

Carolyn Cliff

## **Victorian Government's inquiry into Solar energy**

10/2/16

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on residential solar energy production.

My husband and I have solar panels on our roof for a number of reasons:

- \* it makes good use of an otherwise wasted resource
- \* it makes sense for us to have some control over our energy use and cost
- \* and that, via our grid connection, we can share what we don't use with others.

This last point, while important is also somewhat contentious, in that while we only received 4 cents for each kWh we put into the grid, the cost for any power we take out of it is considerably higher. In other words, what the power company buys from us at a minimal each kWh, is on-sold for a massive profit. In other industries, this would be considered cartel-like behaviour. In this particular industry, it is accepted as reasonable. Quite plainly, it is not. Further, power companies can claim the power produced by my solar panels (and others like mine) as green energy production, which is again on-sold at a premium price.

Given the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, it would make sense to encourage greater engagement with residential solar energy production. The current pricing structure does nothing to support this and I urge this enquiry to address the current situation. A good outcome would be an equitable tariff for power fed into the grid, in line with charges for taking it out.

Another point we would like to raise concerns a potential to improve the relationship between commercial solar power complexes (or other alternative power production sites) and the community. If there was some way of including surround communities in the benefits coming from the power generated, then they might be more supportive of such developments. For example, those within certain radius of the alternative power plant receive some reduction in their power bills, or even are able to buy shares in the development. The benefits would decrease incrementally as the distance from the site increases. Such schemes, we believe, have been developed in German and other countries.