
From: Judy Whistler [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 24 November 2015 10:57 AM
To: Enquiry
Subject: Submission j. Whistler. Feed In Tariffs Enquiry Please advise if this arrives safely

Please find attached, and below my submission, with apologies for the delay,

I would like to thank the Queensland Government for holding this and the second Inquiry into our electricity supply. The amount of roof top solar in Queensland is largely due to previous government projects and to see your government continuing a process of real consultation is much appreciated.

If any of these comments are relevant to the earlier Inquiry, please forward them on if you wish'

Submission J Whistler [REDACTED]

Solar Feed-in Pricing in Queensland

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1. Benefits to Solar Households

- a. avoid costly up grades both urban and rural
- b. and avoid/minimize costly extensions – so called ‘thin lines’
- c. buy electricity at a lower price than the offering wholesale price
- d. avoid large investments, such as peak power stations as peak power demand flattened by solar or solar plus storage reduces the need for additional peak power generation.
- e. reasonable feed in tariff can ensure the network retains the customer, avoiding the ‘death spiral’, which may see significant numbers of solar customers leave the grid.
- f. Increased security and reliability. The threat of thousands of customers going into blackout during storms is lessened. Reports of individual solar homes retaining power despite violent weather which sees blackouts in surrounding areas-Fires in example S.Aust.
- g. Solar powered homes that remain on the grid are less of an insurance hazard, thence cost, as storms rarely destroy a solar power system.

2 Benefits to Solar Consumers

- a. Reduced costs for electricity, given we now have one of the most expensive domestic electricity in the world.
- b. Ideological/lifestyle benefits - Pleasure of using renewable energy, with lower greenhouse impact, lower air pollution, lower impact on bushlands by powerline easement etceteras.
- c. Not supporting the fossil fuel industry
- d. Some feeling of control over an essential service.
- e. Potential to maximise the investment in solar with smart metering, battery technology while retaining the reliability of the grid.
- f. An unfair, unreasonable feed in tariff and costs will continue to see electricity exported to the grid significantly less than the retail price so favouring adoption of battery storage
- g. A fair tariff may see the majority of homeowners stay with the grid
- h. For many it will mean affordable electricity for the home.
- i. . The current rash of increased charges, variable metering fees and other costs are seeing prices ever increasing, with consumers mystified and mistrusting.
- j.

3 Benefits to non-solar homeowners of a fair , reasonable tariff

- a. A reasonable feed in tariff encourages solar homes to remain on the grid, and continue to take their share of network and infrastructure costs.
- b. For those high consumers of electricity, (air-conditioning etc), the option to remain with the grid and use the power more wisely, may be taken as an alternative to solar.
- c. A reasonable feed in tariff will benefit those more mobile consumers, for whom cost is less of an issue as location and type of residence. Again for these, and for renters and others the options for reducing demand through efficiencies are available and easy to manage.
- d. With battery storage, unreasonabl. unfair feed in tariffs, costs, fees etc will see more consumers leaving the grid and put a greater strain put on those that remain.
- e. Environmental benefits of more localized distribution generation are for the whole community. In this area we have the Helidon Hills, regarded as the largest patch of connected bushland in South East Queensland . Unfortunately the Hills have over 30 km of potential and developed easements for powerlines – now about 119 mmeeters wide. The impacts on our wildlife are immense, and may in the future be avoided by more local, regional rooftop distribution networks

B Existing Barriers to Reasonable and Unfair Feed In Tariffs.

1. **Recurrent and on-going costs due to Infrastructure**, based on assumed continual demand increase, or/and lack of engaging with advancing technology.

The question of who covers such costs - gold plating’ of the assets. I understand that the utilities have an arrangement for on-going recompense/reward/incentive payments or some such that is seen by many as encouragement for unnecessary over investment

These were /are investments made against information over a number of years that reported future decreases in demand and decreased need for poles and wires expenditure. Consumers/households are now expected to bear the brunt of these unwise expenditures/financial borrowings. That appears both unreasonable and unfair in our competitive system.

2. The Cost of Air-conditioning

Nothing will improve if governments allow network or/and provider penalties for solar households while ignoring the real cost of air conditioning which is a cost spread over all consumers –whether they personally have air conditioning or not. Solar households use less electricity than non-solar, specially during the summer heat. and are credited with major responsibility for the flattening of the summer peak demand.

3. Volume of electricity used and network costs Especially during the heat of summer

There appears no recognition of the connection between the volume of electricity a customer uses and the cost of providing them with network services.

. If the return on exported electricity is much less than the retail electricity price, this increases the financial viability of storing the electricity in batteries for later consumption.

4. Costs affected by consumer demand at Peak Demand times

Residential solar owners are credited with a major responsibility for the important flattening of the summer peak demand bringing a lowering of costs for the mid day peak which benefits all consumers..

Network costs are mostly driven by how many appliances a customer has turned on when peak demand occurs on the local network. Those with high demand at peak times drive up network costs. Others don't, but still pay the same rate.

Solar can have an overall impact on the availability of electricity in times of extreme heat and extreme peak demand. With battery storage and smart metering, domestic solar has the potential to also impact the evening peaks in demand to the benefit of all consumers.

5. Belief that Solar is responsible for the increase in electricity prices

Domestic solar has a small role here, but greater impacts come from closures of manufacturing and aluminium plants, insulation, smart metering, building requirements and energy efficiency. This myth can gain momentum as consumers unable to understand the doubling and increases in fees welcome a scape goat – it does not help to develop a fair, balanced system of supply and costs..

6. Claims of huge costs to the network to accommodate household Solar.

These claims are in the millions of dollars and also see these unproven costs as a reason for increasing the charges, fees and/or lowering the feed in tariffs.

In November this year it was also reliably reported by a Sophie Vorath that 'Energex in Queensland estimates the infrastructure cost at **\$200 per solar system**. This includes system assessment, cost of meters and meter installation costs which solar consumers may pay for. However, Energex also state that it is difficult to accurately estimate network costs and benefits. '

Concerns around voltage fluctuations and reversed electricity flows are also used repeatedly as reasons for punitive or restrictive measures against solar. Yet it is reported there are relatively simple technical solutions. (Horizon Power already uses "[generation management devices](#)" that control and/or store the electricity generated)

7 Over Subsidising of Fossil Fuels for energy Production a Barrier to Fair feed in tariffs

a new international report has revealed that Australia is still subsidising fossil fuel production to the tune of a massive \$A5.6 billion a year.

The report, 'Empty promises: G20 subsidies to oil, gas and coal production', also highlights how Australian companies have received billions of dollars from other G20 governments to develop liquefied natural gas sites.

And it notes that Australia also funds the industry with a further \$A292 million (\$US262 million) a year in public finance, as it expands fossil fuel production on multiple fronts

C. Conclusion

1. Battery Storage and Future Options

The coming of affordable household battery storage for solar is relevant to the feed in tariff that Queensland adopts. A feed in tariff that is too low, combined with other excessive other charges will see many leaving the grid for a solar plus battery option.

This response could lead to what is termed the Death Spiral. Here accelerating charges on existing /remaining solar homes result in more leaving the grid, which then increases the need for more charges on existing customers. To many in the public this is seen as the impact of fossil fuel lobbyists who see the Death Spiral and rising prices as due to solar. A Fair Reasonable feed in target will help maintain customers for the grid.

A fair more reasonable response to battery storage is perhaps that reported from Western Australia and reported by Giles Parkinson on 17th November this year in the Renew Energy website..

'West Australian energy minister Mike Nahan announced that battery storage installations in the state would be allowed to export back into the WA grid from December 1 '

Also "This arrangement now means eligible customers can install battery storage or EV facilities to complement their solar PV systems and export unused electricity onto the network," Nahan said. "This is an important development given the emerging future trends which forecast widespread installation of solar PV, plus storage systems."

2. A Bit of History, Future Electricity Supply and Options

Queensland has developed on the back of cheap fossil fuelled electricity now largely privatised, state owned and a very profitable sector of the economy.

The position of dominance and high profitability is now challenged by more efficient, less polluting, locally generated and increasingly cost competitive solar power. Development greatly aided by Queensland government subsidies and the avoidance of additional peak power infrastructure.

It is a simple case of better technology coming on line which threatens the profits and control of the energy generation and changes the means of distribution from long distance high voltage to distributed and localised.

To stave off the threat, excessive charges from service, metering charge increases, various tariffs and even a highly raised disconnection fees have been used and the need to incorporate the new ignored.

This way appears to leave a future of stranded assets, reduced incomes and a national grid network that is superseded by many smaller, decentralised, regional and local generation and distribution models.

The future will be in allowing the most efficient, less pollution systems to be encouraged.

Queensland has led the way with domestic solar, in having this public submission process, in allowing choice between providers and now, in keeping with electoral commitments has these two public Inquiries. .

I hope that there will be fair and reasonable tariffs coupled with a wider approach and embrace of new technologies

If further details, such as sources etc that I have used, please contact me.

Apologies for the late submission, we are in a fairly isolated rural area with no high speed connection. I unsuccessfully tried to contact your office continually. When I realised I could not get it to you over the internet on the 23rd... continually engaged, but at the public meeting we were told that late submission would be received.

If in this submission I have made points that could also be relevant to the other Inquiry, please forward a copy to that Inquiry

Best Wishes
Judith M. Whistler



I have written this as a member of both the Helidon Hills and Murphys Creek Landcare and the Fordsdale School of Arts, after discussion with other members, but insufficient time to take it to meetings.

Due to our location, and the cost of bringing the grid to our valley we have been stand alone solar for about 32 years but have always retained an intense interest in electricity supply .