



Information Pack

Local Government supported residential solar power program.



Introduction

Solar Savers is a local government initiative to make installing solar power easy, affordable, and trusted. When you enquire through Solar Savers, residents of the participating councils get access to free and credible advice about residential solar, government rebates, and ways to reduce your energy bill. Solar Savers has selected a trusted solar installer and completes independent audits on 5% of all installations to ensure safety and quality standards are met. Homeowners and renters who do not currently have solar panels are eligible to install through Solar Savers.

Let's talk solar!

To express interest in solar power and get a quote for your home, please go to the solar savers website and complete the registration form:

<https://solarsavers.org.au/register>

Do you live in Moreland City Council? Moreland residents experiencing financial stress may be eligible for grant funding support and are encouraged to register interest with Solar Savers.

Key Terms



Panels - a photovoltaic (PV) module that absorbs the sun's rays as a source of energy for generating electricity.



Inverter - translates or "inverts" the solar energy, generated by panels, from DC to AC so that your home and utility grid can use it.

Subsidy - a sum of money given by the government to keep the price of a product low.

Rebate - a partial refund of the cost of an item.

Tariff - In energy, a tariff refers to how you are charged for electricity or gas usage (the variable part of your bill).

Feed-in tariff – this is the amount your electricity retailer pays you for any excess power your solar panels generate.

1. About Solar Power

What is a **Solar Photovoltaic (PV) system**?

Solar PV systems are made up of two key parts - solar panels and an inverter. Solar panels generate power from the sun, which is converted into energy through an inverter. Installing a solar system is a great way to reduce your energy bills and your carbon emissions.

How does solar **save me money**?

There are two ways solar power saves you money on your electricity bills. Firstly, during the daytime when the sun is out, you use free power from your solar panels so you don't need to purchase as much electricity. This is the main way solar panels save you money. Secondly, your electricity company will pay you a small amount (**feed-in tariff**) for any extra power from your solar panels that you don't use yourself. This saves you a little bit more. On average, you can expect savings of 40 - 60% on your electricity bill after you have installed solar.

How many **panels** should I install?

When you enquire with Solar Savers, our expert installers will recommend a solar system size that matches your roof space and household electricity consumption. For example, a household with a daily usage of 10 kWh would need approximately 10 panels, which makes a 3.3 kilowatt system. You can find out your *average daily usage* by reading your most recent electricity bill. You can read more about solar system products at: <https://solarsavers.org.au/installation-equipment/>

Who **installs my system**?

Solar Savers conducted a public tender to select **eko energy** as our trusted, reliable, and quality solar installer. eko energy is part of Echo Group, a national top 10 renewable energy solution provider. They are ISO 9001, ISO 4001 and AS/NZS 4801 certified and a Clean Energy Council Approved Retailer.

How long **does it take to install solar power**?

Solar power installation involves many parties including an Installer, your Energy Retailer and Distributor, and State Government Bodies. It takes about 3 - 4 months between accepting your quote and having everything fully connected.

Throughout and after your installation, Solar Savers are here to assist you. You can call or email Solar Savers from Monday – Thursday to seek assistance at any stage of your installation. Our program began with an interest in helping pensioner and low-income households access quality solar, and we are still committed to this.



1

Register your interest in solar online or over the phone.

2

We check your **eligibility** for the Council supported Solar Savers program.

3

Our trusted solar installer will design a **quote** for you

4

We can help you apply for the **state rebate** and, if needed, no-interest loan.

5

Your solar PV system will be **installed** and checked for **safety**. Then you can enjoy free **energy from the sun!**

Can I enquire with Solar Savers about upgrading an existing system?

Yes, enquire through the registration form and our solar installers will assess your property and advise if and how they can upgrade your system. Note, homeowners with an existing system installed after 1 November 2009 will not be eligible for the \$1,850 Solar Victoria rebate.

Can solar be installed if I have shading on my roof?

Solar power is not recommended if your roof is mostly in the shade from 10am to 3pm, and you're not willing or it's not possible to remove the trees or other objects casting shadows. However, if only part of your roof is in shade then eko energy can design a solution with individual optimizers or a [solaredge](#) system. Shading will be discussed at your first consultation.

Can solar panels be recycled?

Yes, eko energy can remove and environmentally dispose of an existing solar system. Echo Group have partnered with E3Sixty Solar to recycle old, damaged and faulty solar panels, as well as other equipment used, from projects around Australia. Materials recovered in the recycling process such as glass, copper, plastic, aluminum and silver can be reused in local manufacturing, supporting industries, promoting circular economies and decreasing our reliance on new materials.

2. About Batteries

Should I install **batteries** to store solar power?

If your current electricity bill is over \$500 per quarter and you use a lot of energy during the night, you may want to consider adding a battery to your system. You can ask our trusted installers whether batteries are right for you after you have registered interest with Solar Savers.

If you are looking at batteries purely from an economic/payback/ROI point of view, they don't make sense for most people now due to the high upfront investment. However, we are finding those people that are investing in batteries are doing so for other than economic reasons, (i.e. having more control, giving themselves peace-of-mind from rising energy prices, protecting themselves from blackouts, being more independent from the grid etc.). For further reading, visit [Solar Quotes Advice on Batteries](#).

Batteries were discussed in the Solar Savers, March 2021 Webinar, [available to watch here](#).

What is **the life expectancy of the batteries** and warranty period?

eko energy currently has 2 battery options to choose from – Redback & Tesla. Warranty periods range from 5 – 10 years. Life expectancy of batteries depend on the number of “cycles” or charge-discharges they go through, like your mobile phone or laptop. Heavy users of electricity will typically see a shorter life expectancy than light users. You can learn more about Redback batteries by watching this short video here: <https://youtu.be/CkvJEdLEInE>

3. Pricing Guide

How much does a Solar PV system **cost to install**?

With Solar Savers, a 3kw system starts at approximately \$4,600, up to a 6kw system with a premium inverter at approximately \$8,300. Pension card holders will receive a discounted rate and many households will be eligible for the Victorian Government Solar Homes rebate, currently valued at \$1,850.

Once installed, your electricity company will charge a one-off fee to connect your solar system to the grid, which is usually between \$50 and \$150.

Learn more about pricing here: <https://solarsavers.org.au/products-pricing/>

What **factors** will influence the cost of solar power installation?

Every home is different, and your quote will be tailored to consider factors such as:

- type and number of panels
- type and size of inverter
- type of framing equipment and other system components
- height and accessibility of roof and whether it is tiled or metal or concrete
- any after sales service agreements

There can also be additional costs for properties that require a switchboard upgrade, removal of asbestos, or consolidation of two meters. If applicable, you will be made aware of these factors alongside your quote. Solar power is an investment, so it's best to make an informed decision that considers your projected energy bill savings from installing solar.

What **rebates** are available for solar power?

The Australian federal government offers "Small Technology Certificates" (STCs), which are financial discounts automatically applied to all solar power quotes. The number of STCs you are eligible to receive will depend on the size of the system and your location. There is no application process to receive STCs.

The State Government Solar Victoria Rebate is currently \$1,850 and must be applied through Solar Victoria, online or via post. To further reduce costs, owner-occupiers can apply for a Solar Victoria interest-free loan of \$1,850 that can be repaid over four years. [Learn more from Solar Victoria here.](#)

What **rebates** are available for batteries?

The [Solar Homes Program](#) is supporting eligible Victorian households to install a solar battery, by providing a point of sale discount up to a maximum of \$4,174. Solar battery rebates are now available in every Victorian postcode. Solar battery rebates will maintain their current value of up to \$4,174 until 30 June 2021.

4. Post-Installation FAQs

Will my retailer put me on a different tariff after installing solar power?

Take time to read through your electricity bills and contact your retailer if you have any questions. Installing solar might impact your controlled load or off-peak tariffs so it's a good idea to understand how your bill works and how it will be affected.

To find out if you're on the best deal after installing solar power, compare energy offers with the Victorian Government's Victorian Energy Compare. Visit <https://compare.energy.vic.gov.au/> to find the cheapest energy offers for your home. It's free, independent, and easy-to-use. Note, we strongly recommend you wait approximately three months after your solar installation before changing electricity retailers.

Does my Solar PV system need maintenance?

Solar panels are designed to be durable and generally require very little maintenance. Installing panels on an angle enables the rain and wind to clear away dirt, leaves and debris. During the dry season - or if you have panels installed flat - you can periodically hose down panels to ensure dirt isn't obstructing the sun's rays. Solar Savers installers provide quality, long-term product and performance warranties to maintain your system's efficiency over their twenty-five-year life.

What happens if my solar panels need replacing?

In the rare instance that solar panels need replacing, it's always best to call the solar company who installed the system. If panels are losing efficiency and still under a performance/power output warranty, your solar installer will send someone to assess the situation and either fix the problem or replace the panels. If your panels sustain physical damage, that's often covered under a separate equipment warranty, or under your homeowners' insurance.

I've installed solar - how do I get the most savings?

Your solar panels produce free and clean energy during the day, especially in the sunnier months of the year. Try and use appliances such as washing machines, dishwashers and pool heating during the day to make the most of the energy you are producing.

Please also note, after you have your system installed, your electricity retailer may change your electricity charges (how much you pay for electricity). Once your system has been installed and connected to the grid, we suggest that you shop around the best energy deal for your usage.