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**From:** James Goldsmith [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, 24 July 2017 7:53 AM  
**To:** Retail Electricity Inquiry  
**Subject:** Electricity public forum

Thank you for your kind invitation to attend a public forum on electricity prices.

Unfortunately, **this would be a seven-hour drive for me**, therefore I along with many other **Country Victorians will effectively be excluded from your public forum**.

Pricing of electricity itself is very confusing.  
It is difficult to understand bills and to compare prices from one company to another.  
It would be good if all bills had to be standardised so they were all the same and comparisons were simple.

Smart meters are making this more complicated, although they are supposed to make it easier to change usage patterns to use power when it is more affordable.  
Anecdotally most people do not do this, and have no idea how to.  
This is unlikely to change unless there is a widespread public education program.

Prices are extremely high for a service that is likely to create problems for consumers over the next summer.  
Experience over the last ten years in Birchip shows that brown outs are common and very damaging to some equipment.  
Whilst this is not a direct 'price' issue it is a cost of electricity for many consumers.

The price paid for solar back into the grid is extremely low and seems to bear no relationship to cost of supply or profit margins.  
At six cents it is simply wrong and does nothing to encourage the use of solar which has the capacity to ease brown outs in this area.

Legislation that would allow better access to the grid by potential regional energy suppliers could lead to better pricing in this area.  
One potential regional power supplier has stated that his company could build a solar system in a local country town to supply the whole town and provide power at a lesser cost than is currently being charged.  
Current regulation around the supply and sale of electricity prevent this from happening.

There is also an opportunity for some smart person or company to aggregate current solar on roofs and devise a system to sell power back to the grid at times of high price.  
This type of technology is probably not available to many residents on an individual basis.  
This technology also leads to inequity, in that it is only available to the few people who can afford the initial infrastructure and are smart enough to understand the system.

Kind regards

James Goldsmith  
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