

MEDIA RELEASE

06 AUGUST 2007

NEXT STEP IN SOLAR CITIES PROGRAM

The Townsville City Council and Ergon Energy are getting behind a plan that will shine a ray of sunshine on community facilities on Magnetic Island.

Ergon is proposing to spend up to \$150,000 upgrading the Horseshoe Bay Sport and Recreational Club to use it as a community hub and interpretive centre for the soon to start Magnetic Island Solar Suburb project.

Under the plan, the clubhouse would be handed back to the council for community use once the Solar City project was over in three years time.

Deputy Mayor Cr Jenny Hill said a Sustainable Development Committee recommendation supporting the proposal would go to full council tomorrow.

“The plan will be subject to negotiations with Ergon on a final proposal and detailed design, but it has the potential to deliver a positive outcome for both the Solar City project and the island community,” Cr Hill said.

“It will provide Ergon with a good site for the headquarters and interpretive centre and at the same time provide the island with a fully functioning facility once the project is finished. The opportunity is too good to pass up.”

The council put forward the Sport and Rec club as an option following a request from Ergon for a suitable site on the island for a community interpretive centre and contact point for the Solar Suburb project.

As part of the Solar City initiative, Ergon has also offered to install a 1.5kw photovoltaic (solar panel) system on a council owned building to showcase the city’s commitment to renewable energy.

The council carried out an extensive investigation of suitable sites and chose the building that houses the C-Bar on the Strand.

The solar power system will connect to the grid and supply renewable energy source to the building, as well as provide an interpretive display as part of the Council’s Citisolar program.

Citisolar is a broad community educational program that promotes the Solar City project and the benefits of renewable energy.

Townsville made a successful bid last year to be a trial site for the Federal Government’s \$75 million Solar City program. As part of the national trial, the Council will partner with Ergon Energy on using energy efficient methods such as solar photovoltaic (PV) systems installed at homes on Magnetic Island, the selected solar suburb.