



TasReNews

Tasmanian Renewable Energy Alliance

April 2014

TASMANIAN RENEWABLE ENERGY ALLIANCE

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TREA hits the ground running

The Tasmanian Renewable Energy Alliance:

- Provides a united voice for the renewable energy industry in dealing with government and regulatory agencies.
- Provides services to members that assist them to conduct their business in an efficient and cost effective manner.
- Promotes the use of renewable energy in Tasmania.

Since our formation in October last year:

- We have successfully lobbied to increase the size of solar installations that don't require a building permit from 18m² to 38m².
- We have negotiated an affordable solution for installations that require a minor works exemption or documentation to support a building permit.
- As a result of our lobbying, WorkSafe Tasmania is no longer issuing NDIs or charging fees in overvoltage situations.
- We have organised locally based affordable CPD events.
- Through our membership of the Tasmanian Independent Builders Association (TIBA) we have organised discounts at equipment suppliers for TREA members.

Working collaboratively

TREA was established to provide a distinctively Tasmanian voice, while working cooperatively with national organisations including the Clean Energy Council. We have established close working relationships with Aurora and regulatory agencies such as WorkSafe Tasmania. We work closely with other Tasmanian organisations including NECA Tasmania and TIBA.



Professional Development

For CEC accredited installers

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Professional development delivered locally

Since our establishment we have run seven professional development events covering three topics; building regulations, electrical inspection and micro inverters. We run events in both Hobart and the north of state (Ulverstone, Devonport and Launceston). CEC accredited installers who attended all three of our events will have earned more than the 100 CPD points they need to keep their accreditation current.

Through our membership of TIBA we have organised free access for TREA



members to training courses such as working at heights.

Keep up to date with coming events at <http://tasrenew.org.au/events>

TELL US YOUR PRIORITIES FOR TRAINING

We want to hear from you about what you would like covered in future training events. Topics might relate to new solar technologies (eg battery storage), regulatory issues (eg planning permits) or general trade skills (eg first aid, working at heights). Send your suggestions to eo@tasrenew.org.au

(Main Picture) David O'Byrne, the Minister for Workplace Relations speaking at our Building Regulations training event in Hobart last November.



TREA President Rob Manson (left) and Robbie Nichols, Australian Technical Manager for SolarBridge at our recent training event in Devonport drawing the prize of a 1.5kW micro inverter system donated by Australian Micro Inverters.



10 Goodman Court [White City]
Invermay, Tasmania 7248

Energy Efficient Certifications

For professionals working in the industry, you would now be aware that the Building Regulations have been modified to require building approval for all solar PV installations in Tasmania that do not meet the exemptions in the [Building Regulations Advisory Note](#) of November 2013.

Protek Building Surveying Services in conjunction with TREA have designed a system that will provide you with an efficient and cost effective means of obtaining approval and extend an offer of a 30% discount for TREA members.

If you want to relieve yourself of the hassle of dealing with multiple Permit Authorities and ensure a simple and speedy approval process, contact Paige on 6332 3700 or prichardson@protekco.com.au to obtain a detailed explanation of the process and documents required.



Trade Nights 2014

Queenstown

7 May, Aurora Energy Depot, 3 Sorell Street

Ulverstone

8 May, Ulverstone Civic Centre, Patrick Street

Hobart

13 & 14 May, Citiwide Baptist Church, 400 Cambridge Road, Mornington

Launceston

27 & 28 May, Aurora Stadium Invermay Road

Bicheno

29 May, Diamond Island Resort, 69 Tasman Highway

(all events 5.30 – 7.30pm)

RSVP is essential & required 7 days prior to event date. Phone Sam or Anna on (03) 6270-3761 or email

DBBusinessSupportKirksway@auroraenergy.com.au

If there are topics you would like covered on the night, please contact Henry Hodgson via email or (03) 6166-4621

Renewable energy has a bright future in Tasmania

Tasmania has a strong reputation in renewable energy and has the cleanest electricity supply in Australia.

The rapid growth in solar PV is building on our traditional strengths in hydro and utility scale wind farms.

There are already over 20,000 solar PV installations in Tasmania and we believe there is enormous scope for the industry to expand further and create additional jobs and economic activity throughout the state.

We anticipate strong growth in small scale wind and hydro, including on-farm generation. Technological developments are opening up new possibilities in areas such as battery storage and electric vehicles.



State Election

The solar industry is heavily regulated at both state and national levels, so part of our advocacy work involves making sure politicians of all parties are aware of the importance of the renewable energy industry to Tasmania. Prior to the recent state election we produced a briefing document and offered to meet with politicians from all parties which led to several very useful meetings.

We have requested a meeting with the new Energy Minister Matthew Groom as soon as practical. We will be talking to him about positive support for the development of small scale renewable energy projects as a way of boosting jobs and economic activity throughout Tasmania, as well as immediate practical issues such as overvoltage disconnections and metering problems with solar installations.

The state Liberals have committed to reducing 'red and green tape'. We will be strongly putting the case that any changes to regulation need to be done in consultation with industry and that regulation should not disadvantage local suppliers who are providing a quality service to the public.



**Proudly Supplying to the
Solar Industry**



Solar owners paying Aurora for their own electricity!

Seven months after the state government dramatically lowered the feed-in tariff, solar companies and their customers are still in the dark about whether they can get the full benefit of the solar electricity they generate. At the moment solar panels only offset the light and power tariff.

Customers who export solar power while they are using power on their hot water or heating are being paid 8.3c for exporting power at exactly the same time as they are paying 16.2c to import power.

New solar customers are paying Aurora nearly 8c a kWh for electricity they generate and use themselves – power which never leaves their property!

In August 2013 the then state government announced that it had "instructed Aurora's network business to investigate and implement, as soon as practicable, a technical metering solution that provides small customers who connect a distributed generation system from 31 August with the option of off-setting their on-site electricity consumption for hot water and heating – in addition to light and power – before electricity is exported to the grid."

Before the state election we wrote to both Aurora and the Energy Minister Bryan Green about lack of progress on this issue and did not receive any information about progress, or even a commitment to consult on this issue. We will be taking this up with the new Energy Minister.

Overvoltage disconnections

From December 2013, WorkSafe have instructed inspectors to disconnect the solar PV installation if the solar PV is causing the voltage at the customer's premises to exceed 253V.

Around 100 new solar PV installations are inspected each week and around 7-10 of these are disconnected as a result of overvoltage.

This is a very unsatisfactory situation for contractors and customers. Customers have a connection agreement with Aurora but are unable to connect the system they have installed.

Overvoltage situations are mainly caused by the Aurora supply voltage and there is little the customer can do except not export power to the grid.

TREA and NECA have attended several meetings with Aurora and WorkSafe Tasmania to attempt to find a long term solution to this problem.

As a result of these meetings, Aurora have set up new procedures and are reacting promptly to reports of overvoltage (when solar is not connected) – see box.

Watch out for the "building envelope"

Under [Planning Directives 4 and 4.1](#) owners may be required to apply for a planning permit before installing solar panels in a location that is outside the "building envelope". Refer to the diagrams in these directives and if in doubt consult the local

OVERVOLTAGE – ADVICE TO ELECTRICAL CONTRACTORS

If you identify a customer supply voltage of 254V or over (without a solar PV system operating), Aurora will send a fault crew to investigate.

Ring the Aurora fault line on 13 2004 and give them your contact details, the measured voltage and where it was taken.

Please also report any measured voltage (without solar) of between 248-253V.

Aurora will log the situation. They may not investigate immediately, but this will help identify the scale of the problem and help us lobby for a better long term solution.

planning authority.

Hobart Council enforcement letters

Some home owners are receiving enforcement letters from Hobart City Council requesting information on solar panel installations, in some case for systems installed in 2012!

TREA recommends that you respond promptly and politely to these letters providing only the exact information requested.

If, after supplying this information, the owner subsequently receives a request for a building permit, please contact TREA for further advice.



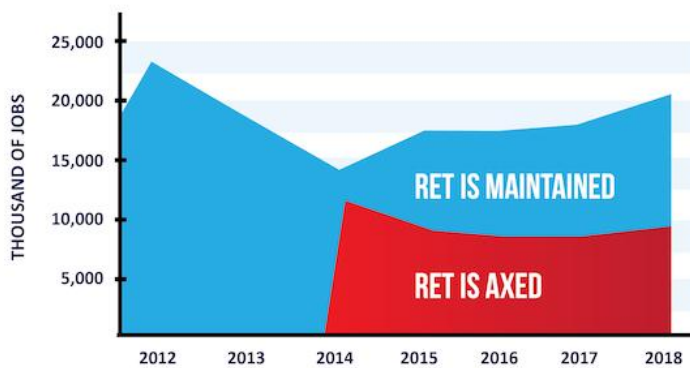
As a Founding Member CNW is proud to support TREA

Renewable Energy Target review (again!)

The Renewable Energy Target (or RET for short) is an important and effective mechanism for supporting the development of small and large scale renewable energy. The Small Technology Certificates under the RET help to make solar PV affordable for households and small business.

The RET was recently reviewed and shown to be effective and affordable. In fact the part that supports household solar actually costs consumers nothing. The small cost is offset by the fact that solar power drives down wholesale energy prices.

The Federal Government has announced a further review of the RET. We encourage solar installers and their customers to look at the excellent material on the RET produced by the [Australian Solar Council](#) and the community group [Solar Citizens](#) and to make submissions to the RET review and directly to their elected representatives.



What next?

In addition to the issues described above we will be working in the next few months on getting a fairer feed-in tariff that reflects the full benefits of distributed generation.

Contact us

For more information visit our website at www.tasrenew.org.au, email info@tasrenew.org.au or contact our Executive Officer Jack Gilding on (0407) 486-651.

Tasmanian Renewable Energy Alliance Inc. is a Tasmanian Incorporated Association, Incorporation number IA1142.

Keep up to date with advice from WorkSafe Tasmania

We circulate information to TREA members which we receive from WorkSafe.

Recent advisory notices on:

- Interpretation of "Legible and permanently identified"
- Labelling of existing main switches after solar installations

are also available on the [WorkSafe Tasmania website](#) under Safety > Electrical Safety > Electrical Technical Information.

Product Recalls



20 January 2014: ACCC [product recall](#) NHP-KDA-432 and KDM-432 metal and plastic DC Isolating switch



4 March 2014: ACCC [product recall](#) for the DKSH Australia Pty Ltd "PVPower" branded DC isolator.

For more details visit: <http://www.recalls.gov.au/>