

MEDIA RELEASE

Commissioner of Consumer Affairs

13th November 2012

Don't Get Burned by Solar Claims

Changes in power costs for Northern Territory consumers will likely prompt an increase in demand for photovoltaic solar (PV solar) systems as NT home owners look to alternatives.

Consumer Affairs Commissioner, Gary Clements, says "solar retailers must be careful when advertising the potential benefits of solar systems to ensure that consumers are not misled".

Claims should be clear and unambiguous and should not include technical or scientific jargon that suggests certain capabilities or effects which cannot be substantiated. Traders are reminded that any claims or representations found to be false or misleading under the Australian Consumer Law may face a maximum penalty of \$1.1 million.

Mr Clements recommended consumers do their homework before installing a solar system in their home and that they thoroughly review the power output of different systems and money saving claims being made by retailers.

"Being an informed consumer is always important, and never more so than in new areas of technology such as solar systems. Understanding the costs involved can help you to make sure a solar system is the right decision for you," said Mr Clements.

It is vital to obtain written quotes and compare prices and services before committing to any purchase, especially when large amounts of money are involved. When sourcing quotes, buyers should contact accredited installers that use licensed electricians, supply products that meet Australian standards and install in accordance with NT building regulations.

A full list and a solar guide can be found at the Clean Energy Council website at www.cleanenergycouncil.org.au. The website has useful information on connecting your home solar system to the electricity supply grid.

Consumers who require any further information should contact Consumer Affairs on 1800 019 319 or email consumer@nt.gov.au.