

# Queanbeyan City Council goes solar:

## New year, new approach to energy

The change in Government has generated considerable speculation about Australia's renewable energy target – **Geoff Hill** asks whether it will be revised and if so, how will the new target affect renewable energy growth throughout our country?

**DESPITE THE POLITICAL CHURN**, many Local Councils are forging ahead with renewable energy plans, driven by a passion for the environment as well as positive energy savings and solid return on investment.

One such forward-thinking organisation is Queanbeyan City Council, NSW. They kicked off the New Year with a custom 40.25 kW rooftop solar system installed atop the Queanbeyan Library. Our company, Solari Energy, partnered with Council on this project.

The 158-panel system, which cost \$110,000, will reduce Council's energy consumption by more than 60,000 kWh – a savings of about \$20,000 per year. As a result, Queanbeyan Council will recoup their total investment within six years.

"Energy expense makes up a significant amount of our Council's annual budget, so cost-saving initiatives such as this are most welcome," said Mayor Tim Overall.

The project is part of Queanbeyan Council's 2013-2017 Delivery Program, where \$385,000 has been allocated to fund a number of alternative

energy projects. Council staff are currently researching the best options for the remaining \$275,000 in funding, and the potential for solar energy solutions extends beyond the Queanbeyan Library project.

"Just looking around, I noticed the number of flat-roof platforms on Council buildings that lend themselves to solar panels," Mayor Overall said. Potential solar additions include the Aquatic Centre, the Queanbeyan Performing Arts Centre (known as "The Q"), and the RB Smith Community Centre.

### Smart Solar Planning and Collaborative Partnership

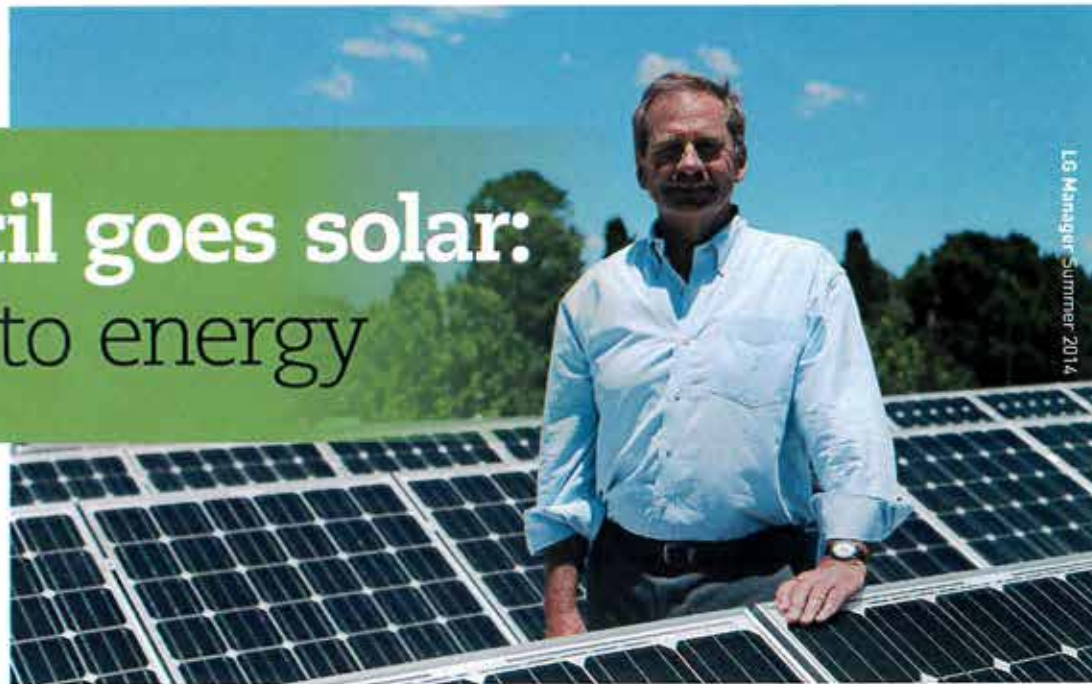
Queanbeyan City Council took the same careful approach to planning for its solar project as it has with the multi-year Development Program. As a first step, Council commissioned Solari Energy to complete an Energy Assessment and Feasibility Study. Working closely with Council staff, Solari's Electrical Project Engineer Jeremy Tranter (BE(Hons) CPEng RPEQ NPER CEC) spearheaded the study. Once completed, a

briefing report presented to Council summarised all elements needed to make a sound decision, including:

- Energy consumption and load profiles
- System design concepts
- Solar energy generation estimates
- Recommended equipment
- Budget estimates
- Net Present Value (NPV) and payback calculations

Armed with this information, Council felt confident that the proposed system would meet long-term energy generation and cost saving goals while operating within capital budget allocations.

Our company's emphasis on quality processes and products matched Council's exacting standards, and close collaboration was key to project success from the initial planning phase through to delivery of a fully functional renewable power plant.



Queanbeyan City Council Mayor, Tim Overall inspects the new 158-panel rooftop solar system.  
PHOTO: Kim Pham – Queanbeyan Age.

The system was installed in January by CEC-accredited professionals. Mayor Overall personally inspected the rooftop panels and commented on Queanbeyan City Council's dedication to sustainable energy. "It's all part of our climate change action plan, which I'm quite passionate about," he said. ■

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