

Changes to the National Solar Schools Program from 1 July 2011

As part of the 2011/2012 budget, the Australian Government has announced that the National Solar Schools Program (NSSP) will close two years earlier than expected, with only two remaining funding rounds (2011/2012 and 2012/2013). The Australian Government will notify all eligible schools of these program changes. **Government schools successful in the 2010/11 round are also being notified that this change does not impact their school and their grant payment will be made once the NPA is in place.**

The following changes will apply from 1 July 2011:

The program will continue until June 2013, with two remaining funding rounds (2011/2012 and 2012/2013). The competitive merit assessment process will remain, however any schools that are unsuccessful in the 2012-13 round will not receive funding under the program.

For government schools - state or territory government education authorities were provided with the flexibility to request that the maximum funding amount available to government schools in their jurisdiction be reduced to allow more schools to receive the grant. Schools will be contacted by the Australian Government prior to the application round opening on the 1st August notifying them of funds available to them.

Due to the funding limitations in the revised NSSP program a funding limit of up to \$25,000 only is available to eligible Queensland state schools. While not limiting the schools to solar a grant of \$25,000 should allow for the extension of 2kW solar panels to an existing system where 2kW solar panels and a 4kW inverter have been previously installed. The balance of funds should also allow for the installation of an additional 2kW solar system and the additional connection to the Data Collection Storage and Visualisation System required by the NSSP.

In addition as limited funding is available, the Australian Government has advised that schools classified as low socio-economic and remote will have an advantage over other schools in the merit-assessment process to allow funding to be directed to schools most in need.

Schools who have received solar panels through the Building the Education Revolution (BER) program are only eligible for \$15,000.

DET will be assessing the on-line applications for the two remaining funding rounds for Queensland state schools.

For full details on changes to the program, please visit the NSSP website at: <http://www.climatechange.gov.au/nationalsolarschools>

The opening date for applications for the 2011-12 funding round is the 1st August 2011

More detailed information on the 2011-12 funding round and how to apply has been on The National Solar Schools Program website in advance of the application round opening on 1 August 2011. Please monitor the website for the latest update on lodging applications available at <http://www.climatechange.gov.au/government/programs-and-rebates/national-solar-schools/application.aspx>

Unregistered schools will be able to register for the program from 1 July 2011. There are only a small number of Queensland state schools who are not currently registered with the NSSP. If unsure if your school is already registered please contact the NSSP hotline on 1800 703 831. If your school is already registered you will be able to obtain the registration number which is required to complete the application process also from the NSSP hotline on 1800 703 831.