

## Fact Sheet: Solar for All Campaign

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### *The problem*

- Australia's electricity prices are high and in many places are continuing to rise, so too is Australia's carbon pollution. One of the best ways for households to lower their bills and their emissions is through rooftop solar. In 2018 ACCC found solar households were saving an average of \$514/year on their electricity bill.
- Unfortunately, more than 35% of households (2.7million) are locked out of solar, as they can't afford it, rent, live in an apartment or homes with shady or unsuitable roofs. Of these 1million locked-out households are located in NSW.
- Different households, face different barriers, meaning the solution to solar access are nuanced.
- To date unlocking solar has been in the too hard basket for most governments, with either no policy support given or small pilot programs that last for a short period of time and aren't scaled up.

### *The Solution*

- A range of models exist that allow locked-out energy users to access solar:
  - Apartment solar microgrids
  - Landlords and tenants share the benefits of solar
  - Solar for public and social housing
  - Virtual Power Plants targeted at locked-out energy users
- Solar Gardens is the model that allows **all** customers to access solar, no matter the barriers they face.
- A solar garden is a centralised solar array that offers consumers the opportunity to purchase or lease solar panels in the array with the electricity generated credited to the customer's energy bill.
- In the USA, 16 states plus Washington DC have Solar for All policies supporting the uptake of Solar Gardens. Now 1.3GWs of Solar Gardens have been installed, supporting thousands of customers to lower their bills.
- Reports from the US National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) show that low-income households in a Solar Garden project in Texas are saving 14% on their electricity bill.
- Research by the Institute for Sustainable Futures (ISF) at the University of Technology Sydney and Community Power Agency found that there are no legal or regulatory barriers to Solar Gardens in Australia.
- In Australia, more than two million households have installed rooftop solar, with government support. This support has come through the federal Small-scale Renewable Scheme, state feed-in tariffs and rebates.
- State Governments should extend their rooftop solar support programs to locked-out energy users, by implementing a Solar for All package.

## *The Campaign*

- Tuesday 8 October a coalition of 20 organisations led by Community Power Agency is launching the Solar for All Campaign.
- This campaign is calling on state governments to:
  1. Commit to ensuring all Australian's can access solar, no matter where they live or how much they earn
  2. Establish a Solar for All Policy Package. Specifically:
    - a. Funding real-world Solar Gardens pilot projects and pilots of other social access models.
    - b. Establish a means-tested Solar for All Rebate.

*See the Solar for All Policy Briefing for more details.*

- The coalition includes clean energy advocates, faith organisations, consumer/renters rights and welfare organisation, environment and community groups.
- A Solar for All, Solar Gardens explainer video will be launched.

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
TUESDAY 8 OCTOBER 2019**

### **New campaign demands ‘Solar for All’ Australians**

A coalition of 20 community groups has launched a [‘Solar for All’](#) campaign calling on state governments to end solar lock-out and give all Australians access to safe and affordable energy.

More than one third of Australians are locked out of access to clean energy because they rent, live in apartments, have unsuitable rooftops, or cannot afford the upfront cost of solar panels.

The coalition, led by the Community Power Agency, is calling for policy and funding support for solutions to solar lockout, including solar gardens. These are centralised solar arrays that people can purchase a small share in; the electricity generated by these arrays is credited on consumers’ bills.

“Solar energy reduces people’s electricity bills and cuts climate pollution. Everyone deserves to access these benefits, regardless of their living arrangements or income levels,” said **Nicky Ison, founder and co-director, Community Power Agency.**

“Governments can easily fix this unfair situation in Australia by funding solar garden trials and solar rebates for low-income and locked-out households.

“These simple solutions can help state governments deliver lower costs of living, better physical and mental health, and meaningful action on climate change. There are no downsides to this,” said Ison.

Solar gardens are a proven concept. In the United States, [1.3GWs of solar gardens](#) are operating across 40 states are saving communities hundreds of dollars per year, while reducing emissions.

**Liunga Palu, Marrickville renter and co-lead of Sydney Alliance’s Voices for Power campaign, said:** “I keep my heater and air conditioning use to a minimum because electricity is just too expensive—you can imagine how miserable that is on a freezing winter day or a scorching summer one.”

“It’s frustrating to know that solar could cut my household bills by hundreds of dollars a year, but that I can’t tap into these benefits because I can’t afford the upfront costs or to buy a home yet.

“Climate change is making our summers hotter every year. I want my elected leaders to quickly support solar gardens and rebates, because we all deserve healthy and safe lives,” said Palu.

**For interviews, contact Vaidehi Shah - 0452 290 082. State-specific analysis is available. Images, videos, factsheets available on [Dropbox](#). Video grabs from press conference will be uploaded after 11:30am today.**

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### About the [Community Power Agency](#)

Community Power Agency was founded in 2011 to drive a faster and fairer transition to clean energy. At the Community Power Agency, we believe that local, people-powered clean energy projects will bring lasting benefits to communities across Australia. We care about achieving a transition to clean energy that benefits everyone, regardless of where you live, or what you earn.

### About [Sydney Alliance](#)

The Sydney Alliance is a diverse coalition of community organisations, religious organisations, unions and schools that uses the tools of community organising to make the city a better place to live. The idea of building a Sydney Alliance was first raised in May 2007, and by November that same year was financially supported by 13 organisations. The Alliance launched with 45 partner organisations on 15 September 2011.

### Notes to editors:

1. Quotes from other community groups / states below.
2. Embeddable explainer video about solar gardens [here](#).
3. Images and footage of the launch will be uploaded into [this Dropbox folder](#) on Tuesday 8 Oct 2019
4. Campaign webpage can be found at [www.solarforall.org.au](http://www.solarforall.org.au).
5. The community groups that are part of the campaign coalition include:
  1. 2040
  2. Australian Energy Foundation
  3. Australian Youth Climate Coalition
  4. Better Renting
  5. Coalition for Community Energy
  6. Community Power Agency
  7. Community Owned Renewable Energy Mullumbimbi (COREM)
  8. CORENA
  9. Enova
  12. Institute for Sustainable Futures, University of Technology Sydney
  13. Nature Conservation Council
  14. Pingala
  15. Renew
  16. Repower Shoalhaven
  17. Solar Citizens
  18. Tenants Union of NSW
  19. United Church in Australia, Synod of Victoria and Tasmania
  20. Uniting Communities

- 10. Environment Victoria
- 11. Hepburn Wind

- 21. Voices for Power campaign of the Sydney Alliance
- 22. Zero Emissions Byron

### **ADDITIONAL QUOTES**

**Mark Henley, Manager - Advocacy and Communications, Uniting Communities, South Australia:**

"Solar options need to be available to low income renters, who are otherwise limited in their ability to control their energy bills."

"It is now evident that solar energy options are cheaper than other energy and renewables and this campaign is fantastic because it promotes greater access to lower cost renewable energy"

**Leo Patterson Ross, Senior Policy Officer, Tenants Union of NSW:**

"Solar gardens offer a clean and fair way to reduce the cost of living for people renting their homes."

"With solar gardens, Australia can deliver solar for all in our beautiful, sunny land we are."

"We know people who rent their homes are keen to join in receiving the benefits of solar, but so far they have been kept in the dark."

"One of the great advantages of solar gardens is you don't have to lose your access when you move - this has been one of the big barriers for people renting their home from accessing solar in the past even if they had the funds to pay"

**Donna Luckman, CEO, Renew:**

As Victoria leads the way towards a clean energy future, it is important to ensure nobody is left behind.