

Solar Feed-in Tariffs
NSW Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal
PO Box Q290
QVB Post Office NSW 1230

I am the owner of a small 1.5kw solar PV system which although installed almost a year ago has only recently been connected. I became aware of the process involving the Tribunal's determination of a solar PV feed-in tariff only a couple of weeks ago. Unfortunately, these issues do not seem to receive wide publicity locally. I have read the draft report, but due to limited time, difficulty obtaining information on the largely de-regulated power industry (everything seems to be "commercial in confidence" including tariffs), and difficulties with the internet service, I am not as well informed as I had hoped to be. Nevertheless, I would like to submit some comments on the draft report.

1. Net Metering

While the Tribunal's charter was to determine an appropriate feed-in tariff for new systems, the future of existing systems is a closely related issue. Like most people, I opted for gross metering because that was by far the best arrangement under the Solar Bonus Scheme. I understand from the draft report that it is likely that all regulation will cease in a year or so. That being the case, on the expiration of the SB scheme the ability of existing installations on gross metering to change to net metering may be in doubt. I feel this should have been addressed.

2. Network and other costs

Refer draft recommendation 3 page 10.

Any reduction in costs to the retailer by reduced use of the network as a result of power generated locally apparently cannot be counted because of National Electricity Rules and structure of metering arrangements. Network charges are a large portion of the retail price, particularly in Western NSW. If reduction of the use of the network is occurring, then someone must benefit. It would seem that it is the owner of the transmission system who is being paid by the retailer for a service the retailer is not receiving. While net metering would largely offset this situation, any review of national rules should address this.

3. Green energy

Retailers offer green energy for a premium tariff. Such green energy is said to be derived from renewable sources. I would like to know if solar PV systems are included in this. In my area I could opt for 20% green energy from my current retailer. I have calculated that the additional cost for my current usage works out at 9.4 cents/kwh. I would like to know if the retailer will be able to purchase power from solar PV systems at the recommended 8-10 cents + network charges, then sell it as green energy with a mark-up of 9 cents. If so, then the solar PV system owner should, I believe, receive the majority of the 9 cents on top of the feed-in tariff. I feel this issue should have been addressed.

4. Draft recommendation 6 page 9.

The quality and accessibility of information needs to be improved not just for feed-in tariffs but for tariffs generally. I had difficulty finding actual tariffs. Mostly I was steered to a website or organisation wanting to sign me up into a contract, with the only information available the amount of money I would pay for the consumption on a recent bill. What I wanted was the actual tariff structure so I could better manage my power usage.

I apologize if any of these matters have been addressed. As stated earlier, I have not had sufficient time to fully investigate them.

Roger Edwards