

Violet Town and District Solar Neighbourhood **organised by VTAG and the new Eco-Living Demonstration Project**

VTAG are partnering with [Rezeko](#) to operate a bulk-buy scheme to install grid interactive solar electricity substantially cheaper than current market rates.

At present there is a government rebate of \$8 000 for 1kW systems. There is no additional rebate for additional capacity over 1kW. Most installations under this scheme are for 1kW systems.

Under the bulk-buy scheme, 10, 25 or 50 households, community buildings, etc., in a neighbourhood or district all sign up, and economies of scale allow the installation pre-inspections to be grouped together, and the pv hardware to be bought in bulk direct from the manufacturers.

For a 'mini solar neighbourhood' of a minimum of 25 participating houses, the cost is \$9,095 for each 1kW installation.

For a 'solar neighbourhood' of a minimum of 50 participating houses, the cost is \$8,895 for each 1kW installation.

*The net cost to the consumer for an installation that is part of the bulk buy, after the government rebate of \$8 000, is **\$895** for a 'solar neighbourhood' of 50 houses [50 kW], and **\$1 095** for a 'mini solar neighbourhood' of 25 houses.*

There are additional costs of electrical inspection and 2-way meter. Allow **\$300 - \$500** for these.

For a single purchase installation of a 1 kW system, the current market price is about \$13 000 to \$15 000. The hardware alone costs the stand-alone installers over \$8 000 for them to purchase, wholesale.

The net cost to the consumer for a single purchase installation, after the government rebate, is \$5 000 to \$7 000.

This bulk buy scheme is so attractive that the fund of government money for the \$8 000 rebate is rapidly being exhausted. We understand that the rebate money will be finished by the end of July, so we are trying to move quickly to catch the rebate while it lasts. Usually the process of forming a neighbourhood and getting to the stage of applying for the rebate takes much longer than 3 weeks, but we think we can do it.

It will depend on a strong 'grapevine', all of us telling everyone else about it. Lets see if our community can do it. We all benefit by grouping together and getting the cheapest price with 50 kW. [Looks like we have a headstart with 11 kW on community buildings for the Eco-Living Demonstration Project.]

Our neighbourhood includes Violet Town and District, pretty much anyone who considers Violet Town to be their community. Plus we are including Strathbogie township, and houses in between Violet Town and Strathbogie.

To qualify for the rebate you have to be an owner occupier, that is, the house has to be your 'primary place of residence', you have to own it, and also your household combined annual taxable income has to be less than \$100 000.. I will find out how much allowance there is for houses still being built, just bought and not moved into yet, etc. If you don't qualify for the government rebate you are still welcome to join our neighbourhood, which is very competitively priced.

We plan for local electrician Jack Smyth to partner with Rezeko's experienced installer Darryl Lavis to do the installations.

As of January 1st 2009 the feed in tariff for power sold back to the grid will 60c/ kW – we buy it for 15c/kW.

See over for a description of the process to make our solar neighbourhood happen. [David Arnold](#)

1. Register online at www.rezeko.com go to 'Apply', sign in, then fill in the form. The sooner the better, no obligation or money required at this stage, just get yourself on the list.

2. Launch event **Tuesday July 15th, 5.30pm, Supper Room at the VT Community Centre.**
Please help put the word around and encourage people to come to this. Eric Zimmerman from Rezeko will give a presentation about the solar neighbourhood, and answer questions.

3. Keep obtaining registrations online at www.rezeko.com go to 'Apply', sign in, then fill in the form.
Help people who don't have the internet or don't use a computer by inviting them to your house and entering the information for them.

4. Pre-inspections

Rezeko has to check every property that has registered to see what special details need to be allowed for, and to see if there is a suitable unshaded position available for the panels. Rezeko gives each house a quote for the whole installation. Some houses are too shaded by large trees to qualify for the rebate, apparently this applies to around 25% of houses, I am not sure how many of our houses this will apply to.

To get the pre-inspection process done really quickly I [Dave Arnold] have arranged to help Rezeko with this. I will need to get a photo of your roof where the panels would go, and of your meter box and fuse box.

5. Decision

Householders need to pay the fully refundable deposit [eg \$895 for 50 kW solar neighbourhood] at this stage

6. Pre-approval

Rezeko obtains pre-approval from the Dept of Environment Heritage and the Arts for the \$8 000 rebate for each household. *This is the deadline part, we have to get the forms in for this by late July. We will probably fill these forms in when I visit for the pre-inspection.*

7. Pay the \$8 000

Householders have to pay this up front, to enable purchase of the hardware, which is repaid after installation by the govt. rebate. GMCU are willing to tailor specific loans for this purpose where needed, as are the Bendigo Bank. For people with mortgages it may be cheaper just to extend this for the period required.

8. Stock arrives 6 – 8 weeks after the order is placed

Probably in a locked container to the Shire depot. We have a trailer day, where everyone collects their hardware and takes it home to their garage or somewhere. Retail value of this hardware is over \$ 8 000.

9. Installation

Installation takes place at about 1 per day. Installation can take up to 2 months, depending on whether your house is first or last to be done.

10. Meter installation and Electrical Inspection

Can take 6 weeks, or much less if a 'Smart Meter' is installed.

11. Receive \$8 000 rebate

Hardware

The BB/EKO solar system comprises:

- 6 x 170 watt or 8 x 125 watt solar panels. These panels meet international standard IEC 61215 and are compliant with the requirements of the Department of Environment, Heritage, Water and the Arts to receive the \$8,000 federal government rebate. These solar panels will be either monocrystalline or polycrystalline depending on global availability. We would ensure suitability to your local climate. 25 yr warranty
- An inverter. The role of the inverter is to convert the DC electricity from the solar panels to AC so that your appliances can make use of the electricity. This will be either the Sunny Boy 1100 or the Latronics PVE 1200 (with weatherproof enclosure). Our inverters meet Australian Standard 4777. 5 yr warranty.
- A Conergy mounting frame. This is suitable for either a flat or angled roof. The mounting system will attach to the frame of your roof to ensure maximum protection against harsh weather conditions. 10 yr warranty.
- All electrical switches and wiring.
- Installation by a Clean Energy Council accredited installer.