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27 March 2021

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The Chief Executive

Australian Energy Market Commission

GPO Box 2603, Sydney NSW 2001

SUBMISSION - PROPOSED RULE CHANGE TO ALLOW FOR CHARGING FOR EXCESS POWER FROM SOLAR PANELS

The proposed rule change reported in Sydney Morning Herald on 26 March 2021 appears ill judged. It can be seen as an attack on the weak. Large numbers of mainly lower middle class people invested in solar roof panels in recent years to lower their power bills and gain some independence from power suppliers, with an expectation they would receive some positive reimbursement from their supplier for power their panels generated in excess of usage. To encourage uptake of solar panel installations some State governments added feed in tariff supplements.

Now that we have a large number of such installations, you are proposing to reverse things and make them pay for supplying power to the grid. You will be aware they are not organised as a lobby group with no spokesperson to bargain on their behalf like the other parties in the Energy market. You must regard them as a group you can impose new and unforeseen costs on without any backlash. Power stations as well as solar panel owners offer power to the grid in 'overload' situations, but I can't see you getting away with a charge to a power station for such power offered.

It wasn't that long ago that we were told a principal reason for high power costs to consumers was the 'gold plating' of pole and wire networks. Blind Freddy could have told suppliers that consumers would rush to install solar panels to escape such costs once technology allowed. Suppliers needed to plan for the adjustments to their networks to accommodate this development. If that was not done, it means any 'gold plating' was misdirected. Solar panel owners should not be penalised for supplier missteps.

If your proposed rule change proceeds, it could act as a discouragement to increased solar panel installations, which I would have thought should be encouraged on environmental grounds. It would become another example of the nation doing the opposite of what is needed to address the looming threats from climate change. It would join decisions like those made by some states to impose road

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usage charges on electric vehicles without switching petrol cars to the same system. Such decisions could be seen as slowing the uptake of electric cars, to the detriment of the environment.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W. G. Hamilton". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "W".

William G. Hamilton