

July 2008

MORELAND ENERGY NEWS

Celebrating people making changes



Moreland
Energy
Foundation



See inside:
**Coburg
Solar Cities
announced**

Also in this issue:

-  **Solar PV systems**
-  **Sustainability for renters**
-  **Sign up to GreenPower with Community Power**
-  **A decentralised energy future**
-  **And more...**

Moreland residents go zero carbon!

Local residents Emma and her partner Bruce show how they have made their home sustainable and are reducing their household's CO₂ emissions to zero.



Coburg Library sees the light

Moreland City Council has recently retrofitted 200 lights at Coburg Library with more efficient technologies. The changeover will save \$4,500 per year in energy costs which means that the project will pay for itself in less than four years. That's a saving of 37,416 KWhs per year, or the equivalent of stopping 50 tonnes or 1 million black balloons of CO₂ going into the atmosphere each year!

Moreland City Council staff get energy smart

Moreland City Council has been offering sustainable energy training to their staff to help them make their office and home more sustainable. Run in conjunction with the Moreland Energy Foundation (MEFL), the sessions provided staff with tips and advice on reducing their energy use and changing their electricity supply to GreenPower.

Participants also received a retrofit kit which included a home energy audit booklet, energy efficient light globe, water saving showerhead, door snake and a MEFL thermometer.

If all eighty staff put their kits to good use, either by installing the items in their own home or installing the items in a friend or family

member's home, the total greenhouse savings are estimated to total over 80 tonnes. Further savings are possible if staff sign up to accredited Green Power.

If you would like to organise energy smart training for your office or workplace, contact MEFL on 9381 1722.

New Staff



MEFL is pleased to welcome two new staff members.

Gabrielle Breen joins MEFL to coordinate our training services. Gabrielle has a degree in Resource and Environmental Management and has previously worked at ICLEI Oceania and a community-based redevelopment

project. MEFL is delighted to have Gabrielle on board.

MEFL offers a range of workshops and professional development opportunities for business, industry, councils, building designers and interested members of the public. Courses include the popular Introduction to Energy Management, the Introduction to STEPS and SDS Assessment Tools for Building Environmental Performance (for local government and industry), practical Energy Retrofit Workshops for home maintenance teams, Principles of Passive Design for planners, architects and designers and tailored workshops available on request. For more information contact Gabrielle on 9381 1722.

Rose Read has been appointed as the Project Manager for the Northern

Alliance for Greenhouse Action (NAGA) Towards Zero Net Emissions research project (see page 4), under a 12 month secondment arrangement with Sustainability Victoria. Rose is currently the Local Government and Partnerships Program Manager at Sustainability Victoria. She has a diverse background, having worked at EcoRecycle Victoria redeveloping the Waste Wise program, and previously as Manager at Women's Information and Referral Exchange, as well as Coordinator and Teacher at Yallourn College.

It is an exciting appointment, bringing Rose's extensive experience and networks to the NAGA project, and reinforcing partnerships between MEFL, NAGA and Sustainability Victoria. MEFL and NAGA extend a warm welcome to Rose.



Solar Cities coming to Moreland

In June this year, the Hon. Peter Garrett, Federal Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts came to the Civic Centre, to announce funding for the Coburg Solar Cities Project.

The project will receive up to \$4.9 million in funding under the Australian Government's \$94 million Solar Cities initiative.

"This is a terrific announcement for Moreland. The Coburg Solar Cities project, the sixth in Australia, will help us create a sustainable vision for our community and a practical example for Australia," says Moreland Energy Foundation Chair Mike Hill.



The project which is expected to commence implementation in late 2008, will engage all levels of the Moreland community to bring about community-based sustainable energy solutions, with a specific focus on assisting low income households to improve energy efficiency and reduce costs.

Key components of the project include:

- Zero Carbon Moreland.
A community-wide campaign which will assist 5000 households, 500 businesses and 50 community organisations throughout Moreland to reduce carbon emissions and work towards carbon neutrality;

- Establishment of a community enterprise with the Brotherhood of St Laurence to deliver energy efficiency services including 1000 energy efficiency audits and retrofits for low income households;
- Redevelopment of Coburg City Centre to become an internationally recognised sustainable urban redevelopment which integrates sustainable urban design, innovative technology and distributed generation (see page 11) as part of the Coburg 2020 initiative;
- A not-for-profit Energy Services Company to coordinate the

installation of distributed power generation within the municipality and to support energy efficiency projects.

The Coburg Solar Cities project is led by the Moreland Energy Foundation in partnership with the Moreland City Council, Sustainability Victoria and the Brotherhood of St Laurence, along with a range of other key supporters.

The project will be launched later this year. To stay in touch with Coburg Solar Cities developments as they arise join the Moreland Energy Foundation mailing list. Visit www.mefl.com.au or phone 9381 1722.

Celebrating diversity and making a difference

The Moreland Energy Foundation in partnership with Environment Victoria and the Australian Lebanese Welfare Association has received funding from the Sustainability Fund for the Green Town project. The project will work with four ethnic communities across Melbourne with a focus on the Arabic speaking communities here in Moreland.

The project will include training local community members to conduct household and business environmental audits, workshops on saving energy and water and the development of English as a second language (ESL) materials.

The Moreland Energy Foundation (MEFL) has already joined forces with the Muslim Unity Coordinating Committee (MUCC) to run education campaigns and sustainability projects within the Moreland Islamic Community.

Sustainability has always been a focus of the Islamic community and MEFL and MUCC are now taking practical measures to provide material to extend this focus. Our first partnership endeavour is a range of showerhead exchanges undertaken with the assistance of Yarra Valley Water.

MEFL looks forward to working closely with the Arabic speaking community to deliver this and future projects. To find out more, phone MEFL on 9381 1722.



Sustainable renting

Most renters in Australia live in older dwellings, not designed or built with environmental principles in mind. With insecure tenure, investing in structural improvement for energy efficiency is not really viable. Paying back such an investment through savings on bills often requires much longer leases than are normally available. Dependent upon the will of the owner to bring systems and appliances up to standard, tenants can be at a disadvantage in the movement towards sustainability.

Renters, however, can try approaching the landlord to request improvements, maybe offering to do some work themselves. While any alteration to the property must have the owner's permission, many property owners may be open to energy and water efficiency improvements.

Adopting a co-operative, non-adversarial approach in negotiating

with a landlord is more likely to succeed. To strengthen your argument, point out the benefits to the landlord, let them know of any rebates or grants available to them and possibly offer to share costs.

Government rebates

Rebates and eligibility vary from state to state and council to council; they are also changing all the time. Research your individual situation before money is spent, to ensure you or your landlord's eligibility.

In this year's Federal budget, rebates were announced of up to \$500 for landlords who increase insulation in existing rental properties. For further information, go to www.climatechange.gov.au

To check other Federal and State-based rebates, go to the Alternative Technology Association website (www.ata.org.au/green-living/renewable-energy-rebates/).

Approaching your landlord

Make a formal, written request to the property owner, including information on what you want and why. Emphasise the benefits to the landlord and to the environment. Then give your research (options and costs), asking for only one major item at a time, or giving a short list in order of preference. Indicate any costs you can contribute, including your own labour if appropriate. Finish with a statement requesting action, for example, 'I look forward to hearing your response to my request.'

If you receive no reply after a few weeks, send a follow up note, asking if they have received your letter and if they have had time to consider your request.

Linnet Good is a writer currently working on a renter's guide to energy and water. She welcomes readers' ideas for innovative solutions for renters. Email goodscribble@gmail.com

Landlord benefits

- Property owners can benefit in several ways by upgrading their buildings. Most importantly, landlords will be doing their part in cutting greenhouse gas emissions and energy use.
- Energy efficiency improvements on rental properties are tax deductible. Maintenance, repairs and servicing costs can be claimed at the end of each financial year; depreciation on the value of capital improvements can be claimed over a specified period of time.
- The cost of losing a quality tenant – with the loss of income from a property vacant for weeks, along with the costs of advertising – may be more than the cost of a simple retrofit. Properties may later be advertised on the basis of lower running costs.
- In Victoria, owners of properties with multiple dwellings (eg apartments, duplexes and so on), without separate utility meters for each, must pay for all usage costs for that utility. This could include water, electricity, gas or oil. The financial benefits of installing efficient systems for those properties become even more attractive.
- Energy-efficiency features are likely to have a positive impact on future sale prices.

The small things really do add up

There are lots of things renters can do to make their home more energy efficient that are free/ low cost and don't require permission from a landlord or a real estate agent.

Simple actions such as closing doors to rooms you are heating, putting on a jumper or turning the lights off will make a difference to both your comfort and your bills. Doing even these simple things can cut your carbon footprint by up to 20%!

Other actions you can take include:

- Turning off appliances at the wall when they are not in use. Standby power accounts for 12% of all energy used in the average home.
- Installing energy efficient light globes. These will save you money and you can take them with you to your next house when you move.
- Draught proofing your doors and windows is cheap (about \$7 per door) and will help reduce your heating needs. Use a door snake under your doors.
- Use thick curtains on your windows. If your landlord won't provide them, investing in or making your own will make life much more comfortable and you can take them with you to your next place.

- If you have an old noisy fridge, why not invest in a more energy efficient one that will reduce your bills for years to come. You can donate your old fridge to Phoenix Fridge, which retrofits old fridges to make them more energy efficient and resells them through Brotherhood of St Laurence shops. (Ph. 1300 366 283)
- If you need a portable heater for your room make sure you choose an energy efficient model that has a timer and switch it off when you aren't in the room.
- If you have central heating or cooling adjust the thermostat to reduce your conditioning costs by 10%. Winter heating should be set at 18-20 degrees and summer cooling at 25-27 degrees.
- Sign up to accredited GreenPower! See page 9.

The Moreland Energy Foundation provides information and advice for renters on how to choose an energy efficient home. Downloadable fact sheets are available on the MEFL website www.mefl.com.au or call 9381 1722.



Zero Carbon Moreland is the Moreland Energy Foundation's new community campaign to tackle climate change. The campaign will work with residents, businesses and community groups to reduce Moreland's emissions to zero net by 2030.

This is in line with Moreland City Council's target of zero net emissions from the Moreland community by 2030 and zero net emissions from Moreland Council by 2020.

Why Zero Carbon Moreland?

There is mounting evidence that our climate is already changing, oceans are warming faster than predicted and extreme weather events continue to wreak havoc in urban and farming communities across Australia. CSIRO reports that increases in temperatures and future rainfall patterns are highly dependent on the extent of

greenhouse gas emissions. The steps we take now as individuals and as a community will determine the extent of change we can expect to see in the years to come.¹

Sobering as this is, small steps make for big change and individuals acting together to avoid and reduce emissions can prevent thousands of tonnes of emissions entering the atmosphere.

Zero Carbon Moreland will provide assistance and support to help you measure your current carbon footprint from your home and activities, and develop a plan to reduce it to zero.

Zero carbon emissions can be achieved by reducing our electricity and gas use, switching to GreenPower, choosing sustainable forms of transport, reducing our waste and food miles and offsetting any remaining emissions.

Although this seems like a big task, many households, businesses and community groups throughout Moreland are already well on the way to achieving zero carbon emissions. See over the page for how one household is already doing it.

Zero Carbon Moreland is an initiative of the Moreland Energy Foundation in partnership with the Moreland City Council and other organisations throughout Moreland.

¹CSIRO, Australian Bureau of Meteorology. 2007. Climate change in Australia: technical report 2007. CSIRO.

Get involved

To get involved or find out more contact the Moreland Energy Foundation on 9381 1722 or visit www.mefl.com.au

Emma and Bruce's steps to a zero carbon home:

North Coburg residents Emma and Bruce bought their home in 2006 and since then have done a green makeover of their home turning it into a comfortable, affordable and sustainable place to live.

The family made these changes over a period of two years, many of which were simple and low cost and using second hand/recycled materials.

By making these changes the household has managed to significantly reduce their carbon footprint and is moving closer towards their target of zero net emissions. Their electricity use is now down to three kilowatt-hours a day and their gas down to around four mega-joules a day. You can find out your own usage from your bills.

"I really love having a comfortable home, and it's finding how to do that in a sustainable way," says Emma.



The first thing Emma and Bruce did was sign up to 100% GreenPower through Community Power. (Average annual household reduction in greenhouse gas emissions: 8,305 kg CO₂-e)¹



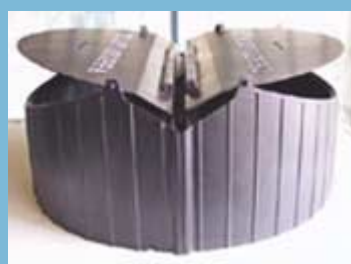
To make the house even snuggier Emma used about 40 tubs of sealant along with weather stripping to seal up all the cracks and gaps in the house... (240 kg CO₂-e)



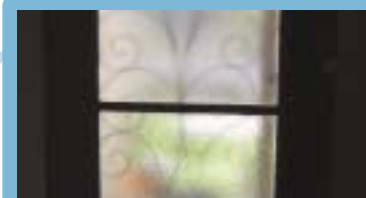
Emma and Bruce's home when they first



They then changed all the lights to energy efficient compact fluorescents. (140 kg CO₂-e)¹



and a Draft Stoppa to cover their exhaust pipes. "If you love having a cosy home insulate and seal gaps"



She also used Clear Comfort, a clear film which can be taped across windows as a cheap alternative to double glazing.



And put in a water saving showerhead (1,360 kg CO₂-e)



30% of heat loss can occur through windows and Emma made thick curtains and blinds and installed pelmets on all their windows to help keep the heat in. (160 kg CO₂-e)



Next came sub-floor insulation. Emma and Bruce used reflective concertina foil to go under their floor boards and also put reflective foil along the base board around the house. When they were installing a new window they used the opportunity to put in wall insulation to the surrounding walls. (180 kg CO₂-e)



To reduce the need for greenhouse intensive heating during winter, they installed R3.5 polyester batts in the ceiling and immediately went down from three doonas to two on a cold winter's night. (2,090 kg CO₂-e)

¹Average yearly CO₂-e savings for a household from implementing these measures. Sources for figures: Australian Greenhouse Calculator; Sustainability Victoria, You have the Power. Save Energy brochure; Australian Greenhouse Office, Cool communities: An introduction to the program, Abatement Actions and Measures.



Emma and Bruce are also aiming to reduce their emissions from transport by using their car as little as possible. Bruce rides an electric bike to work and uses this instead of a car to get around while at work. Emma and baby Annie use public transport or a bike and bike trailer!



To help shade the house and keep it cool they fitted shade sails over a new pergola and planted trees and vines. Planting the trees on raised garden beds has helped to increase their height.



To reduce food miles they are growing as much of their own vegies as they can. Water tanks and a grey water system are making it possible to keep the garden alive over summer.



bought it in 2006.



By using energy-efficient appliances and turning appliances off at the power point when not in use, they have managed to get their electricity right down. Using a powerboard/ powermate has helped make it easier to turn off standby power. (390 kg CO₂-e)



Midway through their second year the household installed a solar hot water system and noticed that their gas bill dropped to half of what it was the same time last year. (1,642 kg CO₂-e)



To reduce the amount of waste going into landfill (which when it breaks down causes methane, another harmful greenhouse gas), Emma and Bruce use chickens, composting and a worm farm to process all of their food scraps on site.



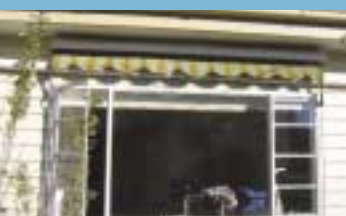
Insulating the hot water pipes with lagging has helped keep water hot in the pipes for longer and reduced the need to heat more hot water.



A heat shifter has made it possible to transfer warm air from one room to another.



When summer came the house started heating up. Emma and Bruce installed ceiling fans instead of air-conditioning.



and put up external blinds on their west and north facing windows. (66 kg CO₂-e)

Offsetting remaining emissions

After two years the household is getting closer to zero carbon emissions. To compensate for the emissions that they are still creating, Emma has decided to put money into reducing emissions elsewhere. Instead of going through an official offset provider such as Climate Positive or Greenfleet, Emma is working to reduce emissions locally. She contributed money to help her sister buy a solar hot water system, and has bought gap sealing products and light globes for her friends and neighbours.

What's next!

Over the next couple of years Emma and Bruce hope to reduce their energy bills even further and make their home even more sustainable. Plans include:

- Continuing to insulate walls as they do further renovations to the house
- Upgrading appliances to more energy efficient models
- Exploring options for double glazing or clear comfort on other windows
- Growing more vines over the pergola for shading in summer
- Installing a photo voltaic (solar power) system. They are currently talking to friends and neighbours about organising a bulk deal. Soon Bruce and Emma hope to be actually putting electricity back into the grid!

A big thank you to Emma for supplying pictures and information for this article.

Towards Zero Net Emissions



Everyone talks about zero net emissions, but how do we achieve this? The Victorian Local Sustainability Accord, through the Sustainability Fund has funded a 12-month program to enable NAGA (Northern Alliance for Greenhouse Action) to answer that question and provide a path for others to follow. The project will focus on establishing the methodology for setting and attaining a target as well as the

quantification process to ensure the process is working.

Individuals, businesses and local governments are establishing zero net emission targets. NAGA was keen to explore how such a target could be expanded to cover the entire northern metropolitan region of Melbourne. The great challenge in this project is the scale and the coordination of such a large number of organisations and individuals.

Whilst information on zero net emission methodologies is growing and can be used to inform development of a NAGA Regional Zero Net Emissions Plan, the ability to meet such a target on a regional

scale requires significant research and large scale modelling.

The research will focus on stationary energy, transport and waste as well as investigating local government's role in provision of offsets.

This project will contribute to our partnerships with local and state government agencies, and other innovative projects within the NAGA region, including the Coburg Solar City project.

The Project Manager will be starting in July, 2008.



Renewable Energy Certificates

Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs) is a Federal government initiative to support the Mandatory Renewable Energy Target (MRET). Installation of solar hot water, heat-pumps, wind turbines, micro hydro and photovoltaic systems may all attract RECs. The greater the energy savings, the greater the RECs. These systems may also attract rebates.

For confirmation of your eligibility for RECs contact the Office of Renewable Energy Regulator (ORER). <http://www.orer.gov.au/>

Are you eligible for rebates?

Rebates are a Government method of subsidising environmental improvements undertaken by individuals. They are available from both State and Federal governments. In some instances, when both State and Federal rebates are offered you can only claim one.

The following actions attract one or both of these incentives. Contact the relevant departments below for further information and to check your eligibility.

Solar hot water

- There are both State (\$900-\$1500) and Federal (\$1000) rebates available;

Heat pumps (hot water)

- There is a Federal (\$1000) rebate available;
- State rebates available (\$2100) outside the reticulated gas areas;

5 Star instantaneous and storage gas water heaters

- State rebate available for those changing from an existing electrical hot water connected to peak electrical supply. Off-peak units are not eligible;

Rain water tanks

- State rebates are available, with greater rebates when tanks are connected to toilet or laundry

facilities. Federal rebates will also soon be available

Grey water systems

- State rebates available for systems collecting grey water from the laundry and bathroom for reuse in the toilet and or garden. Federal rebates will also soon be available.

Photo voltaic systems

- Federal rebate of \$8/watt, capped at \$8,000;

Ceiling insulation

- Up to 30% of the total installation cost, capped at \$300 (minimum R3.5) for homes that have never been insulated. A landlord insulation rebate from the Federal government will be available soon.

Rebates are only available when using approved retailers and installers, who will help you source the best rebates. For more information:

Victorian rebates: Sustainability Victoria: www.sustainability.vic.gov.au or phone 1300 363 744

Victorian water rebates: Our Water. Our Future: www.ourwater.vic.gov.au or phone 136 186

Commonwealth rebates: www.greenhouse.gov.au/rebates or phone 1800 808 571.



Sign up to GreenPower with Community Power



In Moreland we have over 7,800 households that have signed up to GreenPower. Let's get the whole of Moreland switching to GreenPower!

Community Power, a local initiative of Darebin City Council and the Moreland Energy Foundation aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and encourage the uptake of GreenPower.

Community Power went through a competitive process open to all energy retailers licensed to sell electricity in Victoria, considered their proposed GreenPower products and selected Origin as their partner, having what Community Power believed to be the best proposal with the best product.

In fact, Origin's 100% Wind products were rated as some of the best for the third time in a row by Green Electricity Watch – a group of three leading environmental organisations. (Visit www.greenelectricitywatch.org.au)

Community Power is endorsing three of Origin's GreenPower products:

100% GreenPower Accredited Wind, with optional Green Gas¹

– 5.5c (incl. GST) premium per kWh on top of the standard tariff. Includes the opportunity to take up Origin Green Gas at the same rate as conventional natural gas.

GreenEnergy Home² 20% Government accredited GreenPower and Green Gas at no extra cost for the first 12 months (for customers who switch both electricity and natural gas). Includes a free energy efficiency pack worth over \$80, containing 6 energy efficient light globes and 1 AAA rated water saving showerhead.

Business GreenEarth Electricity, providing Origin 20% Government accredited GreenPower at no additional cost to businesses for the first 12 months.

When you sign-up to an Origin GreenPower product endorsed by Community Power, you are joining with other local households and businesses to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. You will also be eligible to receive Community Power's quarterly newsletter and access free energy management programs. Make sure



you opt to stay in touch with Community Power.

To switch to Origin GreenPower, call Origin on the dedicated Community Power hotline: 1300 138 149.

For further information call Community Power on 8470 8220 or visit www.communitypower.org.au

¹ With Origin Green Gas, 100% of your natural gas consumption is offset through emission reduction programs like energy efficiency and tree planting

² Please note that exit fees apply to the GreenEnergy Home product. Contract details will be fully explained by Origin.

What is GreenPower?

GreenPower is Government accredited electricity generated from new renewable energy sources such as wind and solar – unlike standard energy produced from fossil fuels like coal, oil and gas.

When you elect to buy GreenPower, an equivalent amount of renewable energy is purchased by your energy company on your behalf and fed into the

grid. You don't need any special equipment and GreenPower is just as reliable as traditional electricity generated from burning coal.

Switching to GreenPower is a simple and effective action you can take to reduce your household's greenhouse gas emissions.

See: www.greenpower.gov.au

Thinking about a Solar PV system?

Many people are starting to consider purchasing their own solar power system to generate their own electricity and contribute to reducing global greenhouse emissions.

What are solar power systems and how do they work?

Solar photovoltaic panels, which are made of thin slivers of silicon coated in plastic and sandwiched between layers of glass, can convert sunlight directly into electricity. The panels need to be mounted on north facing roofs, and the power generated can be used either in the home, or with 'grid-connection' can be fed into the electricity grid.

Solar PV systems are different to solar hot water systems: solar hot water systems are efficient and greenhouse friendly systems to heat water, whereas using the electricity generated by solar PV to run an electric hot water system would be very inefficient and wasteful.

An 'average-sized' residential installation of 1kW is usually comprised of 6 panels, occupying a roof area of about 1.5m x 5m. This system will generate about 5.4kWh per day in summer in Melbourne – enough to power a relatively efficient home, and a good motivator to maximise the energy efficiency of your home!



Other elements of a grid-connected solar PV system include frames to attach the panels to the roof at the appropriate angle to maximise sunlight capture; an inverter to convert the DC generated power to AC; a two-way meter to allow electricity export and import to and from the grid; and wiring, fuses and junction boxes. Most suppliers will provide a quote for the entire system including all of these associated elements, but some suppliers list these as 'extras' (even though they are essential for the operation of the system).

All panels that are connected to the grid must meet Australian standards;

it is possible to purchase good quality Australian-made panels. Solar panel installers must be accredited with the Clean Energy Council.

For more information, download a fact sheet from Sustainability Victoria, <http://www.sustainability.vic.gov.au/www/html/2038-energy-saving-fact-sheets.asp> or purchase a copy of Alternative Technology Association's Solar Panel Buyers Guide <http://www.ata.org.au/publications/solar-electricity-plan-your-own-electricity-system>

Postcard from Bellingen



Former MEFL CEO Jim Downey has moved to Bellingen NSW. He writes:

My recent move to Bellingen initially involved a car trip from Melbourne to northern NSW via the Hume and then the Pacific Highway. That experience prompted me to really wonder about our Governments' priorities. While driving through a sea of road works I was staggered at the amount of money being spent. One sign for a 24 km bypass section alone proudly boasted a cost of \$800 million. It is currently one of many.

I experienced this in the week we heard that the rebate for solar PV installations will be means tested at a combined household income level of \$100,000, resulting in a significant blow to the solar industry. The reason given essentially was that it was too popular and costing too much! In addition, NSW has no solar feed-in tariff at all. A society whose government is spending millions more on roads than solar energy, really has a problem.

Like Moreland, my new home town Bellingen has many residents making their lifestyles more sustainable. Two weeks ago we had our Renewable Energy Fair which attracted thousands of visitors.

At a personal level, I have been very busy with renovations and ridding our ten acres of weeds. In the meanwhile, enjoying our wonderful views of the World Heritage listed Dorrigó National Park.

Jim

A Decentralised Energy Future

Why we need a better feed-in tariff to help us get there

The most recent Victorian and Federal Government budgets dealt some disappointing blows to renewable energy.

At the Federal level, the decision to place a means test on the photovoltaic rebate program effectively cuts out many of those households who would be in a position to make use of the rebate. And, at the State level, the proposal for an inadequate solar feed-in tariff will provide little financial incentive for decentralised energy generation.

These decisions are already proving disastrous for the fledgling solar industry and appear to contradict both Governments' stated desire to support renewable energy. Further, the ad hoc nature of energy policy to date sends mixed messages to householders about their role in reducing our country's contribution to climate change.

MEFL envisions a future in which everyone can access renewable technologies to power their needs, and where decentralised energy solutions enable regions to meet their own energy requirements via local distribution networks and community-scale generation. The Australian community has repeatedly shown that we want real action on climate change, and now is the time to advance a decentralised energy vision in Australia.

What is Decentralised Energy?

Our current centralised energy network is massively inefficient due to transmission losses and, more significantly, waste heat from power stations. A decentralised energy (DE) system that produces energy close to where it is consumed provides the opportunity to dramatically reduce greenhouse emissions.

There are two key components of a DE system:

1. Buildings (industrial, commercial and residential) generate power through solar, wind or cogeneration.
2. Local networks distribute heat and power, supplemented by community scale plants generating close to the point of demand.

In Australia, where most of our emissions come from electricity generation, implementation of a DE system would:

- Dramatically reduce our contribution to climate change
- Enhance energy security by reducing overall demand
- Increase the number and diversity of energy sources
- Constrain financial risks through lower capital requirements
- Drive technological innovation and creating jobs

What's wrong with the proposed feed-in tariff?

The Victorian Government has announced a feed-in tariff (FiT) for solar power, which will pay 60c per kWh for net energy produced by small photovoltaic systems. If designed well, feed-in tariffs can be a great mechanism for encouraging the broad scale uptake of decentralised, renewable energy systems, as has been shown by the experience of more than 44 countries. However, MEFL believes that the model proposed by the Victorian Government will be insufficient to increase the installation of renewable energy systems. The key problems with the proposed FiT are that it:

- **Is limited to systems no bigger than 2kW**, creating a disincentive to install larger systems.
- **Only applies to 'net' energy production**, which means households are only paid for energy exported to the grid separate from their own energy consumption. This discriminates against those who are at home during the day (shift workers, stay-at-home parents and retirees) and those who can't afford a system surplus to their needs.
- **Applies to solar power only**, unlike the most successful international models which also reward micro wind, cogeneration and other forms of small-scale decentralised energy production
- **Does not exclude low income households from cost recovery**, meaning any extra costs generated will be passed on to those already struggling with energy bill increases

- **Only applies to householders**, excluding community groups and businesses from the potential benefits of a feed-in tariff.

Victorian Energy and Resources Minister Peter Batchelor claims that a weak FiT model is necessary to avoid high costs to consumers, stating that the average household would pay an extra \$100 per year on their energy bill if a more effective "gross" tariff were introduced. Analysis by the Alternative Technology Association (ATA) has found this figure to be grossly inaccurate due to fundamental flaws in the Government's modelling. The ATA's modelling shows that the actual cost to consumers of a gross model tariff (of 60c per kWh) would be an average of \$9.60 per household, per year. Unlike the Victorian Government's modelling, ATA's calculations exclude low income households from cost recovery, meaning that concession card holders would not be disadvantaged by the scheme.

To have a look at the ATA's modelling – endorsed by MEFL, Environment Victoria and the ETU – go to www.mefl.com.au/bigpicture/resources and scroll down to 'Vic Feed-in Tariff'.

What would an effective Feed-in Tariff look like?

MEFL calls for a feed-in tariff with the following characteristics:

- A mandated price of 60 cents per kWh for systems up to 10kW;
- A mandated price of 48 cents per kWh for systems from 10kW-100kW;
- A guaranteed payment period of 15 years;
- Applicable to the entire output of an eligible system via gross production metering;
- Covers a range of renewable energy generation including solar, wind and cogeneration;
- Available to households, businesses and community entities;
- Exempts low-income households from cost recovery.

It's not too late to save the feed-in tariff – until it is put to the Victorian Parliament later this year, you can lobby politicians to call for a better FiT. Once it gets to Parliament amendments can be introduced to make the tariff strong and effective. For more information and to download a template letter to send to politicians, visit MEFL's website.



Moreland Energy Foundation Ltd
P.O. Box 276 Brunswick, Vic, 3056

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Become a member of MEFL!

Join Moreland Energy Foundation Ltd to show your support for our work and to keep up-to-date through our half-yearly newsletters. Members can take part in many MEFL activities and have the right to elect a representative to the MEFL Board of Directors.

Please fill in and return to:

Moreland Energy Foundation, PO Box 276, Brunswick, Victoria, 3056

Name			
Phone			
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Postal Code			
Membership Category <i>(please circle)</i>	Membership fees	1 year	3 years
	Individual	\$15	\$40
	Concession	\$10	\$25
	Family/Household	\$25	\$70
	Community Organisation	\$25	\$70
	Business	\$40	\$110
Payment options			
<input type="checkbox"/> Cheque <input type="checkbox"/> Credit card	Please make cheque payable to: "Moreland Energy Foundation Limited" VISA Bankcard Mastercard Other <i>(please circle)</i> Name on card: _____ Card no: _____ Expiry Date: _____ / _____		

**Join MEFL's
mailing list!!**

Stay in touch with MEFL by signing up to our e-bulletin. The e-bulletin comes out once a month and includes the latest news on events and workshops in Moreland, tips on saving energy and much more. To join phone MEFL on 9381 1722 or visit www.mefl.com.au

The Moreland Energy Foundation Ltd (MEFL) is working to reduce greenhouse gas emissions within the Moreland Community. Established by the Moreland City Council, MEFL is the first independent, locally based organisation devoted entirely to reducing community greenhouse emissions.