

Yoland Wadsworth

Submission to inquiry (solar energy)

10/2/16

Dear Inquiry Committee,

I was relieved when the Victorian Labor Government promised to promote and protect solar in the State -- including a commitment to an investigation into the true value of exported rooftop solar.

As one of the early-takeup cohort who paid a relatively high price for our rooftop solar systems but were compensated with a good payment rate for creating the sustainable energy to power Victoria, I just want to make the point that, unless this fair price is across the board, I am currently -- and will continue to be -- locked in to my current unpreferred energy supplier (Origin Energy), as I have seen in the fine print that any change to my supplier will see me losing that feed-in rate on which I still rely to pay off my system and keep my power bills low into retirement on a low fixed income. This situation is of course counter to economic competition policy.

I am sure many others have made the wider arguments, but I would like to restate them:

- . Rooftop solar power is more valuable and delivering more benefits than climate-endangering fossil fuels and the price paid should reflect this.
- . It is not fair that retailers are able to buy cheap, exported solar from one house and sell it to a neighbour at an inflated price.
- . The costs that networks (that own the poles and wires) charge for solar power should be minimised as rooftop solar puts less strain on the grid due to its decentralised structure.
- . Solar power helps reduce the costs of the grid by averting the need to build more expensive poles and wires and minimising loss of electricity.
- . Battery stored solar power that is exported to the grid should attract the same price as solar power.
- . Rooftop solar power creates no carbon pollution, no particulate pollution and does not create other environmental and other health problems such as those associated with the mining, transportation or burning of fossil fuels.

May I add as evidence that some suppliers (like Origin Energy) are letting down the push to sustainability, by mentioning that my solar rooftop system did not work for many many months without my knowing. However Origin Energy knew this, but did not tell me until I got a huge bill for electricity and I phoned them to ask why they had stopped receiving my rooftop solar inputs. I did not know -- nor did I even know that I needed to know, or could know how to monitor whether my inverter was working or not. Apparently it ceased working a few months after the guarantee ceased. I am not a specialist with technical knowledge, and thought I knew enough and was having the system regularly inspected as per the installer's recommendation.

I look forward to your strong leadership on the solar system issue just as I have been heartened by your strong leadership regarding offering vulnerable refugees safe refuge in Victoira.

These kinds of decisions make me proud to have your government in office.

Thanking you