

Solar Power

Pope Francis says: "There is an urgent need to develop policies so that, in the next few years, the emission of carbon dioxide and other highly polluting gases can be drastically reduced, for example, substituting for fossil fuels and developing sources of renewable energy." (*Laudato si'* #26)

One in five Australian households have installed rooftop solar panels – they are part of the renewable energy transformation. Recent reductions in the price of solar panels mean they can be paid off within a few years (depending on the size of the installation, the amount of electricity used and whether most electricity is used during the day).

You might want to investigate the following suggestions to see if solar panels are right for you:

Before installing solar panels

- Make all efforts to reduce your electricity use.
- Choose the right sized system for your needs. Your electricity bill should tell you whether your daytime use is sufficient to make panels economical. The [Energy Made Easy](#) website can also estimate usage.
- Clarify the costs: do you need a new meter, who will own any feed-in-tariffs or renewable energy certificates, if they apply and do you need to or want to change your current electricity rate/supplier.
- Ensure your solar provider is a signatory to the Clean Energy Council's [Solar Retailer Code of Conduct](#). This code requires providers to disclose clear and accurate information.
- Ensure that your solar retailer provides you with evidence that your new solar panels meet Australian Standards and have a warranty you can trust.

Finding a supplier

The Clean Energy Council's [guide to installing solar systems](#) explains technical information that will help you decide on the solar system that is best for you.

Funding your panels

1. Purchase a solar power system outright
 - *This is the cheapest option but you bear almost all the responsibility for the equipment.*
 - *Environmental and church organisations regularly organise bulk-buys to reduce the cost of equipment and enable more thorough checking of suppliers, e.g., The Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney: Justice and Peace Office initiative "[Caring for Creation through Solar](#)".*
2. Use a solar power purchase agreement
 - *The provider owns the system and you continue to pay for all your electricity – usually you pay less for power from your panels than from the grid*
 - *After a 7-15 year period, you own or buy out the system depending on your contract.*
3. Obtain a loan
 - *As always it pays to shop around as the solar provider may not have the best loan.*
 - *Citizens Own Renewable Energy Network Australia Inc. assist community organisations with finance.*
4. Lease a solar power system
 - *You pay for grid power and pay separate fixed lease payments for the system.*
 - *After 5–10 years, you own or buy out the system depending on your contract.*

For more information:

- Different ways to pay for solar <https://www.qld.gov.au/housing/buying-owning-home/energy-water-home/solar/different-ways-to-pay>
- Solar and battery power <https://energysaver.nsw.gov.au/households/solar-and-battery-power>
- The Clean Energy Council <https://cleanenergycouncil.org.au>

