

# Sustainability Steet - Guide to rebates and offsets for households

By Stuart Sexton

Past articles have described some of the simple things that we can do to reduce waste and use of water and energy resources. There are some larger contributions we can make towards living sustainably, but these inevitably bring cost implications: switching to GreenPower to use energy from renewable resources, installing solar power (usually photovoltaic - PV) for hot water and possibly domestic power, installing rainwater tanks and/or reusing grey water. Most of these projects will also require a permit from Willoughby Council, although depending on your location, they may be covered by the State Government's "complying development" guidelines.

There is a lot of information about sustainable products and services available from Council, and you can obtain ideas and permit requirements if you are thinking about investing time, effort and money in such things. Council's website [www.willoughby.nsw.gov.au](http://www.willoughby.nsw.gov.au) also has a link to the ClimateClever website [www.climateclever.com.au](http://www.climateclever.com.au) that has information about solar hot water systems, solar PV panels, heat pumps, rainwater tanks, GreenPower, and insulation. Following are some notes from ClimateCleverShop's section about rebates. Solar powered energy systems for households typically range from 1kW to 4kW in capacity and cost from about \$8000 including rebates. A 4kW system is said to generate enough power for the average home depending on the angle of the sun on to the panels. Rebates are applied to system installations using Renewable Energy Certificates and the Solar Credit program, and a Feed-in Tariff is a rebate applied to the electricity you generate. The NSW Government's aim is to have 50 megawatts of power generated from home systems, and progress will be reviewed in 2012, or when installed capacity reaches the 50 MW target.

**Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs)** are used as an electronic form of exchange. If you produce one megawatt hour (1 MWh) from renewable sources such as solar or wind power, you are entitled to one REC. A typical 2 kW solar system would currently receive about 42 RECs, but the price of an REC can vary depending on a number of factors. From January 2011, The Federal Government will apply a fixed price of \$40 to each REC. RECs can be given to the supplier of your system in exchange for an upfront discount or cash rebate, or you can accumulate them and sell them using the Federal Government's REC registry. Selling your RECs back to your supplier or the Government will contribute towards Australia's Renewable Energy Target of 20% energy from renewable resources.

**Solar Credits** replace the previous Federal means-tested rebate of up to \$8000. From now until June 2012, purchasers of domestic renewable energy systems will receive five times the number of RECs for the first 1.5kW of their system. This is not means-tested and can apply to holiday homes and investment properties as well as to the principal residence.

**Feed-in Tariffs** are rebates applied to your electricity account for the amount of power generated by your domestic renewable energy system (usually solar, although the scheme also applies to wind powered systems). From 1 January 2010 for the next seven years, the NSW Government has set 60 cents per kWh as a fixed rebate for all electricity generated by households using renewable energy generators, called a gross feed-in tariff. Some electricity suppliers may offer even more than 60 cents/kWh. However a new power meter may be required to measure the outgoing electricity, so a six-month transition period has been set for power authorities to install the new meters. During this period, net metering may continue to apply to

existing systems (only the excess power you generate receives a rebate). More information can be found on the State Government website [www.industry.nsw.gov.au/energy/sustainable/renewable/solar/solar-scheme](http://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/energy/sustainable/renewable/solar/solar-scheme).

**Home insulation** does not currently receive any rebates following the closure of the previous scheme last February. The new system of rebates was to begin in June 2010 as part of the Renewable Energy Bonus Scheme, but it has been delayed indefinitely. The Renewable Energy Bonus Scheme will in addition replace the Solar Hot Water Rebate Program that was also discontinued last February (transitional arrangements are currently in place). Further details may be found through the links detailed in the ClimateCleverShop website.

**Rainwater tanks and grey water systems** receive rebates of up to \$500 for tanks plumbed to provide water for toilet or laundry use, and the same for permanent grey water treatment systems.

**NSW Government rebates** exist for rainwater tanks (up to \$1500) and for solar and heat pump hot water systems (up to \$300). Rebates also apply for 5-star rated gas storage and instantaneous hot water systems (up to \$300 and \$150 respectively). For more information and eligibility criteria visit [www.environment.nsw.gov.au/rebates](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/rebates).

Rebates are subject to change, and the above figures are a guide only. You are urged to check with Federal and State Government departments for the latest information, and also with Willoughby Council regarding development application requirements.

Other useful web sites include [www.livinggreener.gov.au/rebates-assistance/new-south-wales](http://www.livinggreener.gov.au/rebates-assistance/new-south-wales) for further information about rebates, and [www.orer.gov.au](http://www.orer.gov.au) for information and guidelines for small generation units (SGU) such as home photovoltaic systems.

In later issues, I would like to relate some experiences of local residents with installation and use of renewable energy or conservation systems. If you would like to contribute, please do so by emailing me at [stuartrsexton@gmail.com](mailto:stuartrsexton@gmail.com) (with your anonymity preserved if you prefer).

## SUSTAINABILITY ST. IT'S A VILLAGE OUT THERE

*The Artarmon Sustainability Street Group has suspended its regular Thursday meetings following successful completion of the Sustainable Living Collection library project. We will continue to hold regular monthly working bees in the Sustainable Garden outside the Artarmon Library on Sundays. The next dates are 29 August & 26 September. There will be plenty of time for sustainable discussion as we work! Please join us if you would like to help. Contact [stuartrsexton@gmail.com](mailto:stuartrsexton@gmail.com).*

## Talking 2064

Sean O'Sullivan from the **Save Artarmon Committee** ([www.saveartarmon.org](http://www.saveartarmon.org)) addressed the 28 June Council meeting on the Draft LEP with respect to the Soldiers Precinct in Artarmon.

On 1 July, The Hon Joe Hockey MP opened the new **Butterflies Child Care Centre** in Waltham Street. The centre has a 465 square metre soft-play area made from 400 worn-down truck tyres.

Construction of the **Artarmon Library** fit-out at the church at 139 Artarmon Road will commence fairly soon with all work to be completed by Christmas 2010. The library has elected to remain at its current site until late January 2011 when school holiday programs and activities are over. Then we can look forward to an exciting opening!

## Quiz No 18 Answers

Questions on page 4

1. Thomas Broughton was born in Australia in 1811, the son of Thomas Broughton and Mary Stafford. In 1820, at the age of nine, he was admitted to the Male Orphan School with the consent of his mother.
2. Thomas opened a Drapery Shop in George Street, Sydney. He was also a grazier as well as holding public offices including Mayor of Sydney.
3. He purchased 300 acres of what is now Artarmon, known then as the Artarmon Estate. On his death in 1901 the land was subdivided and sold off in parcels up until the 1940s.
4. In 1838 he married Jane Tindale of Penrith. They had fifteen children, five of whom died young. The Broughtons had two rural properties, Gundagai and Muttama.

Thomas Broughton was a highly controversial character - eg there were accusations of mismanagement when he was Mayor.