

MEDIA RELEASE

Shane Rattenbury MLA, Energy Spokesperson, ACT Greens

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Greens propose changes to soften solar industry impact

ACT Greens Energy spokesperson Shane Rattenbury has proposed changes to the feed in tariff that will soften the impact on the local solar industry following the Government's sudden announcement that the micro-scheme had ended.

"The Government and Liberals ignored the Greens' arguments that capping the feed-in tariff scheme would cause a sudden change in the market, and now we have a local industry in trouble," said ACT Greens Energy spokesperson Shane Rattenbury.

"I am proposing the feed-in tariff legislation is changed so that systems of 0-200kW can receive the medium scale tariff rate.

"This will effectively do two things: reduce the tariff for micro generators to a more sustainable rate, and secondly, soften the impact of the scheme cap hitting local businesses.

"As we've always said, we'd prefer no cap for the micro scheme with a lower tariff rate. But given that the government insists on a cap, the next best solution is to allow the micro-installers to access the medium tariff.

"There can be no criticism the cost is of the program is increasing as the cost per unit of installed solar will the same.

"The Energy Minister has indicated that he would ensure the industry would be protected against sudden shocks, but we haven't seen any sign of him doing this. It's likely that a few hundred jobs are at risk in the next few weeks.

“The Greens will propose an amendment to the Feed in Tariff legislation in the next sitting to remedy this situation, and allow the micro-sector to access the medium tariff.

“The cap has only been in place for three months, and already we have reached it. This is an unacceptable timeframe for business to be doing any kind of planning for the future, and we owe it to them to sort this mess out,” said Mr Rattenbury.

Energy Minister Simon Corbell said 17th February 2011:

“The ability of the minister, as proposed in this bill, to move allocations within the overall scheme cap gives the necessary flexibility needed to avoid any sudden shocks or closures of particular categories. That, combined with the regular price review mechanism that is advised to me by the ICRC, will also provide a certain level of surety.”