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Solar scheme delivers green jobs and raises money for Father Bob Maguire Foundation

ACTU President Ged Kearney and Father Bob Maguire today launched the first installation of a solar hot water unit in a Father Bob community house under a new not-for-profit manufacturing scheme designed to create green jobs.

“The Earthworker Cooperative program creates green manufacturing jobs in Australia, promotes renewable energy, saves people money on their power bills and gives a portion of the profits back to charity,” said ACTU President Ged Kearney.

“It’s a great example of how unions and the not-for-profit sector can work together to create jobs, take action on climate change and give back to the community,” said Victorian Trades Hall Council Secretary Luke Hilakari.

Father Bob Maguire said the partnership with the Earthworker program is an exciting opportunity.

“Installing the solar hot water units in our community houses is a way the Father Bob Maguire Foundation can save money on power bills in our community houses while promoting clean green energy and Australian jobs,” Father Bob Maguire said.

“I am also grateful that the Father Bob Maguire Foundation has been nominated to receive 5 per cent of the profits from the program.”

The Earthworker Cooperative raised over \$78,000 through crowdsourcing in June this year to boost manufacturing of solar hot water units and heat pumps at a small Australian business, Everlast, which employs 10 full time people at its Dandenong factory.

“As a manufacturing company we have struggled to compete with overseas markets, the Earthworker Cooperative program will help create many more new jobs and keep them in Australia” said Everlast business owner Joe Caygill.

How it works:

The Earthworker Cooperative is a 100% Australian owned not-for-profit organisation. It aims to support green manufacturing jobs and the community sector.

Employees can purchase a solar hot water unit from the Earthworker Cooperative with their annual wage increase under their EBA.

It costs less than \$3000 to purchase a solar unit and once it is paid off the employee enjoys cheaper electricity bills and their wage increase resumes back into their pay packet.

Five per cent of profit goes towards community programs administered through a partnership with the Father Bob Maguire Foundation.

A University, City Council and a large community agency are the first three workplaces to agree to include the Earthworker program in their EBAs as an optional choice for their employees.

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