

Going solar?

Questions to ask your solar PV installer

Power and Water encourages customers to research installers and choose a quality system at a cost effective price. The following questions you can ask when installing a solar power system:

- What brand of solar panels and inverter will be used – are these guaranteed to be used or will the supplier substitute equipment according to availability of supply?
- If product substitution does take place, will the householder be informed in advance or given the option to withdraw?
- Where does the installer intend to install the inverter? Inverters produce a ‘humming’ noise, they should be located away from day time living areas. Depending on the inverter, this may be outside, ideally out of direct sunlight.
- What is the length and type of warranty? Five year warranty on inverter; 10 year product warranty and a 25 year (at 80% output) warranty is recommended as a minimum for solar panels.
- What is the track record of use and servicing in Australia of the major components to be used?
- What is the track record of the company (ask for references)? Who will they use to carry out the installation – are they local or ‘fly in’? Delays in turning the system on can result if the completion advice provided to Power and Water is incomplete or the PV installation is sub-standard advice provided to Power and Water is incomplete or the PV installation is sub-standard.
- Does the installer do a formal inspection of the site, assess expected output and provide a written quote before asking for a deposit or a commitment from the householder? Power and Water highly recommends site inspections prior to accepting a quote or paying any deposits.
- How does the installer propose to provide local support for warranty and service claims?
- Where package prices are advertised, are there extra costs involved? For example meter installation, grid connection, removal of asbestos, building permit costs, two storey buildings, or any upgrades to the meter panel or switchboard.
- Does the installer manage the process of connecting the solar system to the electricity grid or obtaining any applicable building permits?
- Does the installer require a deposit and what is the timeframe between paying a deposit and installation?
- Does the company provide a point of sale discount through the purchase of **Small-scale Technology Certificates (STCs)** and if so, what price is paid for each STC?

Related fact sheets to help you go solar:

- The process of installing a photovoltaic (PV) system
- PV application checklist