



World-first shared solar service set to revolutionise the global rental market

(1 December 2015) Australian tech startup, Matter, has launched Digital Solar, a pioneering technology that will enable 2.4 million rented households in Australia to benefit from clean and cheap solar power by allowing landlords to sell solar energy to their tenants.

Digital Solar combines two growing trends; distributed solar and the shared economy, to create a unique solar business model for the rental market. This means that for the first time landlords are able to run solar panels like a micro-utility, earning five times the cost of installation and saving their tenants 20% off their energy price, on average \$300 annually.

Despite Australia leading the world in domestic solar adoption with 1 in 5 owner-occupied homes having installed panels, 1/3 of all Australian households live in rented accommodation and do not have solar. This is because landlords cannot justify the considerable expense of providing a solar system when the benefit of a reduced energy bill goes to the tenant. This issue, called the 'Split Incentive' problem, exists all over the world, with 43m rentals in the US, 18.5m in Japan and 5.4m in the UK, all unable to benefit from solar power.

To solve the problem, Matter allows property owners and tenants to collaborate through a simple online business case calculator to see what shared benefits they can generate before signing up to the Digital Solar service. Matter then provides a quote and facilitates the installation process.

Chris Mrakas, Matter CEO:

"Our mission is to empower millions of people who want to adopt sustainable energy but currently don't have the option.

By pioneering the shift from ownership to usership in the energy industry Digital Solar puts landlords and their tenants in control, creating new revenue streams and lowering energy bills. It's a trend that's set to continue as solar becomes more prevalent and new business models emerge to meet the needs of the changing energy landscape."

The service means landlords can install solar energy systems that have attractive payback periods and high lifetime returns, which improve both rental incomes and the capital value of their investments. Installing Digital Solar can typically achieve a return on investment of 3-6 years with a Net Present Value of five times the investment.



Digital Solar comes in the form of an unassuming box, installed between the solar panels on the roof and the electrical box, feeding outlets in the home. Power generated by the solar system and consumed by the household is accurately measured and made available to both owner and tenant through Matter's portal.

The platform allows a property owner to bill their tenant for the power they use with an invoice automatically generated by Matter's system. A separate log-in allows tenants to view their usage in real-time, visualise the dollar value of what they're saving and even view a usage forecast, leading to more conscious energy consumption habits.

Tenants can secure their daytime energy supply with Digital Solar and use traditional grid energy for the top-up energy that can't be produced by the solar system. Savings can be as high as 20% off their utility supply charges for new installs.

Dramatic reductions in the cost of panels and the arrival of affordable solar battery storage in the near future means that benefits to property owners and tenants will continue to grow. Mrakas continued;

"There's no reason why in the future, communities using this technology won't be able to produce, share and even trade in solar energy units."

Digital Solar is currently suitable for single tenanted rental properties and will be rolled out to multi-tenanted, mixed residential and commercial properties across next year. Matter is expecting high demand as it launches Digital Solar in November in Australia, with plans to launch in the USA and Europe early 2016.

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