

Solar 'feed-in' rebate is action on global warming

The sustainable energy industry welcomes South Australia's plans to reward householders who install solar power in their homes.

At the weekend, the SA Rann Government announced an Australian first - legislation for a new "feed-in" solar rebate, which will boost the financial incentive for householders to harness the clean energy of the sun and install solar panels on their roofs.

Under the legislation, householders will be paid up to double the standard electricity retail price for putting surplus solar power back into the mains electricity grid.

The legislation reflects the benefits of solar power as a clean, local electricity source.

Solar power holds enormous potential to relieve the pressure on Australia's stressed electricity network, which will need \$24 billion in infrastructure investment over the next five years. For example, the Queensland Government estimates that for every air-conditioner installed the electricity industry has to spend an extra \$13,000 on more poles, wires and substations to manage the load. Ultimately, this is a cost borne by all consumers.

Solar photovoltaic (PV) is perfect for supplying electricity when we need it most – at peak times on summer afternoons.

Welcoming the South Australian initiative, Executive Director of the Australian Business Council for Sustainable Energy (BCSE), Mr Ric Brazzale, said government legislation to drive the use of Australia's abundant renewable energies such as solar was essential.

"What this legislation means is that the many Australian householders who want clean, renewable electricity that sustains both the environment and their wallet – now, in South Australia, they will be able to have that," Mr Brazzale said.

"This is a great boost to the solar power industry, which has been waiting for a government to demonstrate this kind of concrete action in the energy market.

"South Australia's initiative is proof that, if the will is there, a government can easily provide the practical laws needed to drive investment in clean electricity."

Australia is the sunniest continent in the world and has been a leader in solar technology. A large proportion of Australian households could support solar PV systems.

Mr Brazzale said similar policy on a national scale was not only possible but necessary, if Australia is to balance the competing demands of a prosperous economy, growing electricity infrastructure investment and reduced greenhouse gas emissions.

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