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## **Planning underway for Solar City project**

Ergon Energy's Magnetic Island customers can expect to receive an information package on the Solar City Project later in 2007.

The package will research their views and allow them to register their interest in being involved in this unique seven year, \$30 million major sustainable energy trial under the Australian Government's Solar Cities programme.

The programme is designed to demonstrate how solar power, smart meters, energy efficiency and new approaches to electricity pricing can combine to provide a sustainable energy future while reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

While planning is underway to roll out the project, Ergon Energy is negotiating the Solar Cities Project funding agreement with the Australian Greenhouse Office.

Magnetic Island will be the focus of the project which is targeting the installation of 500 solar photo voltaic (PV) systems on around one-third of the island's residential and commercial buildings as well as the installation of smart meters and energy efficiency measures in all 1700 network connected properties.

Manager Regional Services Paul Ryan said the first stage in the project will be a free energy audit of Ergon Energy's customers on the island.

"Over the next three years, all eligible residential and business customers will be offered a free, comprehensive energy audit. The audit will identify inefficient use of electricity leading to customers losing money and recommend behavioural and technical changes to save electricity and money and reduce greenhouse gas emissions," he said.

With the approval of the owner, the auditor will install basic energy-efficient devices such as compact fluorescent lamps and water-efficient showerheads at no charge.

Mr Ryan said customers involved with the program are likely to see a reduction in their electricity consumption.

"It's predicted that trial participants could reduce their electricity use between 10 and 40% which is a considerable saving and at the same time reduce greenhouse gas emissions. However this assumes no significant addition of appliances or increase in people in the house or business," he said.

It's estimated that over the period of the entire Solar City Project, greenhouse gas emissions will be reduced by 50,000 tonnes – the same benefit as taking 1,700 cars off the road for the seven years.



Ergon Energy will own and maintain the solar PV systems and those customers hosting them will continue to be connected to and supplied from Ergon Energy's network. Billing and all other existing arrangements will remain unchanged.

As part of the Solar City Project similar measures will be implemented at Serene Valley and Riverway as well as a Townsville CBD commercial building.

"Learning outcomes from the project will be extended across the whole of Queensland and beyond", he said.

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For more information on the *Townsville: Queensland Solar City* project, contact Ergon Energy's Solar City Community Engagement Manager Julie Heath on 0408 862 520 or 4080 4913.

Or visit [www.greenhouse.gov.au/solarcities](http://www.greenhouse.gov.au/solarcities) or [www.ergon.com.au/environment](http://www.ergon.com.au/environment).

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