



National Solar Schools Program

The Federal Government has \$50,000¹ funding available to primary and secondary schools (or \$100,000 if a multi-campus or combined primary secondary school with over 1,000 students) under the National Solar Schools Program. The program is currently suspended but it will open again at the beginning of the 2010/11 financial year.

Sustainable Focus is working with many South Australian schools to implement combined solar power and energy efficiency projects through this funding mechanism. We provide a tailored approach to get the best value out of the grant funding for each school. Our strength is our commitment to quality and our extensive experience in energy and water management.

Our approach

Under the guidelines a minimum of 2kW solar power needs to be installed and the remaining funds can be spent on energy efficiency measures, rainwater systems or further solar power. In general we are installing a 2kW solar power system and putting the remaining funds into a targeted energy efficiency upgrade.

Energy efficiency is an excellent financial investment. Energy efficiency projects will pay back the initial investment within 10 years whereas solar power systems will take more than twenty years to pay back including the benefit of the feed-in tariff. The feed-in tariff will only provide a benefit to very small schools as, in our experience, the base load of schools will generally be greater than the electricity produced by the solar PV system.

In addition, many energy efficiency measures involve replacing old technology with new (for example replacing old lights). This provides a significant capital upgrade benefit and maintenance saving.

Our service

Sustainable Focus, as a contractor, will provide a fixed quote covering the supply and installation of energy and water measures based on a no obligation on-site assessment. Measures will be chosen based on our review of the site and discussions with school staff. This complete service takes schools from grant approval through to reporting and acquittal, including managing the expenditure of funds as well as summarising the savings generated.

If the school has additional funds available to undertake energy and water saving measures not covered by the National Solar Schools Program, such as; upgrade tapware and toilets, improving IT systems, replacing commercial refrigeration units; then Sustainable Focus can design and project manage the implementation for the additional funds.

¹ If solar power is not installed due to concerns of vandalism or maintenance issues, then a grant of \$30,000 only is available. If a school has previously received Green Vouchers grant funding, the National Solar Schools grant is for up to \$50,000 less the amount of Green Vouchers funding received.

Example measures

- Supply and installation of a minimum 2kW solar power system.
- Supply and installation of non-retailer smart meter, communication interface and software. This allows the school to monitor its current and long term consumption and extract data which can be used by students. The information is accessible via the school's intranet. The software/system can also be used to generate reports, which allow comparison/validation of electricity retailer's bills.
- Supply and installation of Clipsal electronic time switches and single pole control relays to control the operation of hot water services and boiling water services. This will dramatically reduce the stand by losses.
- Supply and installation of Clipsal electronic time and occupancy sensors switches to control the operation of the lights. This measure will dramatically reduce the operation of equipment in vacated spaces.

Case studies

A Regional Primary School – the school's consumption will be reduced by 13,000kWh per annum, saving \$2,200 per annum through the above measures as well as the following site specific upgrades:

- Supply and installation of new lighting to 80% of the school. All lights are made of the highest quality components. This will result in reduced maintenance costs, because the lamps will not require replacement for 7 to 10 years, and in many cases longer.

A Small Metropolitan High School – the school's consumption will be reduced by 20,000kWh per annum, saving \$3,400 per annum through the above measures as well as the following site specific upgrades:

- Supply and installation of Clipsal electronic time switches and relays to control the operation of the electric radiant heaters.

A Large Metropolitan High School – the school's consumption will be reduced by 60,000kWh per annum, saving \$10,000 per annum through the above measures as well as the following site specific upgrades:

- Supply and installation of a fully integrated load shedding and control system to regulate the operation of 100 refrigerated split air conditioning units. The system automatically isolates the units in line with lunch, recess and end of school. We have designed the system to help the school alleviate electrical capacity problems. This has saved them tens of thousands of dollars through avoiding replacing the main electrical transformers.

We actively engage with both the staff and students to ensure the benefits of the NSSP measures are understood and integrated into the curriculum.

We would be pleased to provide referees from schools in which we have completed projects through the National Solar Schools Program.

Next steps....

The process for the National Solar Schools Program has been complex and changeable. If you are interested in working with us please contact us on **(08) 8340 8666** as soon as possible to make sure you don't miss out on the funding.

We look forward to working with you to achieve the best possible value and greenhouse savings from the funds available.