

18 February 2010

No house fires caused by solar panels

NATIONAL: The Clean Energy Council (CEC) has moved to reassure consumers about the safety of Australian household solar panel systems following a story on ABC's Lateline program last night.

Clean Energy Council chief executive Matthew Warren said while there had been around 100,000 solar panels installed in Australian households over the last 30 years, the industry has received no reports of any causing house fires.

"We take safety seriously. The safety record of the solar industry is good. To put this in perspective there are more than 10,000 house fires every year, most of which are caused by faulty wiring or appliances – not solar panels," Mr Warren said.

"All solar panels receiving government support must be installed by an accredited installer. The panels must comply with the Australian standard. All houses connecting solar panels back to the grid must also be installed by a licensed electrician.

The accreditation program includes audits of installed systems to ensure compliance with these rigorous standards and consumer confidence is maintained.

"All households looking to install solar panels should be using a CEC-accredited installer who is required to ensure that their solar panel system is safe and complies with the Australian standard," Mr Warren said.

"The Clean Energy Council will continue to work with Federal and State Governments to ensure the highest standards are maintained and consumers can continue to generate their own clean electricity with confidence," he said.

"We welcome any additional measures to improve the safety, performance and reliability of these technologies as they evolve to becoming part of the mainstream energy supply in Australia."

"Both major parties should be proud of the transformative effect their policies have had in developing the Australian solar industry. They have made solar power more affordable for consumers, created jobs and reduced thousands of Australian household's reliance on fossil fuel-based electricity," he said.

For media enquiries please call Mark Bretherton 0413 556 981 or 03 9929 4111

<http://www.cleanenergycouncil.org.au/cec/mediaevents/media-releases/February/solarpanels>