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**Solar panels on public housing could save tenants \$750 a year: improve health, stimulate the economy and reduce emissions.**

One of Australia's peak social services groups, Catholic Social Services Australia (CSSA), has supported calls for rooftop solar panels to be installed on Australia's public housing stock.

A joint report by the University of NSW and the Australian Photovoltaic Institute says adding solar panels to the nation's 440,000 social housing dwellings could save low-income households at least \$750 a year.

Chair of CSSA, Francis Sullivan, said the proposal is a major initiative that would have real benefits for both low-income earners and the environment.

"This plan would give many low income and disadvantaged people the same access to cheap energy that about one in three homes in Australia already enjoy.

"It is common knowledge that energy bills represent a much higher percentage of expenditure in poorer households than in wealthier homes.

"Anything that can be done to bring these costs down should be a priority for Government," Mr Sullivan said.

According to the report, around 4 per cent of 125,000 NSW public housing dwellings have solar panels, other states have various 'piecemeal' schemes.

"While Australia leads the world with rooftop solar uptake, we need to ensure that everyone has access to cheaper electricity," Mr Sullivan said.

The report estimates it would cost \$1.8 billion to cover every social housing roof with solar panels.

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