

Thursday, 17 September 2020

## **RACV SOLAR PUTS POWER BACK IN THE HANDS OF VICTORIAN CHARITY**

RACV Solar is lending a helping hand to Free 3D Hands, a Victorian charity that uses 3D printers to manufacture hands and assistive devices for children, by providing reliable, efficient and always-on solar power supply.

Along with support from Tesla, Fronius, Trina Solar, Bass Coast Shire Council, Phillip Island RSL and local schools, RACV solar has installed a 30kW solar power system on the Free 3D Hands factory at Cowes on Phillip Island.

Free 3D Hands founder, Mat Bowtell, said the new RACV Solar power system, complete with 109 panels and two Tesla storage batteries, means the factory can keep 3D printing hands regardless of electricity supply issues.

“In the past, we’ve experienced problems with the electricity grid on Phillip Island. Even the smallest disruption to the power supply during production means we need to scrap the printed materials and start again. It not only costs us time and money, but causes delays getting the devices to the children who need them the most,” Mr Bowtell said.

“The new solar panels and batteries provide us with the certainty that we will no longer have those issues and we can keep doing what we love, which is making hands for kids and helping those in need.”

Traditionally manufactured prosthetic hands, which children can outgrow quickly, can cost as much as \$20,000. Free 3D Hands provides state-of-the-art printed hands to children around the world free of charge.

Besides printing prosthetic hands, Mat and the Free 3D Hands team recently repurposed the factory’s 3D printers to manufacture face shields for healthcare workers on the frontline of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“In March, we knew there was a shortage of personal protective equipment for Australian doctors and nurses battling COVID-19. We wanted to help, so we changed focus and began printing face shields free of charge to help medical workers on the frontline,” Mat Said.

Between March and July, Free 3D Hands printed close to 4,000 face shields for healthcare and other frontline workers.

RACV Solar CEO, Andy McCarthy, said the new solar power system will provide Free 3D Hands with uninterrupted power supply from the sun.

“It’s so incredible to see the work Mat and his team do out of the kindness of their own hearts. It’s even more amazing when you consider that they are helping so many people in these trying times. That’s why RACV Solar wanted to help,” Mr McCarthy said.

“RACV Solar has been on a mission to provide all Victorians with more sustainable and reliable electricity supply. We’re proud to be able to help community groups and charities, like Free 3D Hands, who give back so much to the community in what has been a very difficult year for many.”

More information about RACV Solar is available at [racv.com.au](http://racv.com.au).

**##ENDS##**

For all media requests, contact the Media & Communications team on **0417 041 398** or [media@racv.com.au](mailto:media@racv.com.au).

## **About RACV**

*Founded in 1903, RACV exists to improve the lives of Victorians by delivering valued benefits to members and their communities. RACV addresses the needs of Victorians by informing, advising and representing them through products and services spanning motoring, mobility, leisure, travel, insurance and the home. RACV seeks to help shape a smarter, safer and more connected future for Victoria.*