

## Solar Our Schools

November 26, 2020

Stately Kirribilli House gained a pink, solar-powered cubby house delivered by a convoy of parents and children on 30 September, carrying an urgent message: [Solar Our Schools](#).

More than 10,000 Australian parents have signed an open letter to Prime Minister Scott Morrison asking the Federal Government to fund solar panels and batteries for all Australian schools and early childhood centres.

Organised by Australian Parents for Climate Action, the Solar our Schools petition was delivered to the Prime Minister's Sydney residence inside the solar-powered pink cubby, after Mr Morrison announced a gas-led energy recovery.

National director of the parents' action group, Suzie Brown, said putting solar into the nation's schools was a "no brainer".

"Solar Our Schools would solve the Federal Government's energy woes, create thousands of jobs, save thousands of dollars in energy bills that can be spent on education resources, and help make the climate safer for our kids," she said.

"Instead of wasting taxpayer money on gas, which won't address climate change or electricity prices, the Prime Minister should be investing in solutions like Solar Our Schools, which solve pressing economic, environmental, and energy challenges today while setting us up for the future."

Federation has written to Australian Parents for Climate Action congratulating it for its advocacy and making it clear the union shares its commitment to ensuring all public education settings are given the opportunity to move to solar and to become more energy efficient.

Federation also indicated it was available to work together as far as the campaign relates to public education settings.

Solar Our Schools would create more than 7000 jobs in renewable energy and education industries across Australia and save schools and centres money, according to research by Beyond Zero Emissions.

Their research also shows that the energy savings from solar, as well as income from selling their excess solar energy as a "virtual power plant", would save large schools and centres \$114,000, and small schools \$12,700 per year.

The campaign aligns with Federation's long history of environmental activism dating back to the late 1960s/early 1970s, making it one of the first unions to support environmental movements.



In early 2018, Federation installed an array of 158 solar panels on the roof of Teachers Federation House in Surry Hills, which generates 85 kilowatt hours of energy and saves more than \$30,000 in electricity bills per year.

Federation's Environment Policy from 2011 Annual Conference states: "NSW Teachers Federation recognises the preservation of our natural environment and addressing environmental challenges such as climate change is union business. As workers who are educators, our members have a role in encouraging the growth of a clean economy that will be safe and prosperous for future generations."