



TASMANIAN RENEWABLE ENERGY ALLIANCE

TasReNews

Tasmanian Renewable Energy Alliance

August 2014

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What's in store?

Constant change and challenges are about the only permanent things about our industry. Innovation in products and reductions in price continues to drive new possibilities, at the same time as we are required to deal with constant change in both state and national policy and regulation.

Our next training event (p.3) focuses on the emerging possibilities for battery storage in on-grid situations. This new market is driven by battery and control system improvements and by continuing reductions in feed-in tariffs which make self-consumption more attractive than exporting to the grid.

Distributed generation and storage on houses, commercial buildings and farms will play an increasingly important role in the future of the electricity network and we believe that properly managed this can have significant benefits for all customers. Continuing involvement by TREA and NECA Tasmania in the consultative process now being managed by TasNetworks allows us to positively address issues such as overvoltage disconnections (p.4) that are symptomatic of the challenges we face in this transition.

This year celebrates the 100th anniversary of Hydro Tasmania. While Tasmania continues to have the cleanest and most renewable energy supply in Australia we cannot rest on our laurels in this fast changing environment. The abolition of the carbon price and uncertainty about the RET have seriously damaged Tasmania's employment and economic prospects. Hydro Tasmania has forecast a 90% reduction in profit for the current financial year and has recently announced the loss of 100 jobs.

Both political leadership and entrepreneurial business initiative is necessary for us to grow the renewable energy industry in Tasmania and the jobs and economic growth that can result.

Rob Manson, President, TREA

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About us

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.



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News

Feed-in tariff reduced again!

The Tasmanian Economic Regulator has dropped the feed-in tariff (FiT) for solar customers who signed up after 30 August 2013 from 8.28c to 5.55c (+GST) effective from 1 July 2014. This 33% reduction highlights the unfairness of the methodology used by the Economic Regulator to calculate the benefits of exported solar electricity.

Solar owners are being paid less than 6c for electricity that is then resold by Aurora to their neighbours for 24.7c. Tasmania's solar tariff is now the lowest of any state in Australia that sets a state level tariff.

Solar owners who export electricity should be fairly rewarded for generating electricity close to the point of use and avoiding the need for infrastructure that makes up nearly half the cost of electricity.

Solar remains a good investment for customers who can use most of the power they generate at the time they use it.

TREA will be putting the case to Energy Minister Matt Groom that the methodology used to the Economic Regulator is unfair and not in the best interests of all electricity users. See the full TREA media release at <http://tasrenew.org.au/fit2014/>. For background on the problems with the Economic Regulator's approach see the [Save Solar Tasmania](#) submission.

Less than three weeks left to install 1200 legacy tariff systems

Over 6000 solar installations were contracted in the 12 days after the announcement of the end of the 28c feed-in tariff last year. At the time the government announced that eligible systems would need to be installed and connected by 30 August 2014. Following the merger of Aurora Networks and Transend, this process is now being managed by TasNetworks.

1200 of the contracted systems have yet to be installed. TasNetworks has been sending reminder letters to customers and have agreed that systems will be eligible as long

as an Electrical Work Request (EWR) is lodged by 30 August.

For more information see the recently updated information on the [TasNetworks](#) site and the general [eligibility info](#) on the Aurora site, call 1300 137 008 or email newsupplyapplications@tasnetworks.com.au

Q: Can I change supplier if they cannot install in time?

A: You will need signed agreement from the supplier you contracted with to change suppliers.

Q: What if I want to install a different system?

A: See the eligibility criteria above, in general you can change the equipment to be installed as long as you notify TasNetworks first and the system capacity does not increase.



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*The weatherproof enclosure (ELT CB4N) depicted on the left in the above image, is not manufactured in Austria.

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Australian Solar Supplies Pty Ltd is specialised in sourcing and distributing energy saving products. We have been working closely with manufacturers, distributors, installation companies and electricians since 2009.

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News (cont.)

Tasmania's newest power station

Congratulations to TREA members Nigel and Josh Tomlin from River Power Tasmania. Their 400 kW run of river scheme on the Humboldt River started operation in July this year.

Training and events

TREA CPD event: Integrating battery storage and solar PV

Volker Haider, Technical Sales Advisor for Fronius Australia will describe the Fronius approach to achieve the lowest LCOE (levelised cost of electricity) and the technology for integration of battery storage in solar PV.

Ulverstone: Monday 8 September, 5-7:30pm, River Arms Function Room, 1 Crescent Street

Hobart: Tuesday 9 September, 5-7:30pm,

Rexel, 221 Main Road Derwent Park.

Light refreshments served, courtesy of our sponsor Rexel Electrical Supplies. Free for TREA members, you can join on the night.

RSVP: rsvp@tasrenew.org.au

Hobart CEC Installer Night, 5-7:30pm, Thursday 4 September

The Clean Energy Council Accreditation Team invites accredited

installers to join CEC technical staff and special guest speakers for a night of learning and networking, helping you stay up-to-date with the latest industry trends and technical developments. TREA Executive Officer Jack Gilding will be presenting on local issues and TechSafe and WorkSafe Tasmania have also been invited. [Click here](#) to register. Each Installer Night is worth 50 CPD points and costs \$30.

Is your CEC registration up to date?

Once an installer has successfully completed two years as a fully accredited installer, they move onto the continuous professional development (CPD) renewal scheme. Installers are sent reminder emails 6 weeks and again at 2 weeks before their renewal is due. However we have had at least one case where an installer participated in one of our CPD events but was not eligible for points because they had not renewed their registration.

If you are unsure about the renew process or your eligibility for CPD points, please contact the CEC Accreditation team at accreditation@cleanenergycouncil.org.au or (03) 9929-4141

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

Asbestos awareness - free online learning

Networks New South Wales has developed a freely available asbestos e-learning package for electrical workers. Find out more and start learning at: <http://asbestosafety.gov.au/node/125>



Coming events

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



TREA welcomes our newest Corporate Member, Rexel Electrical Supplies. In Hobart drop into the new showroom and warehouse at 221 Main Rd Derwent Park or contact Jason Gulliver, branch manager on (0418) 431-998 or Anthony Holbrook, Energy Efficiency Business Development Manager on (0427) 366-698 for a free no-obligation solar design for residential and commercial customers. Check out the [Rexel website](#) for locations and contacts in Burnie South, Devonport, Launceston and North Hobart.

Policy

Still no resolution on metering issue

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.*" Despite contact with both the previous and current energy ministers and with Aurora we still haven't received a written response to what is happening about this issue. Unofficially we have told that the advice is that this is not technically possible with current meters and that customers who want to use all their solar electricity to offset their own consumption should either move to a time of use tariff or go on to a single tariff 31 (thereby losing the benefits of the cheaper heating tariff). TREA does not believe this is a satisfactory answer and will continue to pursue this issue with TasNetworks and the Energy Minister.

Overvoltage disconnections

As reported in our last newsletter, 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. This is a very unsatisfactory situation for contractors and customers. Overvoltage situations are mainly caused by high network supply voltage and there is little the customer can do except not export

OVERVOLTAGE – ADVICE TO ELECTRICAL CONTRACTORS

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

Ring the TasNetworks 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.

TasNetworks 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.

power to the grid.

A series of meetings have been held this year including representatives from TREA, NECA Tasmania, WorkSafe Tasmania and Aurora Networks. TasNetworks have taken the initiative to continue these meetings which we applaud. At the last meeting WorkSafe Tasmania presented data on 45 disconnections up to 20 May 2014. Our analysis of this data shows that, of the 41 cases where the voltage was recorded both with and without solar connected, the average supply voltage **without** solar connected was 252 V and the voltage rise recorded with solar panels connected was 5.2V. This analysis clearly demonstrates that if the networks supply voltage was at the nominal voltage of 230V none of these solar installations would have needed to be disconnected.

The problem is likely to increase seasonally because on warm sunny days output from solar PV will be at a maximum and demand on the network will be low, leading to an increase in supply voltages. We will continue to liaise with TasNetworks and WorkSafe Tasmania to attempt to find long term solutions to this problem.

Retrospective building permits

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! Some owners are being instructed to apply for retrospective building permits (which involves hundreds of dollars of work by a building surveyor) or else 'demolish the building work' which may require a demolition permit! HCC believe they are legally obliged to investigate situations where complaints are made by a member of the public (which is happening almost exclusively in Hobart) and in some cases to enforce the requirement for building permits.

We wrote to Minister Peter Gutwein about this on 3 June requesting an urgent meeting and pointing out that this is a perfect example of the red tape which the government has promised to reduce. However he wrote back declining to meet with us and saying that this was 'a matter for the Council not the Minister'. Since then Peter Gutwein has been quoted in The Mercury as reviewing '1000 pieces of red tape' including the need for minor works permits for solar panels. We welcome any simplification of the regulations around solar installations. We have written back to Peter Gutwein urging him to consult with the solar industry to make sure that changes are workable and get the right balance on safety and consumer protection

HCC LETTERS

If homeowners receive an initial letter from HCC, 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.

and simplification. And of course there is little point in making the process of new installations simpler and then continuing to create uncertainty and expense for existing solar owners.

Renewable Energy Target review

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 Australian Solar Council and Solar Citizens have organised a campaign to write to cross bench senators urging continuation of the RET. 54 Tasmanian businesses have signed the letter to Tasmanian Senator Jacqui Lambie.

We encourage you to support the excellent work being done by the Australian Solar Council on this issue. Follow them on Twitter [@SolarCouncil](https://twitter.com/SolarCouncil), or sign up for their [newsletter](#).



Energy Strategy Issues Paper

The state government has released an issues paper and called for submissions by 8 September as part of the development of a whole-of-state energy strategy. The paper is available on the [State Growth](#) website.



Join TREA Application for membership

Member name:
(individual or organisation)

Address:

Suburb: Postcode:

Contact name:
(if different to member name)

Email:
(please print clearly)

Phone: Mobile:

I wish to be a:

Corporate member \$1925

Ordinary member Individual or small organisation \$770

Larger organisation* \$1540

Associate member (non voting) \$660

The first year's membership costs comprise:

- Members: Ordinary \$500 or \$1000 for larger organisations. Associate \$600, Corporate \$1750
- Levy for Ordinary members in the solar PV industry to cover establishment costs: \$200 or \$400 for larger organisations.
- GST

* Larger organisations are those with 4 or more employees.

How to pay:

Post a cheque with the above form to: Tasmanian Renewable Energy Alliance Inc. PO Box 4748, Bathurst St, Hobart TAS 7000

Email the above details to membership@tasrenew.org.au and make a direct deposit to our bank account: BSB: 633-000 (Bendigo Bank), account: 150526713, account name: Tasmanian Renewable Energy Alliance Inc. **Make sure you include your name as the reference on the direct deposit.**

Invoice: If you require an invoice before paying, please email or post the above information and we will post you a Tax Invoice.

Periodical payment: contact us for details of our easy periodical payment option.

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.

