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a thriving community, locally active and globally aware

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Submission to the Victorian Government's Feed-in Tariff Inquiry

BEAM Mitchell Environment Group, with The Seymour We Want has begun a series of initiatives to develop the sustainability of Seymour. Some of these initiatives focus on small and medium scale electricity generation projects including solar panels and pumped hydro-electricity. In addition, many of the members of our groups and the wider Sustainable Seymour Network are considering or already have solar panels on their roofs, and are considering adding battery storage to their systems.

So we are concerned that the feed-in tariff is so low that it makes investment in renewable energy generation much less viable.

We feel that 5c/kWh comes nowhere near the true value of renewable sources of distributed electricity generation. The true value include:

- Renewable energy is cleaner than fossil fuels and the price paid should reflect this. The health benefits alone should warrant a higher price for renewables.
- Rooftop solar owners just want a fair go. It's not fair that retailers are able to buy cheap, exported solar from one house and sell it to a neighbour at an inflated price. We are looking at Virtual Net Metering for Seymour but the main outlet for any surplus energy will remain in the hands of the retailers for some time.
- The costs that networks (the companies 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. Indeed, 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. Many of our members live in country areas where they are at the end of distribution networks, and voltage drops and power failures are common. BY producing electricity in these areas, they are providing a service during times of peak demand.
- Battery stored solar power that is exported to the grid should attract the same price as solar and other forms of renewable power.
- Higher feed-in tariffs would improve expected returns and encourage investment in renewable energy by individuals, communities and businesses.

Yours Sincerely

Peter Mitchell,
Secretary,
BEAM Mitchell Environment Group
for the Sustainable Seymour Network