



Anthony Roberts
Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy

MEDIA RELEASE

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IPART FACT SHEETS TO ASSIST SOLAR BONUS SCHEME CUSTOMERS

The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) today released a series of fact sheets to help Solar Bonus Scheme (SBS) customers prepare for the closure of the scheme at the end of the year.

In 2009 the former Labor Government announced the introduction of the SBS and legislated it to close on 31 December 2016. Labor estimated the SBS would cost \$362 million. However, by October 2010, the estimated cost of the SBS, if it continued the way it was going, would have reached \$3.988 billion, according to the NSW Auditor General's Report 2011.

In response to the increased costs that would be paid by all NSW households and businesses to fund the SBS, the gross tariff for new applicants was reduced from 60 to 20 cents, which reduced the estimated cost to \$1.94 billion.

The NSW Liberals & Nationals Government then closed the SBS to new applicants in April 2011, thereby further reducing the estimated final cost of the scheme to approximately \$1.26 billion. These costs continue to be subsidised by the rest of the state's electricity customers.

Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy, Anthony Roberts, said the closure of the SBS would affect around 146,000 of the almost 350,000 households and businesses in NSW which have installed small scale solar and are now generating their own electricity.

"Since the SBS closed to new participants in April 2011, a further 200,000 households and small businesses have installed solar systems without the need for a subsidised feed-in tariff," Mr Roberts said.

"It demonstrates that even without the subsidised scheme, customers are benefitting by using the electricity their solar panels generate in their home, which saves having to buy electricity and therefore reduces their overall bill."

To get maximum benefit from their solar systems, SBS customers need to ensure they switch from a gross meter to a net meter (which could also be a smart meter). This means the electricity generated by their solar panels can be first used in the home, with any excess power exported to the grid.

IPART found that when the SBS ends, customers who switch from a gross meter to a net meter are likely to be between \$234 and \$461 better off each year, depending on the size of their solar system.

To help Scheme participants manage the transition, the NSW Government has organised more than 20 state-wide information sessions and developed a comprehensive web portal to assist customers with information on smart meters, battery storage and energy management systems.

Customers should also speak to their preferred energy supplier about their options to make the most of their solar PV system.

To view the IPART fact sheets visit:
www.ipart.nsw.gov.au

For more information on the closure of the SBS visit:
<http://www.resourcesandenergy.nsw.gov.au/energy-consumers/solar/solar-bonus-scheme/faqs-about-the-solar-bonus-scheme-closure>