

Plug in: to installing solar power

Sourcing your energy from the sun can be a smart move, for your wallet and the planet. This step-by-step guide outlines what to look out for, what questions to ask and how to make the right choice for your home.

1 Understanding if solar is right for you

What is a solar power system?

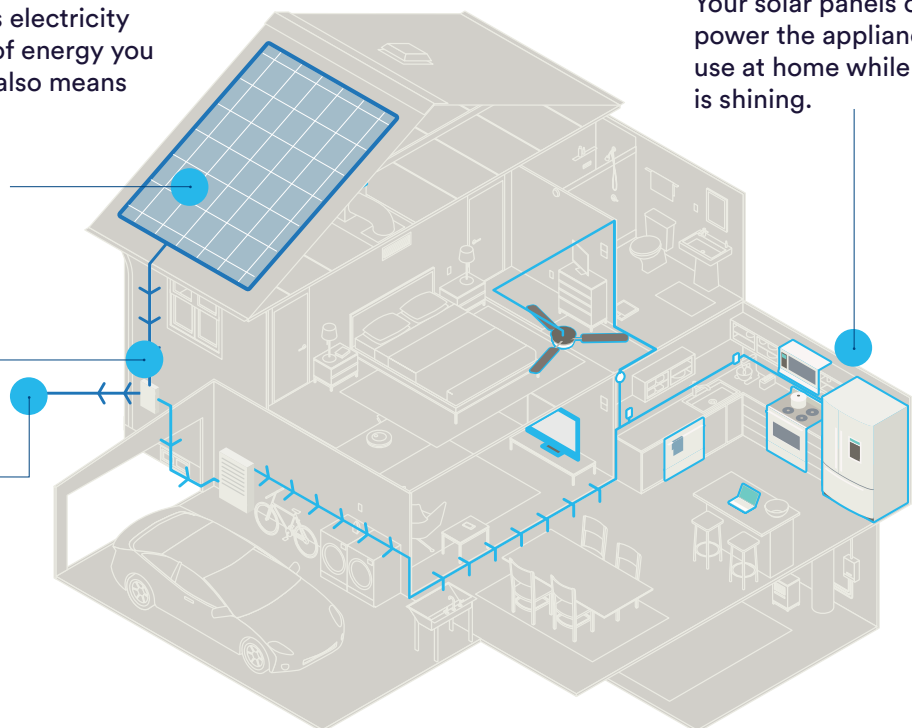
During the day, your solar power system (also known as a solar PV system) provides electricity to your house, reducing the amount of energy you buy from your electricity provider. It also means the energy you're using is renewable.

The solar panels on the roof turn sunlight into energy.

An inverter converts the energy into electricity for your home

Electricity you don't use during the day may be able to be sent to the grid for other people to use. You could also be paid for the solar power you sell.

Your solar panels can help power the appliances you use at home while the sun is shining.



New Energy Tech Approved Sellers are committed to meeting consumer protection standards on solar systems. Look for the Approved Seller badge

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What are the benefits of solar power?

Save money: you're using electricity that you've produced, instead of buying it from a provider; and if you are using less energy than you're producing, your energy provider may buy it off you to share with your community.

Reducing your impact on the environment: by using the sun to power your home, you are generating zero-emissions energy for yourself and possibly your neighbours.

It also helps you reduce reliance on providers: instead of depending solely on an energy provider, you are making some of your own energy.

Remember:

There will be times, such as in winter or cloudy days, when your solar panels produce less energy than you use. To fill this gap you will use regular energy from the grid, which you will be billed for.



Is a solar power system right for me?

Can I install solar panels on my roof?

Look out for heritage overlay and Owner's Corporation permission if you own your property, or landlord permission if you are a renter.

Is my roof suitable for solar power?

If it's large enough, faces north, east or west, and is not too shaded, then probably. A good retailer will help you make this assessment.

How long will it take for the savings to exceed the cost?

Usually between 5 and 10 years. It depends on the cost and size of the system, where you live, how much electricity you use during the day and what (if anything) you get paid for your feed-in. A good retailer will estimate your approximate payback period.



Understand your energy use and research your options to ensure you get a solar system that meets your needs. Find out more at newenergytech.org.au

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Choosing a solar retailer

How to find a good solar retailer.

As the solar panel market has grown, so has the number of retailers to choose from. Like any industry, most retailers are knowledgeable and honest but a few are not so good. The best ways to find a good solar retailer are:



Ask people you know about good experiences they've had with solar retailers.



Look for retailers that are members of a consumer protection program like the [New Energy Tech Consumer Code Program](#) run by the Clean Energy Council. Some state government rebate programs require use of these retailers.



Search for companies online and consider independent reviews and ratings from search engines, social media and forums. Look for local installers, as they are more likely to assist with any issues that arise in future.

Once you have found a few solar retailers you like, you can compare their quotes to find the offer that best suits your needs.

What should I look out for in my quote?

In your quote, a good retailer should give clear information about:

- The details and cost of the different system components – brand, capacity, warranties, and so on. Many solar panels have 25-year warranties, and many inverters have 10-year warranties.
- The expected performance of the system and an estimate of the financial benefits it will bring you.
- Timelines for starting and completing installation.
- An installation warranty: this is different to component warranties and covers any problems with the installation. Some will even cover work needed after the warranty period to replace components that fail during their product warranty period.
- Whether the system includes a monitoring system with an app to show how your system is performing, or how much it will cost to add such a monitoring system to your solar system.
- Clearly explain financial incentives, rebates and offers that may be applicable to you



If an Approved Seller claims you will make a return on investment on your solar system, they will explain their calculations

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Questions to ask retailers when quoting:

- Are there any issues with my property that will affect the cost or performance of installation? Such as shading, roof shape, orientation, required system upgrades or network limitations?
- How long will installation take?
- Am I eligible for any rebates or subsidies? If so, how much will they reduce the cost of the system by? How do I access these rebates?
- How long will it take me to pay back the cost of the system with my energy bill savings?
- What are the warranties on components and installation?
- Will my system provide electricity during a power outage?

There may be a few options for paying for your solar power system. You should check what option best suits your financial situation before you sign your contract.



You could pay up-front.



Your state government might offer low or no-interest loans for solar power.



You may redraw on your mortgage but consider independent financial advice first.



The solar retailer may offer finance so you pay in installments.

Signing the contract and paying for your solar power system

Once you have reviewed some quotes and found the best retailer for you, you will be asked to sign a purchase contract.

A good retailer should:

- Give you a contract that is clearly written and not full of technical language.
- Explain the contract to you and point out any specifics you should be aware of.
- Detail the payment process to you and what happens if the contract needs to be ended. For example, whether your entire deposit will be refunded or only part of it.
- Explain what happens on the rare occasion that an issue is discovered on installation, this should also be detailed in your contract.



Approved Sellers are committed to providing clear quotes and contracts for solar systems with no hidden surprises

Before accepting finance (i.e. paying in installments) from your solar retailer, ask:

- Is the total cost different if I accept financing?
- How much is the interest?
- Are there any additional fees?
- Are there any payment terms or conditions that you must meet?
- Are there any additional fees you'll be charged if you fail to meet terms and conditions?
- Will this affect my credit rating?
- What happens if I have trouble making a payment?

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Getting your solar installed

What happens on installation day?

Your solar retailer will have nominated a day for installation to start and let you know if there are any changes to the date or timeframe.

For installation, your solar retailer will advise you of the installer's name and details, and they will:

- Arrange for safe delivery and installation at your property.
- Advise you of the installer's name and details.
- Inform you of any inconveniences such as blocking driveways or having to turn your electricity off during part of the installation.
- Tell you about any problems that occur and what it will cost to fix them.
- Give you clear instructions for how to use your system, and information sheets or manuals for the components. Make sure you keep this component information somewhere safe because you will need it if you have a warranty claim.
- Clean up when they are done.

On rare occasions, a solar installer will find a significant issue on site that prevents installation or limits the size or performance of a system so much that it's not worth installing. In these situations the retailer should offer to terminate the contract and refund you some or all of your deposit.



Already have solar panels? Check out our guide to using solar power at [newenergytech.org.au/cips](https://www.newenergytech.org.au/cips)

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How do I activate my system?

Once your system is installed, it needs to be properly tested and 'commissioned' (activated). This involves registering it with your energy provider so they can set up your meter and their billing systems to accommodate your new solar system. This can take some time.

A good installer should:

- Keep you informed as to how it's progressing.
- Tell you anything you need to do to help it along.
- Let you know when it's done.

How do I start using my system?

Once it's all up and running you'll be helping to power your home with your own solar panels.

A good retailer should:

- Give you clear information about how to safely use, maintain and get the most out of your solar power system.
- Show you how to find out and understand how your system is working:
 - How much electricity it is producing.
 - How much energy you are using.
 - How much energy you are feeding into the grid.



New Energy Tech Approved Sellers are committed to meeting consumer protection standards on solar systems



Designed by peak industry and consumer bodies

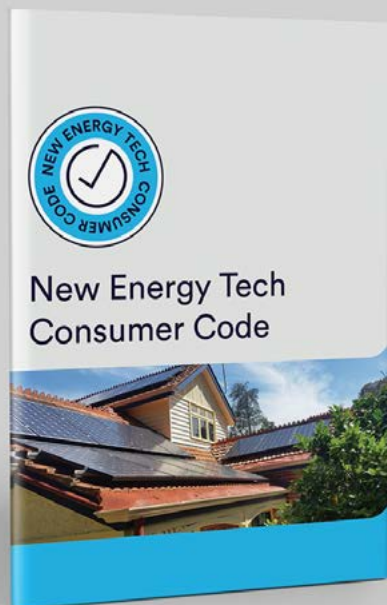


Authorised by the ACCC



Standards for the complete consumer journey

If you experience any problems with an Approved Seller, let us know at [newenergytech.org.au/complaints](https://www.newenergytech.org.au/complaints)



Find a solar retailer who meets consumer protection standards

New Energy Tech Approved Sellers are committed to meeting independent consumer protection standards designed by peak industry and consumer bodies and authorised by the ACCC.

The standards are designed to ensure customers get a fair and quality service when purchasing solar, battery storage, EV chargers or other new energy tech from Approved Sellers.



Sales and marketing

Honest, accurate, clear and fair sales practices. No pressure-selling.



Quotes & contracts

Clear, comprehensive quotes and contracts that meet customer needs with no hidden costs.



Delivery & installation

Services delivered safely on time and with clear information on activation and use.



Warranties & support

Complaints dealt with promptly, issues fixed and warranties honoured.



Find an Approved Seller at newenergytech.org.au or ask your retailer to show you their Approved Seller badge