



# MEDIA RELEASE

**The Hon Peter Garrett MP**

*Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts*

PG /141

13th September 2008

## **A SOLAR SUBURB WITHIN A SOLAR CITY**

The \$32 million Solar City in Townsville will help the local community save energy, save money and reduce carbon pollution, Environment Minister Peter Garrett said today.

Visiting Magnetic Island for the launch of the Smart Lifestyle Centre at Horseshoe Bay, Mr Garrett said the Magnetic Island Solar Suburb would be the main component of Townsville Solar City, with the installation of 2500 smart meters, 1700 household energy audits and an estimated 500 solar photovoltaic systems installed on residential rooftops.

“Magnetic Island residents are already coming on board with 31 PV solar systems and 54 smart meters already installed and a massive 35,785 watts from old light bulbs replaced with energy efficient ones. This community is so eager to embrace green living that over 100 homes have already participated in energy audits.”

Mr Garrett said the new Smart Lifestyle Centre would help inform energy efficient decisions, providing a one-stop shop to showcase photovoltaic systems, energy efficient lighting and smart metering technologies – with a host of solar and energy saving tips.

“As well as saving energy, money and reducing carbon pollution, one of the real advantages of the Townsville Solar City is that work to install additional electricity infrastructure through this magnificent, World Heritage, Great Barrier Reef Marine Park can be postponed.

“Everyone who lives, works or owns property on Magnetic Island can participate. I encourage all residents, landlords and business owners to sign up to the program today and receive a free energy assessment and energy saving devices, with the opportunity to host a solar energy system.”

The Townsville Solar City projects are located at Magnetic Island, Rocky Springs, Riverway and the proposed GreenT building in the CBD. As well, the project is involving the community and selling its message across Townsville through the Community Based Social Marketing initiative

“Together, these elements will deliver carbon pollution reductions of more than 50,000 tonnes over the life of the project – equivalent to taking 1700 cars off the road, while increasing public awareness in sustainable energy use,” Mr Garrett said.

“The information and data collected through Townsville Solar City will complement the work being done in the six other Solar Cities in Adelaide, Alice Springs, Blacktown, Central Victoria, Coburg and Perth.

“Combined, the seven cities are expected to reduce carbon pollution by more than 76,000 tonnes each year, with over 3,200 solar photovoltaic panels expected to be installed on private and public housing and other buildings,” Mr Garrett said.

The Townsville Consortium is receiving \$15 million under the Australian Government’s \$94 million Solar Cities program. The Consortium members will also contribute to the Solar Cities project, including Ergon Energy, the Queensland Government, Townsville City Council, Delfin Lend Lease, Honeycombes Property Group and Cafalo Pty Ltd.

For more information on Solar Cities visit [www.environment.gov.au/solarcities](http://www.environment.gov.au/solarcities)