



MEDIA RELEASE

The Hon Peter Garrett MP

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts

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LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS A PRIORITY FOR COBURG SOLAR CITY

A community program exploring how low-income households can become more sustainable will be a highlight of Australia's latest Solar Cities project.

Environment Minister Peter Garrett today announced \$4.9 million in Australian Government funding for the Coburg Solar City, the 6th in the Solar Cities program.

"I am particularly pleased that a key feature of the Coburg Solar City will be the development of an 'Energy Hub', a community enterprise providing energy retrofit services for low income and public housing tenants," Mr Garrett said.

"This is a clear example of governments, industry and the community sector working together to help their communities cut greenhouse gas emissions.

"Led by the Moreland Energy Foundation Ltd in partnership with the Moreland City Council, the Victorian Government and the Brotherhood of St Laurence, the Coburg Solar City project will ensure that assistance gets to those who need it most in finding sustainable energy solutions. We expect around 1000 low income households to benefit from energy efficiency audits and retrofitting," Mr Garrett said.

The Brotherhood of St Laurence will build on a scheme funded by the Victorian Government where unemployed people are trained to retrofit low income households for energy and water efficiency, such as insulation and shower heads.

Victorian Environment Minister, Gavin Jennings said the Victorian Government had contributed \$500,000 to the project through the Smart Energy Zone scheme.

"The MEFL/Solar Cities consortium should be congratulated for providing a great example of how Victorian communities can work together to act on climate change by stimulating innovation.," Mr Jennings said.

"The Brumby Government will continue to take action on climate change by supporting the project through Sustainability Victoria's Smart Energy Zones scheme."

Data collection is the key aim of the Solar City Program and this project this will include the installation of smart meters in homes to provide data on how energy use holds up under external pressures, such as rising energy prices.

The Energy Hub will include a community-wide campaign to help households, businesses and community organisations to understand and reduce their carbon footprint. As well as smart meters, it will involve the installation of solar systems; discounts on energy efficient products and grants to install energy and water saving measures targeting community residential units, renters and families.

It will also work to establish an Energy Services Company to develop small scale energy projects in the area and inform a major redevelopment of the Coburg City Centre.

“The addition of Coburg is part of the Government’s election commitment to expand the Solar Cities program,” Mr Garrett said.

“Coburg joins Adelaide, Townsville, Blacktown, Alice Springs and Central Victoria as part of the \$94 million Solar Cities initiative to help us change the way we supply and use energy.”

By collecting vital information and data on energy use, the Australian Government will develop effective policy responses to help tackle climate change. For more information about the Australian Government’s Solar Cities program visit www.environment.gov.au/solarcities