



DEPARTMENT OF
THE ENVIRONMENT,
CLIMATE CHANGE,
ENERGY AND WATER

FACTSHEET

ACT ELECTRICITY FEED-IN TARIFF SCHEME

What is a Feed-in Tariff?

A Feed-in Tariff rewards households and businesses that install renewable energy generation technology by paying a Premium Price for the electricity they generate. For each unit of renewable energy generated, you will be paid at a rate greater than the retail price you would usually pay to buy the same amount of energy for your use.

The ACT Feed-in Tariff Scheme is based on gross generation, so you are paid for each unit of electricity that you generate. Most other jurisdictions only pay you for any energy left after deducting your own consumption.

When will the Feed-in Tariff Scheme start?

Stage 1 of the Scheme aimed at householders and small business will commence on 1 March 2009. An announcement on how larger scale generation will be included within the Scheme is expected in June 2009.

Who can access the Scheme?

The Scheme is available to all ACT electricity customers (except non-educational Government agencies) with generation facilities of no greater capacity than 30kW. All schools and educational institutions, both public and private, are eligible to access the Scheme. If you are renting, you will need the permission of the property owner before you can install renewable generation equipment.

What do I need to do?

You need to occupy a property in the ACT and install an approved form of renewable generation (at present solar or wind generation). If you live in flats or under strata title you should check with your landlord and Body Corporate for any rules restricting placement of equipment. You will then need to enter into an agreement with your electricity supplier for them to purchase the electricity you generate. You may also be eligible for a subsidy or other support from the Commonwealth Government (phone 6274 1888).

Is renewable energy safe to use?

Electricity generated from renewable sources is the same as any other electricity. You will not notice any change in the operation of equipment or appliances.

However, like all electrical devices, renewable energy generation equipment is dangerous. Installation of this equipment is NOT a do-it-yourself project. It is a job for trained professionals and must be inspected by ACT Government and ActewAGL officials for safety before you will be allowed to start generating any electricity.

How much will I be paid?

From commencement of the Scheme on 1 March 2009 until 30 June 2010 the Premium Price will be 50.05 cents per kWh generated for systems up to 10kW. For systems between 10kW and 30kW a rate of 40.04 cents per kWh will be paid.

How long will I be ensured of receiving the Premium Price?

The Premium Price is set each year. However, when you enter into an arrangement with your electricity supplier you are guaranteed payment of the Premium Price prevailing at that time for the full 20 years of your agreement.

What if I already have solar panels installed? Will I receive back payments?

Renewable energy generators installed prior to the Scheme's commencement date will be eligible to participate in the Scheme. However there are no back payments. Payment of the Premium can only commence from the date on which you enter into an agreement with your electricity supplier under the Scheme. You may need to have your existing meter inspected or replaced to measure gross generation. Contact your electricity supplier for further details.

What if I want to get out of my contract?

Twenty years is a long time for an agreement to run for both parties. Anything might happen. You might move or the solar panels may be damaged and not be replaceable. The ACT has made laws on who is eligible for a feed-in tariff, what Premium Price you are guaranteed for the 20 years of your contract and that you are to be paid on a quarterly in arrears basis. You will need to agree all other details with your electricity retailer including how the agreement can be changed, amended or terminated. This is a matter between you and your retailer. It is in your interest to seek legal advice on the retailer's terms before committing yourself.

If there is a blackout can I use my own electricity?

Generally not. The Scheme is based on the export of all generated electricity back to the grid. The system is wired and metered to do this. While it is technically possible to install a switching mechanism, such a system would most likely be cost prohibitive to the average householder. Those interested in this option should contact the ACT electricity distributor (ActewAGL Distribution) on 6293 5856 for further details.

I live in a heritage area, can I install solar panels?

If you live in a heritage area you will need approval from the ACT Heritage Council. For further advice contact the Heritage Unit on 6207 5556.

Can I cut down trees that shade the roof where I want to place my solar panels?

Generally not. If you have any questions about pruning or removal of trees contact the Tree Protection Unit on 62075878.

Who pays for the Scheme?

All ACT electricity bills will have a small amount added to cover the Scheme's costs.

Where can I get more information?

Your electricity retailer is your best source. They can advise you on what terms they can offer you and what you need to do to enter into an agreement. Your installer can also advise you on the ActewAGL Distribution and ACTPLA inspection and approval processes.

For list of licensed electricians, visit the ACT Planning and Land Authority website at: http://www.actpla.act.gov.au/topics/hiring_licensing/find_professional/list

For a list of exemptions from building and development approval visit: http://www.actpla.act.gov.au/topics/design_build/process/heating_and_cooling_installations

For more information on the process of joining the Feed-in Tariff visit: <http://www.actewagl.com.au/environment/solar/chart.aspx>

More general inquiries about the ACT Feed-in Tariff Scheme or legislation may be directed to the ACT Department of the Environment, Climate Change, Energy and Water on 6207 5589.