



# MEDIA RELEASE

**The Hon Peter Garrett MP**

*Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts*

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## **SOLAR AND WATER GRANTS TO BENEFIT SCHOOLS AND INDUSTRY**

Marking the start of term 3 in New South Wales, Environment Minister, Peter Garrett today reminded Australia's 9000 plus schools that they now had the opportunity to become solar schools thanks to the *National Solar Schools Program*.

Mr Garrett said grants of up to \$50,000 were now available for the installation of solar power systems and a host of energy and water saving measures.

Visiting Newtown Public School in Sydney, Mr Garrett said the program would provide schools with an unprecedented opportunity to take practical action to help tackle climate change while saving money, energy and water.

"The Rudd Labor Government wants every Australian school – primary, secondary, public and private – to have the opportunity to become a 'solar school' and the commencement of this half a billion dollar program delivers on our election commitment.

"Schools can save energy, water and money through this program. Schools with mains power supply may also be able to sell surplus solar power from weekends and school holidays back into the grid – making these schools 'mini' renewable power stations."

Mr Garrett said the *National Solar Schools Program* replaced the Green Vouchers for Schools program, and provided schools with greater freedom to choose from a wider range of renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies.

"Every school, every home and every community is different. The National Solar Schools Program provides the flexibility schools need to find sustainable solutions that suit their individual needs. We will be encouraging schools to undertake a sustainability audit to help them determine what delivers the best results for them," Mr Garrett said.

"Rainwater tanks, solar hot water systems, upgraded lighting, insulation, small wind or hydro power generators, awnings – there is a long list of water and energy efficiency measures that schools can choose from to improve their sustainability. Schools will decide what is best and the Government will provide the backing.

"Solar Schools will strengthen the Australian Government's partnership with state and territory governments through AuSSI - the Australian Sustainable Schools Initiative, which seeks to improve education in schools about sustainability.

"Industry too will benefit from the program from the \$480 million federal funding injection creating increased demand for large solar power systems for school roofs.

"Importantly, this program will also provide students with a practical demonstration and knowledge which will carry with them into their homes and into our communities; every little bit helping in the global effort against climate change," Mr Garrett said.

Mr Garrett said schools could find out more information about the program, including funding guidelines at: [www.environment.gov.au/settlements/renewable/nationalsolarschools/index.html](http://www.environment.gov.au/settlements/renewable/nationalsolarschools/index.html)