

# Media Release

8 December 2010

## PETS IN ALICE SPRINGS REAP SOLAR CITY BENEFITS

Thousands of dogs, cats, guinea pigs and other loved pets in Alice Springs will now reap the benefits of the town being a solar city.

The newly opened Alice Springs Veterinary Hospital has undergone a raft of energy efficient measures, including the installation of 15kW rooftop solar power system which is expected to generate 22,000 kWh of power per year, and save \$4,900 and 15 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>.

Debbie Osborne, the hospital's owner and manager said, "When we had the opportunity to design the building from scratch we thought it was important to be as environmentally friendly as possible."

"The clinic has some unique power requirements and surprisingly uses a lot of power, so with advice and funding support from Alice Solar City we had a chance to minimise our impact on the environment."

"Animals, like humans, cough, sneeze, have diarrhoea and release airborne nasties into the air."

"We treat thousands of animals per year and need to maintain a sterile environment, so we can't rely on external ventilation and have to leave our air-conditioning on 24 hours a day."

"For example, in the operating theatre we need a 'positive pressure' environment so that when the door opens, air is let out and not in – stopping germs from entering the theatre. In the ward areas, we need to create 'negative pressure' to reduce smells and to contain the spread of these germs."

"Alice Solar City worked with us during the design phase of the building and we took on board as much of their advice as possible, without compromising the standard of the building as far as patient care is concerned", says Debbie Osborne.

Brian Elmer, General Manager of Alice Solar City says that many commercial customers have special power requirements and there is always a way to work around these and save energy at the same time.

"We are looking forward to seeing the performance of the rooftop solar system, as it is facing in a south east direction, at a low angle, instead of the common

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aspect of due north. We expect a relatively minor reduction in output compared to if it was facing due north."

Local company Ogden Power installed the \$97,000 rooftop system, with \$45,000 provided by Alice Solar City.

The Clinic will be able to sell all the electricity produced by the system to Power and Water earning approximately \$5000 revenue per year, giving a payback of well under 10 years.

"With an expected life of around 25 years, installing a solar PV system is not only good for the environment, but is a sound business investment", says Brian Elmer.

Other energy efficient measures at the hospital include a sensor on the external lighting, which needs to be on at night in case of emergency arrivals; and wide eaves and a wide veranda over east facing and north walls and windows respectively.

The hospital's lighting needs are also high with bright halogen lights required in the operating theatres, however where possible the hospital has installed energy efficient LED lighting.

Water saving measures includes a solar hot water system with a circulating pump so there is no wait time to get hot water out of the pipes, and an innovative toilet design where the hand basin sits over the cistern to allow grey water return to the toilet.

Ends....

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#### **About Alice Solar City**

The Alice Springs Solar City Consortium is led by the Alice Springs Town Council and includes broad community support from the Northern Territory Government, Power and Water Corporation, Tangentyere Council, the Northern Territory Chamber of Commerce, the Desert Knowledge Cooperative Research Centre and the Arid Lands Environment Centre. Funding sources include the Australian Government, the Northern Territory Government, Power and Water Corporation, and Alice Springs Town Council.

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