

19 July 2011

BE WARY 'NO COST' SOLAR OFFER – MAYOR

Solar North East councils are cautioning residents regarding a spate of automated phone calls making offers for the provision of 'no cost' solar panels that are purporting to be "Council approved".

Rural City of Wangaratta Mayor, Cr Anthony Griffiths warned residents who received the automated calls to be wary of the no cost offer and the Council endorsement, which he said was confusing residents who thought the phone calls might be from the Solar North East program.

"Firstly, if it sounds too good to be true, in that there is no cost, then it probably is too good to be true. Secondly, given Council is part of the Solar North East program, it is not endorsing any other solar programs," Cr Griffiths said.

"Several people, so far predominantly in the Wangaratta area, have received the calls. It is a recorded message that asks people to press 1 to accept the offer and 2 to decline," he said.

Solar North East Senior Project Manager, Tim Shilling said suppliers, and therefore pricing or interest rates had not yet been finalised for the Solar North East program.

"We anticipate having an offer available to participants by late August, 2011," Mr Shilling said.

"We are not making phone calls to residents. If people are interested in registering for the Solar North East program they do so via our website www.solarnortheast.com.au and we correspond with them via email and mail," he said.

More than 1490 north east residents and businesses have now registered their interest in the Solar North East program.

The Solar North East program is a collaborative initiative of Alpine, Benalla, Indigo, Mansfield, Towong, Wangaratta and Wodonga councils and Sustainability Victoria.

The program's key features include:

- Bulk-purchase of solar panels.
- Provision of low-interest finance.
- Local Energy Assessors for advice.
- Potential to bulk-purchase other sustainability initiatives, such as water tanks.
- Collaboration with education providers to develop a youth scholarship for sustainability studies.

It is anticipated the project will facilitate solar PV installations with the capacity to generate over 4000 MWh/per annum of renewable electricity and also improve energy efficiency within north east homes and businesses.

Ends

For more information and to arrange a photo and/or interview, contact:

Cr Anthony Griffiths on (03) 5722 0862 or
Tim Shilling on 0417 028 544.