

investor

Unit owners have solar in common

by Tony Raggatt



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THE Solarus unit tower has gone solar to save on electricity.

The South Townsville unit complex is believed to be the first residential building in the region to install a big solar photovoltaic system to help power services such as its pool and elevators in common areas.

Unit owner and building committee chairman Adam Parsons said the system may be the first of many fitted to similar residential and commercial buildings.

"I think body corporates are crazy if they don't look more closely at this," Mr Parsons said.

"There will be significant savings for us."

The common areas of big residential and commercial buildings are big electricity users.

For Solarus, a 73-apartment tower with commercial areas on the ground floor, electricity consumption in its common areas alone push supply over the threshold of what is deemed by electricity authorities as a large commercial user of more than 100,000 kilowatt hours per year.

The status means higher electricity tariffs and more costs to add to body corporate fees already hit by big increases in insurance premiums.

Mr Parsons said the building



SUN ROOF: Frank Dallmeyer (left) with Adam Parsons at the Solarus complex.

Photo: TONY RAGGATT

committee commissioned Townsville firm Tropical Energy Solutions to undertake a feasibility study, and when it was found to be viable, worked to convince unit owners to install a system.

Of the 73 unit owners, 72 supported it and a levy was introduced to make the investment.

He said they installed a 33 kilowatt system which cost \$98,000 but recouped \$22,000

through rebates provided by the Federal Government's renewable energy certificates.

"The electricity savings will result in payback on the system in four to four and a half years," Mr Parsons said.

"It also brings the common area under the 100,000 kilowatt hours per year (threshold) which puts us into lower electricity tariffs."

Tropical Energy Solutions di-

rector Frank Dallmeyer said solar systems for common areas of large buildings was one answer to soaring body corporate costs.

"I think if body corporate managers want to find a solution to ongoing fee rises, this will be one of them," Mr Dallmeyer said.

"I think it's something where property owners who make an investment in their property will also add value."