



Victoria

The Place To Be

Media release

From the Minister for Environment and Climate Change

Friday, 28 August, 2009

SOLAR HOT WATER REBATE EXTENDED FOR REGIONAL VICTORIA

An additional \$10 million has been committed by the Brumby Labor Government to extend a popular rebate scheme that helps families in regional and rural Victoria switch to solar hot water.

Environment and Climate Change Minister Gavin Jennings today said more than 15,000 households had already accessed the *Regional Solar Hot Water Rebate Scheme*.

Mr Jennings said the successful scheme would now be extended and for the first time enable homeowners in bushfire communities who lost their homes to install a gas-boosted solar hot water unit in their new homes.

The solar hot water rebate has previously only been available for the installation of solar hot water in existing homes.

“Our Government is taking action to help households across rural and regional Victoria continue to switch to solar hot water systems which is better for the environment and will be cheaper to run over time,” Mr Jennings said.

“This program has been a major success and more than 15,000 households throughout regional Victoria have taken up the scheme. That equates to average cost savings of about \$245 per home each year and emissions savings of 55,516 tonnes or 1.1 billion black balloons per year.

“The new \$10 million funding will allow for an additional 6000 regional Victorian households to take advantage of the scheme.”

Mr Jennings said the scheme now included 670 installers and suppliers of solar hot water systems and had created up to 250 green jobs for Victoria. The extension will mean a further 400 plumbers will be trained in solar water system installation.

Mr Jennings said the uptake of the \$33 million scheme, which began in 2008, had been strong and that’s why the government was providing a further \$10 million towards its extension.

Under the extended scheme the rebate for replacing non-electric systems has been reduced from a maximum of \$2300 to a maximum \$1600, which is consistent with the Australian Government’s rebate for replacing electric hot water with solar.

“The overwhelming take-up of our Government’s regional solar hot water rebate scheme shows how committed Victorian families are to tackling climate change,” he said.

Mr Jennings said for the first time the scheme would be expanded to allow homeowners whose residence was destroyed in the bushfires to apply for a rebate for installing a solar hot water unit in their new home.

To be eligible, people will need to have been eligible for the Victorian Bushfire Appeal Fund Destroyed Homes payments. People who lost their homes in the 2009 bushfires who do not meet this criteria may be able to be considered on a needs basis. To be eligible, people must be replacing a non-electric hot water system.

“The Brumby Labor Government wants to give those affected by the devastating bushfires every possible chance to rebuild their houses and their lives,” Mr Jennings said.

Media contact: Lyaal Johnson 951 5799 or 0400 422 142

www.premier.vic.gov.au

“Demand for the regional rebate scheme is strong, will be closely monitored and the Government will consider the future of both the regional and metropolitan solar hot water rebates through the upcoming Climate Change White Paper.”

Australian Government assistance continues to be available for households replacing an electric hot water system with a solar hot water system. Incentives for switching to solar hot water are also available through the Brumby Labor Government's Energy Saver Incentive.

For more information about solar hot water programs go to <http://www.resourcesmart.vic.gov.au>