**ADDRESS TO COMMUNITY GROUPS**

Note: To fill in gaps within PowerPoint and speech, use the details particular to your own school from the feasibility report provided by Sustainability Enquiries. In this speech we’ve included the direction (slide) when using the transcript in conjunction with the provided PowerPoint.

Good evening P&C, staff, and fellow students. My name is \_\_\_\_\_\_, and I am here to speak to you tonight about an initiative that will benefit our school for many years to come.

In order to protect our environment, we increasingly need to employ renewables as a source of energy in our communities and in our schools. Today I will explain a process that our school community can undergo in an effort to contribute to these changes.

There exists a tendering program provided by the Department of Education that provides 50% of the funding for any solar installation if the school's infrastructure funding, P&C, and community can together provide the other 50%. Before I further explain this process, allow me to detail the importance of solar panels in our school.

(Slide). Solar panels, which function by absorbing the sun’s rays and converting them into electricity and heat, are one of the primary forms of renewable power sources, as they produce little to no greenhouse gas emissions, and are environmentally friendly. What’s more, due to global innovation, increased demand, and governmental responses to the impending threat of climate change and pollution, the price of solar has dropped dramatically. This means that solar power as a source of energy is becoming an increasingly viable option, and it’s time we join the march of progress. (slide)

For most, the question of cost is important - are we going to get a return on investment? The short answer to the question is yes. (Slide).

For a school to have consistent annual savings it is very hard to reduce variable costs - that is a cost that varies with the level of output such as replacing music gear, updating our software, or buying new books for the library - and we can’t reduce those because they contribute to the vision and mission of the school - they provide and enhance our learning. Electricity is a fixed cost, one the school has to pay every year and though it has fluctuated along with electricity rates, it remains relatively the same. However, because solar panels use sunlight to generate energy, the electricity they produce is free. This means that after the initial cost of installing the panels is met, a saving is made from funds that previously went to purchasing electricity from the grid. Solar panels are also estimated to last for approximately 25 years, allowing a long period of saving to occur. (Slide).

At our school, the reduction in electricity purchased from the grid will reach \_\_\_\_\_\_\_kWh per year, amounting to a total of $\_\_\_\_\_\_ savings per year, with little to no maintenance of the panels required. (Slide).

These savings can then be repurposed to further better our school. Some options for this spending are:

* Improving the senior study and library
* Providing funds for student-led projects
* Installing shade cover for outdoor sport areas
* Purchasing books for subjects that require ‘extra-reading’
* Film equipment for drama and photography syllabus
* Better educational resource and equipment
* Art installations e.g. murals and outdoor sculptures

(Slide). Not only is this action economically in the school’s interest, but also environmentally, as the proposed solar panel system will save \_\_\_\_ tonnes of CO2 emissions per year - the equivalent of planting \_\_\_\_\_ trees per year, a change that will affect not only our community but the wider community in Australia and the world. (Slide).

Schools such as Menai High School in 2013 and Caringbah High School in 2018 have gained considerable publicity for the installation of their solar panels. By following in their footsteps, our school can also become a leader in sustainability, gain positive publicity, and educate our students on environmentally-friendly practices. In the case of Menai High, the installation of solar-panels brought forth an environmentally conscious movement, inspiring students and staff which snowballed into other sustainable measures such as recycling initiatives and water harvesting.

(Slide). So what is the proposal?

(Slide). The proposed solar panel system is \_\_\_\_kW as the maximum a school can have is 100 kW and we already have \_\_\_installed. The total cost for this system is $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. However, as I said before, the department has made installing solar panels easier for schools, hence the department’s School Infrastructure NSW body is willing to contribute 50% funding for the solar system. This leaves us seeking a donation from the P&C of $\_\_\_\_\_, which would break even in savings in \_\_ years. (Slide).

Moving forward once we have your funding we need to confirm with the department’s Asset Management Unit (AMU) who will then complete the necessary approval forms. The AMU, in consultation with our school, will then install and manage the project. As a school the only thing we need to do is to secure funding. (Slide).

There are very few potential areas for concerns, though I understand we must address them.

* To prevent disruption to learning, we can have the panels installed during a holiday period, as Menai High School did.
* The second concern is that the rooves will need replacing for solar panels to be safely installed. This is something the AMU will discuss with us if it is an issue throughout the process.

(Slide). As you can see, this project and your donation will open an unlimited realm of opportunities that otherwise would not be possible. This project ticks all the boxes, it adds up economically, environmentally and socially. Before I finish are there any questions or opinions regarding this project?

(Slide) Thank you all for your time.