Changes to the electricity market could be an opportunity to harness the potential for many Tasmanians to be producers, not just consumers of electricity. Households, communities, farmers and businesses are keen to invest in these opportunities, but the government needs to provide a supportive policy environment."*

Chris Harries, a member of the Tasmanian Climate Action Council said: *"Investing in rooftop solar is the most visible and powerful way that ordinary Tasmanian families are choosing to be active participants in Tasmania's climate response and its 100% renewables brand. Adequate feed-in tariffs help facilitate this positive 'Yes, we can!' community attitude and should be viewed as a cornerstone to building Tasmania's clean green reputation, our fledgling renewables industry and Tasmania's unique branding."*

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Save Solar Tasmania calls for:

- A public consultation and review process that sets a fair price for electricity from solar and other small renewable energy technologies in Tasmania, taking into account the many employment, economic and environmental benefits of these installations.
- Guarantees that existing tariff arrangements will continue for people who have already installed solar PV systems and for those who order systems before new arrangements are finalised.

Press conference

A press conference will be held on the lawns outside Parliament House at midday today (11 April) where the media will be able to talk to members of the group including:

- solar installation companies
- householders who have installed solar panels and those who are contemplating installations but are concerned about possible changes to the feed-in tariff
- businesses that are developing small and medium scale wind and hydro projects.

More information

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Website: Save Solar Tasmania solarcitizens.org.au/tas/

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/SaveSolarTas> @SaveSolarTas

Facebook: [Save Our Solar Tas](#)

The following members of the alliance are available for follow up interviews

Rob Manson, [I Want Energy](#), rob@iwantenergy.com.au

John Thirgood, [Solar Squad](#) (Launceston) and [Save Our Solar Tas](#), admin@saveoursolartas.org

David Fry, Business Manager, Grant Chugg Plumbing, (03) 6326-8780

Phil Harrington, Climate Action Hobart and one of the authors of the Tasmanian Renewable Energy Industry Development Board report pharrington@pittsh.com.au

Chris Harries, member, Tasmanian Climate Action Council, christharries@gmail.com

Rob Nichols, Nichols Poultry and Blowing in the Wind, robert@nicholspoultry.com.au

Nigel Tomlin, River Power Tasmania, nigeltomlin@bigpond.com.au

Supporting organisations

Organisations supporting Save Solar Tasmania include:

- Solar installers: I Want Energy, Solar Squad, Grant Chugg Plumbing, Southern Solar
- Renewable Energy project developers: Blowing in the Wind, River Power Tasmania
- Climate Action Groups: Climate Action Hobart, West Hobart Environment Network