

# Solar tariff confusion

Bonsai annual show

ON October 27, without warning, the NSW Parliament slashed the feed-in tariff rates for solar energy, causing chaos in the industry.

A rally was held at Sydney Town Hall last week to protest at the reduced subsidy.

Solar industry leader, Ged McCarthy, President of the Solar Energy Industries Association Inc., is leading the charge.

"No one can understand it", Mr McCarthy said.

"Whatever the

issues may be, there is no excuse for cancelling the current scheme without industry consultation, with no notice.

"It creating an immediate crisis in the NSW solar industry," Mr McCarthy said.

"Thousands could suffer, and the first layoffs came within days," he said.

The feed-in tariff rate was 60c/kwh, a rate which Mr McCarthy says everyone agreed was too high.

"The original rate was extremely generous, perhaps too generous, and it overheated the industry, causing huge demand that could not be filled.

"But to slash the rate to 20c/kwh overnight, without consultation or warning, is worse.

"20c is below what people in regional areas are paying for energy produced from coal.

"It provides no incentive to convert to solar.

"There seems to be general agreement among industry members that 45c/kwh strikes the right balance," Mr McCarthy said.

The Parliamentary decision had bipartisan support from Labor and Coalition.

In the face of the industry backlash, the Liberal-National Coalition has joined The Greens in discussions with representatives of the solar industry.

According to Mr McCarthy, the best long-term solution would be a rate of subsidy which is set nationally by the Federal Government.

"In the 1990's Australia was a global leader in solar energy production and research.

"Much of the technology which is now being used worldwide originated in Australia, through the CSIRO, but we have since fallen behind.

"Australia could still lead the world in solar technology, uptake, installations and usage.

"But we lag far behind Germany, the Netherlands, the USA, Spain, France, Italy and Greece, all of whom have made real commitments to cutting carbon emissions with strong feed-in tariff programmes encouraging solar uptake and meeting renewable energy targets.

"We can't go backwards on this.

"To back out now is not just fatal for the industry but for the future of renewables," he said.

The 2020 Federal Government target is to produce 20% of all electricity from renewable sources, and the carbon pollution reduction scheme, which would make renewables more attractive.

An online petition is available at [www.seia.org.au](http://www.seia.org.au).

THE Wauchope Bonsai Group is holding its annual show at Port Panthers on Saturday and Sunday, November 13-14.

Over 60 native and traditional bonsai will be on display.

There will be continuous demonstrations of bonsai skills and a raffle with a green island fig as first prize, and a sales table offering bonsai, starters and bonsai tools.



**Solar energy specialist:** Ged McCarthy, President, Solar Energy Industries Assn. is pushing for sustainable tariff feed-in rates.

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## Ear bitten off: CWA room for lease

man in court

PART of a 25 year old Wauchope man's ear was bitten off during an assault in the car park of a local hotel in the early hours of Sunday morning.

Police said the assault happened in the car park at the Hastings Hotel around 12.30am.

"There was allegedly a fight which resulted in part of the victim's ear being bitten off," a police spokesperson said.

"Detectives attended the scene along with crime scene police.

"Subsequently, a 30 year old male from Wauchope has been charged with recklessly causing grievous bodily harm and assault occasioning actual bodily harm and will appear in Port Macquarie Local Court on November 29.

"Police were notified when the victim attended Port Macquarie Base Hospital."

Police said the victim underwent surgery in the Port Macquarie Base Hospital. There is no report on his current condition.

DOES your community group have a worthwhile project needing a place to operate?

Port Macquarie Hastings Council is calling for expressions of interest from community organisations interested in using the former Wauchope CWA Baby Health Centre on a regular basis for a two year period.

The Centre adjoins the CWA Hall, next to Council's Administration Office, Library and Seniors Centre.

Since the baby health centre moved to the Wauchope Hospital, the building has been used by the CWA and ACES Disability Services to provide outreach programs

to Wauchope residents.

Council's Community Facilities Co-ordinator, Steve Lawrence said, "Community organisations which would like to use the Centre should complete and submit an expression of interest outlining how their use of the building will meet the needs of the community.

"The key criteria will be the ability of organisations to provide activities from the building that are aligned with the Port Macquarie-Hastings Social Plan.

"Other assessment criteria include ability to deliver activities that cater for the needs of residents of Wauchope and surrounding areas, capacity to maximise use of the

building and demonstrated experience in the delivery of community services and activities," he said.

Once a successful applicant has been identified, negotiations can then take place on the form of management agreement, such as a lease, licence or hire agreement.

The EOI Form is available at [www.tenderlink.com/pmhc](http://www.tenderlink.com/pmhc)

Organisations must register online to download the documents.

EOI close 11.00am Thursday December 2.

For further information please call Council's community facilities coordinator, Steve Lawrence on 65818111.

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