

# HAYSTACKS SOLAR GARDEN

19 September 2022

[Haystacks Solar Garden](#) have announced details of their proto-type Solar Garden Project

The Solar Garden project is aimed at Electricity Customers who want to gain the benefits of Solar PV power but have no suitable roof solar access. This includes renters, apartments and any premises that has its solar access blocked by trees or tall adjacent buildings.

**Customer owned behind the meter PV installations will still give the best returns** for those who have suitable sites.

Haystacks have set up a part commercially owned (Como Energy Grong-Grong) Solar Farm, 1.5 MW, 4-5 hectare in the Riverina area. Solar Garden members buy a "garden plot share" at \$4200 (equivalent cost of a 3kW PV solar set up). 333 garden plot shares are available for sale. Cost of the Solar Farm is about \$1.4M, plot sales cover about 34%, the remainder being made up by NSW government funding and Commercial sources. The solar farm output will, at this stage, be sold on the spot market. The chosen site is a high solar output area, low fire and flood risk, and with normal storm and hail insurance and maintenance contracts.

Haystacks have entered into a partnership contract with energy retailer **Energy Locals**, and all plot owners will need to transfer to them. Plot owners will receive an annual income credit of \$505 for 10 years, credited on their electricity bills monthly (just like a feed in rebate, and equivalent of a 3kw PV system). It is expected the credits will be treated as are feed in tariff amounts as far as tax is concerned.

Particularly important is plot owners receive the rebate even when they move (renters), as long as they remain with Energy Locals (every State except WA and NT). Indigo Power also uses Energy Locals as a supplier.

The setting up of the Solar Garden concept has been very protracted (2 years) and complicated – involving a 55-page legal document and NSW government legislation. Plot members are financially protected by means of CCU's - Co-operative Capital Units - which are a type of debenture with preferential rights. Haystacks have a 5-year contract with Energy Locals, with a 3 year renewable option (in case things change and there are better options!)

Garden plots are on sale now, (91 so far), and all 333 must be sold by 30 September for the project to proceed. Construction of the Solar Farm will be completed over Summer, and first repayments May 2023.

Additional costs to plot members include a \$50 joining fee, and \$1 membership.

As Energy Locals operate in Victoria it would be possible for Victorians to buy in.

This is the first Solar Garden to get up, and it is expected others may evolve using differing arrangements.

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