



The Hon Barry O'Farrell MP

Premier of NSW

Minister for Western Sydney

MEDIA RELEASE

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RESULTS OF SOLAR PANEL AUDIT

Householders are being advised to ensure their solar panel systems are safe following an audit which found that up to 18.5 per cent of installations have major defects.

Premier Barry O'Farrell said today the review of 658 homes in Sydney's north-west by Fair Trading inspectors found widespread defects in solar panel units

He said 18.5 per cent had major defects and 63.5 per cent had minor defects. The major defects related primarily to incorrect installation of some components or incorrect wiring while the minor defects generally related to incorrect marking and signage.

Mr O'Farrell stressed that, of the 120,000 homes in NSW with solar installations, only two had reported minor fires in their fuse boxes.

He said the most important advice to householders was **NOT** to turn off their solar panel systems but to call a qualified expert if they were concerned that their installation may be defective.

An education campaign will be launched immediately to advise householders of the action they should take if they are concerned that their solar installations may not be safe.

As a first step, those with concerns should contact the company which sold them their solar panel system to confirm that the installer was qualified and that the system has a Certificate of Compliance. Where the company cannot confirm that the system is safe, owners should ask them to inspect it again.

Those who are still not satisfied with the response or who want an independent inspection of their system, should go to the Clean Energy Council website at www.solaraccreditation.com.au where customers can access a list of accredited solar-trained electricians who can check systems for a fee

Mr O'Farrell said that where there is a problem with a system the installer is required to fix the defects as soon as possible at no charge.

NSW Fair Trading can also take action against substandard installations of solar panels where complaints are lodged.

Mr O'Farrell said that electricity distributors are also now writing to customers with detailed advice on what to do and are standardising their inspection procedures to

check that solar PV systems are properly connected to the electricity network.

He said it was clear that the solar bonus scheme had been bungled by the previous Labor Government at every stage.

“The scheme was too generous, there was a rush to get panels installed and we have ended up with many homes having defective systems,” Mr O’Farrell said.

“Where major defects were found during this audit the systems were shut down by Fair Trading Inspectors and the owners informed.

“Fair Trading is also contacting the installers responsible for the defective work and directing them to rectify the problems.

“It is appalling that Labor implemented a scheme which was open to abuse and resulted in so many homes being left with defective units.

“But the key message now is for householders to follow the safety advice which means NOT fiddling with their installations – but calling in an expert to do any checks instead.”