

## **Customer Service Centre Questions and Answers**

### **Announced changes to feed-in tariffs**

#### **Question: Why are feed-in tariffs changing?**

Answer: Changes to feed-in tariffs follow a wide-ranging review by the independent Victorian Competition and Efficiency Commission (VCEC). It considered the significant fall in the price of solar panels as well as the costs to the wider community of supporting feed-in tariffs. The Commission concluded that the fairest outcome going forward would be to base feed-in tariff rates on the wholesale price for power.

This avoids placing upward pressure on electricity prices. Previous feed-in tariffs meant that solar electricity was being purchased at a higher than wholesale-rate., This additional cost was being paid for by the rest of the community through higher power bills.

Up until now, different rates were available for different renewable energies and different sized systems. This is being streamlined to one “efficient and fair” rate of 8 cents for 2013, based on the wholesale price for electricity and determined annually by the regulator until 2016.

### **Victorian Competition and Efficiency Commission (VCEC) Inquiry – General**

#### **Question: Is the Victorian Competition and Efficiency Commission (VCEC) Report publicly available and where can I access it?**

Answer: The final report is available on the website of the Victorian Department of Treasury and Finance, as is the Government response to the recommendations contained in the report. ([www.dtf.vic.gov.au](http://www.dtf.vic.gov.au))

#### **Question: What are the main features of the Government’s response to the Victorian Competition and Efficiency Commission (VCEC) report in relation to feed-in tariffs?**

Answer: The Transitional Feed-in Tariff (TFIT) scheme will be closed to new applicants as soon as practicable after reaching 75MW in capacity.

No retrospective rate changes will be made to existing customers on the premium solar, transitional and “one-for-one” feed-in tariff schemes. An end date will, however, be introduced for customers on a “one-for-one” offer.

A new “efficient and fair” rate will be introduced upon closure of the TFIT scheme and “one-for-one” arrangements. It will be set at 8 cents/kWh for 2013. Subsequently it will be updated by the regulator on an annual basis until 2016.

The new rate will apply to renewables of less than 100kW and also to low-emissions technologies once legislative amendments are made.

There will be a requirement on retailers to offer the minimum prescribed feed-in tariff (8 cents for 2013) until at least 2017. Retailers, however, are always free to top up over and above the minimum should they choose to do so.

**Question: What are the main features of the Government's response to the Victorian Competition and Efficiency Commission (VCEC) report in relation to minimising barriers to distributed generation?**

Answer: The Commission has found that the primary barrier to distributed generation is the connections process. The Government will be looking to provide improved information on the connection process and how best to streamline the process.

**Question: Why has the Government released its response to the final Victorian Competition and Efficiency Commission (VCEC) report so quickly? Has it allowed enough time to consider the recommendations properly?**

Answer: The Government has given careful consideration to all of the recommendations contained in the final VCEC report.

The Government has published its response in as timely a manner as possible in order to provide greater certainty for the solar and renewables industry and its customers. It also sought to ensure that current feed-in tariff arrangements, which add to cost pressures on all Victorian electricity customers, do not continue longer than necessary and are replaced with more sustainable arrangements.

### **Premium Solar Feed-in Tariff**

**Question: I am currently receiving the premium solar feed-in tariff (PFIT). Will I be affected by the new feed-in tariff arrangements?**

Answer: No. There will be no retrospective changes. Customers who qualified for the premium solar feed-in tariff prior to scheme closure will continue to receive premium solar feed-in tariff credits until the legislated end of the scheme on 31 October 2024, provided that they continue to meet the eligibility requirements of the scheme. Customers will continue to receive a minimum of 60 cents per kilowatt hour for electricity exported to the grid over this period of time.

In particular, customers will not be able to upgrade their system capacity beyond that which was already installed at scheme closure without forfeiting their PFIT credits.

**Question: I have heard that the new rate will be set at 8 cents per kilowatt hour. I am a premium solar feed-in tariff (PFIT) customer. Does this mean my rate will be reduced to 8 cents?**

Answer: No. There will be no retrospective changes to the PFIT scheme. You will continue to receive a minimum of 60 cents per kilowatt hour for electricity exported to the grid until

the legislated end of the scheme on 31 October 2024, provided that you continue to meet the eligibility requirements of the scheme.

**Question: Can I change energy retailers without forfeiting my premium solar feed-in tariff (PFIT)?**

Answer: Yes, you are free to move to another electricity retailer at any time you choose. Once you are signed-up to the premium rate, your property will remain eligible until 2024. Just be sure to check your obligations under your current contract with your electricity retailer. Some retailers may charge a fee if you exit the contract early. This is specified under the terms and conditions of your contract.

**Question: I am moving house. Can I take my solar panels with me and continue to receive the premium solar feed-in tariff (PFIT)?**

Answer: No. Your PFIT payments are linked to your property. This means that you cannot continue to receive the PFIT at your new address.

**Question: I receive the premium feed-in tariff. If I sell my house can the new occupants receive the premium rate?**

Answer: Yes. As the PFIT is linked to the property and not to the customer, any house which is signed-up can continue to access the premium rate until 2024. This means that if you sell your house, the new occupants will be able to access the premium FIT.

**Question: What happens if I move into a house with solar panels which was previously signed-up for the premium solar feed-in tariff (PFIT)?**

Answer: As the PFIT is linked to the property and not to the customer, any house which is signed-up can continue to access the premium rate until 2024. This includes if you move into a property which already has solar panels and was signed up to the PFIT before its closure.

However, you cannot add new panels to an existing solar system after the closure date and continue to access the premium rate. Additional panels will disqualify you because there is a state-wide capacity cap for the scheme. If you would still like to add capacity to your system, you should contact your electricity retailer about other solar offers available to you.

**Question: Can I increase the capacity of my existing system and continue to receive the premium solar feed-in tariff (PFIT)?**

Answer: No – The PFIT scheme has reached capacity and was closed on 29 December 2011; you cannot therefore add additional panels to your existing solar system and still receive the premium rate. By adding new panels, even if you remain below the 5kW system size limit, you will forfeit the premium rate. Should you still wish to install additional panels, you will

be eligible to receive the new feed-in tariff rate which will be set at 8 cents for 2013 and will be updated by the regulator on an annual basis until 2016.

**Question: Some of my solar panels have been damaged. Can I replace them without forfeiting the premium rate?**

Answer: Yes. You are able to replace existing panels provided you do not add any additional generating capacity. This means that you are able to replace damaged panels without forfeiting the premium rate so long as you do not increase your system size by replacing existing panels with higher generation capacity panels.

**Question: How can I tell if I have an effective Premium Feed-in Tariff contract and that I am having premium credits applied?**

Answer: If all paperwork was lodged with your energy suppliers, including an agreed premium rate contract with an electricity retailer, you had solar metering in place and you were placed on the correct PFIT network tariff before the premium scheme's closure, you should have qualified for the PFIT scheme.

This means you will continue to receive credits until the scheme ends on 31 October 2024, provided you maintain your eligibility and do not upgrade your system capacity.

You do not need to have received a bill with premium rate credits on it to be considered eligible for the scheme. However it is best to check this with your electricity retailer.

Contact your retailer to see if all the required steps were completed prior to final scheme closure.

**Question: I installed my solar PV system and applied for the premium rate ahead September 30 2011, but my retailer did not process my application and I missed out. What should I do?**

Answer: The closure of the premium solar feed-in tariff (PFIT) scheme on 29 December 2011 was statutory in nature so it is unfortunately not possible for you to now qualify for the PFIT. If you were unable to qualify for the scheme due to incorrect or lack of action from your electricity retailer or distributor, you may wish to raise the matter with the independent Energy and Water Ombudsman of Victoria (EWOV). EWOV has the power to investigate and facilitate resolution of consumer complaints, and the service is also free to consumers. EWOV can be contacted on 1800 500 509 (Freecall).

Calls from restricted phone services - ring 12550 (Telstra reverse charges) and quote (03) 9649 7599 – the EWOV will then accept the reverse charges and the call cost.

You may also still wish to apply for the Transitional Feed-in Tariff [up to 30 September 2012) or to express your interest in the new feed-in tariff to be set at 8 cents per kilowatt hour for 2013.

**Question: I submitted my paperwork for premium solar feed-in tariff (PFIT) in early October 2011. Couldn't the Government have just asked electricity businesses to process the paperwork? Why can't the PFIT be extended?**

Answer: The premium scheme was designed with a cap on the installed capacity of solar panels across the state of 100 megawatts. This cap is fully subscribed, which means the premium scheme has now closed.

If you submitted your paperwork after September 30 2011, you should contact an electricity retailer and discuss the solar offers available to you. You may still be eligible for the new Transitional Feed-in Tariff which offers eligible properties with small-scale solar PV systems of up to five kilowatts in size a credit of at least 25 cents per kilowatt hour for excess electricity fed back into the grid or for the new feed-in tariff to apply from 1 January 2013. If applying for the Transitional Feed-in Tariff, make sure you submit all paperwork by 30 September 2012 to be considered under this scheme.

Register with DPI - [www.dpi.vic.gov.au/feedintariffupdates](http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au/feedintariffupdates) if you would like to receive updates on new feed-in tariff arrangements.

**Question: I have recently installed solar panels and would like to access the premium solar feed-in tariff. Can I still do so?**

Answer: No - The Premium Feed-in Tariff was closed to new applicants on 29 December 2011. It is no longer possible for new customers to access this scheme.

### **Transitional Feed-in Tariff**

**Question: I am currently receiving the transitional solar feed-in tariff (TFIT). Will I be affected by the new feed-in tariff arrangements?**

Answer: No. There will be no retrospective changes. Customers who are already receiving transitional solar feed-in tariff credits will continue to receive these credits until the legislated end of the scheme on 31 December 2016, provided that they continue to meet the eligibility requirements of the scheme.

**Question: I have installed solar panels and am in the process of applying for the Transitional Feed-in Tariff. Will I qualify in time before the scheme closes?**

Answer: If you have already paid a deposit and commenced the process of installing solar, you can still apply for the current transitional tariff. To be considered, you should ensure that you, your solar installer or electrician submit all paperwork to your electricity suppliers by 30 September 2012.

Paperwork includes the:

- Solar Connection Form (to your electricity distributor)
- Electrical Works Request (EWR) (to your electricity retailer)
- Certificate of Electrical Safety (CES) (to your electricity retailer)
- Transitional Feed-in Tariff Application Form (to your electricity retailer)

Double-check that all forms are accurate and all mandatory fields are complete. If possible, email the forms so you have a record of submission and retain a copy of all documents for your files. To complete these forms, you will need to have your system fully installed and signed-off by a licensed electrical inspector.

If you are in the SP AusNet distribution area and your system is greater than 4.5 kilowatts in size, you may also need to complete a preapproval process. This may increase the time it takes to complete the end-to-end process required to qualify for the TFIT scheme. Contact your distributor for further information.

Once paperwork is submitted, to complete the eligibility process you will also need to have your metering upgraded and have feed-in tariff credits being applied to your account by 31 December 2012.

**Question: My solar retailer/installer has told me that they can guarantee that I will be able to access the Transitional Feed-in Tariff. Is this correct?**

Answer: No. No one can guarantee that systems installed from this point onwards will have completed all the steps required to qualify for the Transitional Feed-in Tariff by scheme closure. If you are considering installing solar you should be aware that you may not qualify for the Transitional feed-in tariff but that you may be eligible for the new feed-in tariff (set at 8 cents in 2013) instead. You may also wish to consider the benefits of avoided electricity consumption from the grid, rather than simply the value of any excess electricity exported to the grid.

**Question: Do my panels need to be inspected prior to 30 September 2012?**

Answer: Yes, the installation of your solar panels will need to have been inspected and signed off by a licensed electrical inspector on your Certificate of Electrical Safety (CES), which will need to be lodged with your electricity retailer by 30 September 2012.

**Question: Does my metering need to be upgraded by 30 September 2012?**

Answer: No. Whilst you will need to submit all the relevant paperwork by 30 September 2012 (including the Solar Connection Form, Electrical Works Request, Certificate of Electrical Safety and retailer Transitional Feed-in Tariff Application (TFIT) form) the upgrade to your metering does not need to be completed by this date. Your metering will, however, need to have been upgraded by final scheme closure and you will need to have been placed on the correct TFIT network tariff in order to qualify for the scheme.

**Question: I am already receiving TFIT credits. Can I upgrade my system capacity prior to the Transitional Feed-in tariff scheme closing?**

Answer: In order to continue receiving credits under the transitional feed-in tariff scheme, it is recommended that you complete your upgrade, lodge the associated paperwork with your electricity distributor and notify your electricity retailer prior to 30 September 2012.

Once the scheme is closed you cannot add additional panels to your existing solar system and still receive the transitional rate. By adding new panels, even if you remain below the 5kW system size limit, you will forfeit the transitional rate. Should you still wish to install additional panels, you will be eligible to receive the new feed-in tariff rate which will be set at 8 cents for 2013 and will be updated by the regulator on an annual basis until 2016.

**Question: Some of my solar panels have been damaged. Can I replace them without forfeiting the transitional rate?**

Answer: Yes. You are able to replace existing panels after scheme closure provided you do not add any additional generating capacity. This means that you are able to replace damaged panels without forfeiting the transitional rate so long as you do not increase your system size by replacing existing panels with higher generation capacity panels.

**Question: How can I tell if I have an effective Transitional Feed-in Tariff contract and that I am having transitional credits applied?**

Answer: If all paperwork has been lodged with your energy suppliers, including an agreed transitional rate contract with an electricity retailer, you have solar metering in place and you have been placed on the correct TFIT network tariff before the TFIT scheme's closure, you should qualify for the TFIT scheme.

This means you will continue to receive credits until the scheme ends on 31 December 2016, provided you maintain your eligibility and do not upgrade your system capacity.

You do not need to have received a bill with transitional rate credits on it to be considered eligible for the scheme. However it is best to check this with your electricity retailer.

Contact your retailer to see if all the requisite steps have been completed.

**Question: I have applied for the Transitional Feed-in Tariff but my latest bill has no reference to the credit - what has happened?**

Answer: The first thing to do is to contact your retailer to confirm that they have received your Transitional feed-in tariff application and that:

- all eligibility criteria were met;
- you have the correct metering installed and that it is properly configured; and
- you have been placed on the correct TFIT network tariff.

If you applied verbally on the telephone, ask the retailer to check for any customer contact notes on your account to confirm when the conversation took place.

You may also wish to ask for written confirmation from your electricity retailer that although your bill has been delayed, you have been placed on the Transitional Feed-in Tariff and will be receiving credits on future bills.

If you are in this situation and the application of credits has been delayed through no fault of your own – for example you are eligible and all the required metering is in place - then you should check that once the billing issues are resolved, all accrued credits are back-dated to when you first qualified for the scheme and are applied to your next bill or subsequent bill.

If this situation continues or you believe you need help to resolve the matter with your energy retail company, then you should contact the Energy and Water Ombudsman (EWOV) on: 1800 500 509 (Freecall)

Calls from restricted phone services - ring 12550 (Telstra reverse charges) and quote (03) 9649 7599 – the EWOV will then accept the reverse charges and the call cost

**Question: Although my system is bigger than 5 kilowatts, once I take into account the energy that is lost through my inverter, my system capacity is actually less than 5 kilowatts. Am I eligible for the Transitional Feed-in Tariff?**

Answer: No - Legislation specifies that the installed or name-plate capacity of the solar PV system must not exceed 5 kilowatts. This does not include any potential losses through your inverter.

If your system exceeds 5 kilowatts you may be eligible for the Standard Feed-in Tariff.

Contact electricity retailers to discuss the solar offers available to you.

**Question: Can I change energy retailers without forfeiting my Transitional Feed-in Tariff (TFIT)?**

Answer: Yes, you are free to move to another electricity retailer at any time you choose. Once you are signed-up to the transitional rate, your property will remain eligible until 31 December 2016. Just be sure to check your obligations under your current contract with

your electricity retailer. Some retailers may charge a fee if you exit the contract early. This is specified under the terms and conditions of your contract.

**Question: I am moving house. Can I take my solar panels with me and continue to receive the Transitional Feed-in Tariff (TFIT)?**

Answer: No. Your TFIT payments are linked to your property. This means that you cannot continue to receive the TFIT at your new address.

**Question: I receive the transitional feed-in tariff. If I sell my house can the new occupants receive the transitional rate?**

Answer: Yes. As the TFIT is linked to the property and not to the customer, any house which is signed-up can continue to access the transitional rate until 31 December 2016 provided they continue to meet the scheme eligibility criteria. This means that if you sell your house, the new occupants will be able to access the TFIT.

**Question: What happens if I move into a house with solar panels which was previously signed-up for the transitional feed-in tariff (TFIT)?**

Answer: As the TFIT is linked to the property and not to the customer, any house which is signed-up and continues to meet scheme eligibility criteria can continue to access the transitional rate until 31 December 2016. This includes if you move into a property which already has solar panels and was signed up to the TFIT before its closure.

However, you cannot add new panels to an existing solar system after the TFIT closure date and continue to access the transitional rate. Additional panels will disqualify you because there is a state-wide capacity cap for the scheme. If you would still like to add capacity to your system, you should contact your electricity retailer about other solar offers available to you.

### **Standard Feed-in Tariff - Existing Standard Feed-in Tariff Customers on a "One-for-One" Rate**

**Question: I am currently on a 'one-for-one' feed-in tariff. Will I be affected by the new feed-in tariff arrangements?**

Answer: Partly. If you are already receiving a 'one-for-one' standard feed-in tariff, you will continue to receive a 'one-for-one' rate as long as you remain with your current electricity retailer. The 'one-for-one' offer will be end-dated, however, at 31 December 2016, to align with the expiry of the transitional feed-in tariff (TFIT) scheme. As the one-for-one tariff is retailer funded, if you switch electricity retailers, you will need to apply for the new feed-in tariff, set at 8 cents for 2013.

**Question: I am currently on a ‘one-for-one’ feed-in tariff. Can I switch electricity retailer and keep my current feed-in tariff rate?**

Answer: No. The ‘one-for-one’ feed-in tariff is electricity retailer funded. If you are currently on a ‘one-for-one’ feed-in tariff offer with your electricity retailer and decide to switch electricity retailer, you will no longer be able to remain on your current ‘one-for-one’ rate and will need to take up the new feed-in tariff rate (set at 8 cents per kilowatt hour for 2013 and available from 1 January 2013).

**Question: I am currently on a ‘one-for-one’ feed-in tariff which is less than the minimum 8 cents on offer via the new feed-in tariff. Can I change to the new rate?**

Answer: Yes. You can advise your electricity retailer that you wish to move to the new feed-in tariff at any time you choose to do so. The new rate will become available from 1 January 2013 and will be updated by the regulator on an annual basis until 2016.

### **Standard Feed-in Tariff – New Applicants prior to 1 January 2013**

**Question: I have paid a deposit on a renewable energy generator but have not yet completed the connection process. Will I qualify under the existing “one-for-one” arrangements?**

Answer: If you have paid a deposit and are in the process of installing a renewable energy system you should ensure that you, your installer or electrician submit all paperwork to your electricity suppliers by 30 September 2012.

Paperwork includes the:

- Connection Form (to your electricity distributor)
- Electrical Works Request (EWR) (to your electricity retailer)
- Certificate of Electrical Safety (CES) (to your electricity retailer)
- Standard Feed-in Tariff Application Form (to your electricity retailer)

Double-check that all forms are accurate and all mandatory fields are complete. If possible, email the forms so you have a record of submission and retain a copy of all documents for your files.

To complete these forms, you will need to have your system fully installed and signed-off by a licensed electrical inspector. Once paperwork is submitted, to complete the eligibility process you will also need to have your metering upgraded and have feed-in tariff credits being applied to your account by 31 December 2012.

### **Standard Feed-in Tariff – New Applicants on a “Efficient and Fair” Rate**

**Question: When will the new “efficient and fair” feed-in tariff rate become available?**

Answer: The new “efficient and fair” feed-in tariff rate will be available from 1 January 2013. Electricity retailers may already wish to offer new customers with solar PV systems of 5 kilowatts and under, the new rate prior to this date.

**Question: What will the new feed-in tariff rate be set at?**

Answer: The new feed-in tariff rate will be set at 8 cents per kilowatt hour in 2013 for electricity exported to the grid. The tariff will be updated by the regulator on an annual basis for 2014, 2015 and 2016.

**Question: Why has the tariff been set at 8 cents per kilowatt hour?**

Answer: As one of its election commitments, Government asked the Victorian Competition and Efficiency Commission to inquire into a feed-in tariff that would provide fair value for electricity exported to the electricity grid and which would contain no hidden cross-subsidies from other electricity customers.

The Commission provided its final report to Government on 27 July suggesting an efficient and fair tariff would be set at around 6-8 cents per kilowatt hour for electricity exported to the grid. This covers the wholesale cost of the electricity and allows for avoided transmission and distribution losses as well as accounting for exports at various times of the day.

**Question: How can an 8 cent tariff be considered to be fair when it is less than the tariff I pay to my electricity retailer for electricity I consume from the grid? Why is the feed-in tariff not set at the same rate?**

Answer: Unlike the premium and transitional feed-in tariffs which are cross-subsidised by all electricity customers, the new feed-in tariff is electricity retailer funded. The electricity retailer does not receive all of the value that you pay for your supply tariff, as the network portion of the bill is passed on to the electricity distribution businesses for use of electricity poles and wires.

**Question: Is my electricity retailer obliged to offer me the new feed-in tariff or is it only an indicative benchmark?**

Answer: If your electricity retailer has more than 5,000 customers they are obliged to offer you at least the new “efficient and fair” tariff from 1 January 2013. This tariff is a minimum only and your retailer is always free to “top up” over and above the 8 cent minimum if they choose to do so.

If your electricity retailer has less than 5,000 customers they are not obliged to offer the new “efficient and fair” tariff but are able to do so if they wish.

**Question: If I sign up to the new feed-in tariff of 8 cents will I continue to receive this same rate in subsequent years?**

Answer: Not necessarily. The new rate will be reviewed by the regulator on an annual basis for 2014, 2015 and 2016. A new rate can therefore potentially be reset in each of these years. You are not locked in to the rate that applies in the year you sign up. The annual rate update will continue to take account of wholesale electricity costs and avoided transmission and distribution losses. In other states where wholesale based feed-in tariffs have been in place for longer, customers are seeing an increase in the feed-in tariff rate over time to align with wholesale price increases.

**Question: What will happen to feed-in tariffs after 2016?**

Answer: The Victorian Competition and Efficiency Commission has suggested that the requirement to offer a feed-in tariff could be removed after 2016. The Government will, however, conduct a review no later than 2015 to determine whether the market is sufficiently competitive and that customers are likely to obtain a fair deal from their electricity retailer before making further changes to current arrangements.

**Question: How does the new Victorian feed-in tariff rate compare with feed-in tariff rates available in other states?**

Answer: The new Victorian “efficient and fair” rate is highly comparable with feed-in tariffs available in other states.

**Question: Who is the new rate available to?**

Answer: The new rate will be available to solar, wind, hydro and biomass systems of less than 100 kilowatts in system capacity. This includes customers with solar PV systems of 5 kilowatts and under, currently able to access the transitional feed-in tariff scheme.

Once new legislation is passed, planned for the first half of 2013, the scheme will also be opened to other renewables and low-emissions technologies that meet a specified emissions threshold.

**Question: Can I apply for the new feed-in tariff rate even though I have a solar PV system of 5 kilowatts or less?**

Answer: Yes. The standard feed-in tariff scheme was temporarily closed to solar PV customers of 5 kilowatts and under for during the period that the transitional feed-in tariff scheme is open to new customers. Once the transitional feed-in tariff scheme is closed to new customers, the “efficient and fair” tariff will become available to new solar PV customers of 5 kilowatts and under.

**Question: Can I apply for the new feed-in tariff rate for my holiday home?**

Answer: Yes. As the new feed-in tariff rate is based on the wholesale price of electricity it is not cross-subsidised or paid for by other electricity users. It is therefore also available for holiday homes.

**Interaction of New Feed-in Tariff Rate with other FIT Schemes**

**Question: Can I apply for the new feed-in tariff rate (8 cents in 2013) if I am already receiving the premium solar feed-in tariff?**

Answer: You cannot apply for the new feed-in tariff rate at the same property and for the same generator where you are already receiving a premium solar feed-in tariff.

If you are applying for a different property for which you are not already receiving a feed-in tariff, you may apply for the new feed-in tariff rate.

**Question: Can I apply for the new feed-in tariff rate (8 cents in 2013) if I am already receiving the transitional feed-in tariff?**

Answer: You cannot apply for the new feed-in tariff rate at the same property and for the same generator where you are already receiving a transitional feed-in tariff.

If you are applying for a different property for which you are not already receiving a feed-in tariff, you may apply for the new feed-in tariff rate.

**Question: Can I apply for the new feed-in tariff rate (8 cents in 2013) if am already receiving the “one-for-one” rate?**

Answer: You cannot apply for the new feed-in tariff rate at the same property and for the same generator where you are already receiving a standard “one-for-one” feed-in tariff.

If you are applying for a different property for which you are not already receiving a feed-in tariff, you may apply for the new feed-in tariff rate.

**Metering Questions**

**Question: I thought the Government had committed to introducing a gross metered feed-in tariff scheme. Why is the new feed-in tariff not a gross feed-in tariff?**

Answer: Whilst Government is continuing to look at the relative benefits of gross and net metering in the medium to long term, continuing current net metering arrangements in at least the short term is considered to provide the greatest benefits to Victorian customers. With feed-in tariff rates that are based on the wholesale value of electricity, customers are

actually better off under net metered arrangements. This is because the value of avoided electricity costs is higher than the value of exports to the grid.

The majority of other Australian states also now have net metered feed-in tariffs.

**Question: I do not know if I am scheduled to receive a smart meter but I want to install solar PV. Will I need to have two meters installed?**

Answer: Most power companies will install Smart Meters for any solar or renewable energy customer requesting a metering upgrade to access feed-in tariffs. The customer may be asked to cover any truck-visit costs if Smart Meters are not yet scheduled for installation in their area.

In the early stages of the Smart Meter rollout, some bi-directional or interval meters were still being installed either because Smart Meter supplies were not available or because back-end computer systems were still in development.

Now that the Smart Meter program has been running for some time, the right IT systems are in place, making it easier to install and operate Smart Meters in advance for customers requesting a metering upgrade to access feed-in tariffs.

Smart Meters are fully solar capable and can measure two-way power for feed-in tariffs. In cases where your smart meter was installed before you decided to install solar panels you will most probably need to arrange for your electricity distributor to reconfigure your meter in order to switch on the import/export functionality. In many cases this can be done remotely.

Some customers have already had a smart meter installed by their local distributor as part of the 2009-2013 state-wide rollout, but the local smart meter communications network may not be in place yet. In these cases the distributor may still be required to visit the site to enable to import/export functionality.

All Victorian households and small businesses will have their current meter upgraded to a smart meter by the end of 2013. The rollout is being coordinated by the Victorian electricity distribution businesses: Jemena, United Energy Distribution, SP-Ausnet, Citipower and Powercor.

**Question: I am a Centrelink or Veteran's Affairs customer – will the feed-in tariff be counted as income and reduce my payments?**

Answer: As of the 14th May 2010, Centrelink advised that if you receive your feed-in tariff rebate as a direct payment, for example by cheque or by direct deposit you must report these earnings to Centrelink every time you receive a payment.

Each payment is then assessed over a 52 week period so the impact on your fortnightly payment is minimised.

However if you opt to receive the solar feed-in tariff as a credit against your electricity bill, Centrelink has advised (as of 14 May 2010) that this will not be deemed assessable income for social security purposes and these credits and discounts do not have to be declared to Centrelink.

Please check with Centrelink for further information.