18 April, 2010

**GREEN ENERGY PLAN TO GENERATE MORE INCOME FOR FAMILIES**

Solar electricity generation systems up to one hectare in size and domestic wind turbines which meet strict noise limits, may soon be able to be approved in just 10 days.

Minister for Planning, Tony Kelly, said under the proposed changes which go on public exhibition from today, families would be allowed to more easily earn income from their domestic wind and solar systems under the NSW Government’s generous feed-in tariff scheme.

“Today’s changes are about allowing home and other property owners to more easily install their own wind and solar photovoltaic systems,” the Minister said.

“This has several advantages including being able to turn our existing suburbs and rural areas into renewable energy harvesting areas, with no or minimal environmental and local amenity impacts.”

To date, the NSW Government’s reforms have mainly concentrated on creating a clear and certain assessment system for major wind farm and other renewable energy proposals.

Under the proposed changes for wind turbines:

- 10-day complying development approvals could be granted for wind turbines mounted on the ground or a building or structure with a generating capacity of up to 10 kW in residential zones, and up to 60 kW in other zones;
- If located near neighbouring dwellings, these turbines will need to meet strict operational noise limits;
- All turbines mounted on a building or structure approved as complying development must not protrude more than three metres above the existing roof line;
- Small-scale wind turbines less than 25 metres in height, located well-clear of neighbouring dwellings and meeting other guidelines would be allowed without any planning approval in rural areas.

Mr Kelly said modern domestic-use wind turbines are generally extremely quiet but will, nonetheless, be required to meet strict noise limits.

"Depending on the particular type of turbine being installed, it could be required to be located up to 200 metres away from adjacent properties to further protect neighbours from noise impacts," the Minister said.

"Visual impacts will also be closely controlled with both height limits and minimum setbacks imposed.

"These provisions ensure, in particular, that higher-density urban areas will not end up looking like turbine jungles."
Under the proposed changes for solar systems:

- 10-day complying development approvals can be granted for ground-mounted solar energy systems no more than 10 metres in height, and occupying an area less than 10,000 sq/m, in rural, industrial and special purpose zones;
- Boundary setback limits for these types of development and other planning controls apply;
- Building-mounted solar systems with a generating capacity of less than 20kW which meet other planning provisions can proceed without any planning approval;
- Ground-mounted systems up to 1,000 sq/m in size which preserve local amenity are allowed without planning approval in rural, industrial and special purpose zones.

Australia has the highest average solar radiation of any continent in the world, with two per cent of all energy used sourced from solar power.

Mr Kelly said the proposed changes further illustrate the NSW Government’s continued commitment towards promoting renewable energy.

The two discussion papers covering solar and wind energy approval systems are being exhibited from Monday, April 19, until Friday, May 28, and can be downloaded at [www.planning.nsw.gov.au](http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au).