

Solar rises in the West – national scheme logical next step

Senate Committee hands down finding on industry

NATIONAL: Australia's peak renewable energy body, the Clean Energy Council, welcomed the WA government's announcement of a solar energy gross feed-in tariff – a plan to pay households a premium for all the solar energy they produce.

Premier Carpenter announced this policy as part of the WA government's election commitment and it follows on from the ACT's gross feed-in legislation. Gross feed-in tariffs (GFITs) are recognised world wide as key to driving industry maturity.

With the majority of Australian states and territories supporting the policy and the federal government's election commitment to ensuring a nationally consistent approach, the Clean Energy Council sees a national gross feed-in tariff as the logical next step. This policy will deliver industry certainty, reduce policy complexity and encourage wide-scale adoption of solar PV and other renewables. GFITs also received support in the Save Our Solar Senate committee's report released yesterday.

Clean Energy Council spokeswoman, Irena Bukhshtaber said "The WA announcement and the Committee's report are timely given the Council of Australian governments are meeting in Perth on October 2nd and are widely expected to discuss a national feed-in tariff policy."

"Today's report from the Senate committee acknowledged that a gross feed-in tariff was supported by the Australian solar industry to encourage uptake of solar energy systems and help develop a viable industry."

"Rather than a range of inconsistent policies, a national gross feed-in tariff will mean every Australian can access the same benefits for acting on climate change."

"Now is the time for a long-term industry policy, which will transition the industry from rebates. Gross feed-in tariffs set high enough and for long enough will deliver long term investor certainty, energy security and most importantly reductions in greenhouse gas emissions."

Stationary energy is responsible for half of Australia's emissions, so any climate change solution needs to target the energy sector first. Feed-in tariff schemes are already running successfully overseas, resulting in the rapid adoption of clean energy and displacing the use of fossil fuels.

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The Clean Energy Council, the peak body for the clean energy sector, is working with all Australia governments to ensure a secure and diversified energy sector; increasing our energy efficiency through insulation and solar hot water; and including more clean energy sources in our stationary energy mix from solar PV, wind, geothermal, hydro, bioenergy and gas.