



Mick Gentleman MLA
Member for Brindabella

Media Statement

Monday, 14 May 2007

Canberra: Soon to be the solar capital?

Known for its large number of environmental enthusiasts, Canberra will be a greener capital if a new proposal is adopted which will assist people to generate their own electricity. Labor Member for Brindabella Mick Gentleman has asked the Chief Minister and Minister for Environment Jon Stanhope to consider including a 'Feed-in Law' as part of the ACT Labor Government's renewed Climate Change Strategy due to be released in coming weeks.

A Feed-in Law is a market mechanism that encourages the adoption of solar technology by paying people who generate their own electricity via solar cells (Photovoltaic or PV). People who generate electricity from their roof top and feed that electricity back into the grid are paid more than the market price for the power that they generate.

"This offsets the cost of installing the PV panels on the roof and encourages people to generate clean energy," he said.

"We are currently investigating which would be the most appropriate model for the ACT. The most successful model we have is the German one, which has been in operation since 1991 and was amended in 2000. In Germany, the rate is set at a higher level than current electricity and is paid on each unit of the electricity generated by the consumers' solar PV system. The premium paid to the generator falls every year and is funded through a small levy on all electricity bills.

"The PV industry in Germany has resulted in €6.8 billion being invested in PV systems in that country since 1999 and is now employing 30,000 people. The ACT will hopefully now get a slice of the solar action.

"There's no doubt the increased use of PV panels would create jobs in trades connected with installation such as the electrical and other building trades. In

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future with adequate demand, we could even see a high-tech PV manufacturer set-up in the ACT.

“I think this exciting technology has the potential to provide Canberrans with the opportunity to generate cost-effective clean energy, and to protect Canberrans from electricity fluctuations caused by issues such as water shortages.

“The scientific evidence of climate change is indisputable. We all have to act now, and the ACT must play its role in contributing to the growing international and national response to climate change,” Mr Gentleman said.

Statement ends

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