



Hello sunshine!

How to do your home, family and the environment a power of good

We take it for granted: flick a switch and an invisible flow of electricity powers our lights, heating, and appliances.

It does it silently and reliably, but it's increasingly expensive. And producing large scale electricity through coal-fired power stations can be a dirty business.

Thanks to technology

advances and heavyweight government incentives, thousands of Australians are harnessing power from the sun.

It couldn't be cleaner, and it's becoming very affordable.

How does solar power work?

Photo-voltaic (PV) panels are fitted to your roof and orientated towards the

“average” path of the sun. A semi-conducting material absorbs the sunlight and sheds electrons, creating electricity. The concept is a century or more old, but in the last 10 years solar power systems have become more sophisticated and powerful, and with more people “going solar”, less expensive.

Why go solar?

According to NSW-based energy reduction company Go Green there's an immediate benefit: more than just freeing yourself from electricity bills, you can be paid to generate power. Solar consultant Aaron Mailey says, “With roof-mounted solar systems you generate electricity that's measured and fed into the grid, and for which electricity companies pay you. You stay connected to the grid for cloudy days, but with government rebates the systems usually pay for themselves within a few years.

“Longer term, because you no longer fully rely on coal-derived electricity, it becomes one of the major contributions that your household can make towards a cleaner environment.”

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What size system do I need?

The size of a solar system is measured by the number and size of its PV panels, and how much electricity (measured in kilowatts, or KW) they produce.

When deciding on a system, factor in the area and orientation of your roof, how much you want to invest, and to what extent you want to reduce or eliminate your current energy bills. Hot water systems for example can account for more than half a household's energy consumption. Based on NSW's feed-in tariffs a 1.5KW solar system is adequate for an average suburban home, and would fully negate average electricity bills. Larger homes and families may need a larger system. Go to www.2gogreen.com.au for more information.



How much does it cost?

The cost depends on the power required from the system and therefore the number of panels and size of the inverter.

Typical 1.5KW systems cost around \$11,000, however under the Government's Renewable Energy Target Scheme a household installing a 1.5KW system can benefit from a \$6200 subsidy, which is paid to the installer. Your actual outlay therefore is more than halved. If you install a typical solar water heater you can receive \$1300 in support. Details at www.livinggreener.gov.au/rebates-assistance

How much am I paid for "my" electricity?

The rate you receive for the electricity you produce varies by state, but it can be three to four times the going peak retail rate. Your energy provider pays this to you as a credit on your bill, or if your created electricity value is greater than the electricity company's charges then they pay you. Under the NSW government's current solar incentive scheme for example the surplus produced by a 1.5KW system for an average household is worth approximately \$1500 per annum over a seven-year period. (The scheme will be reviewed in that state in 2012, or earlier depending on its popularity).

Go to www.livinggreener.gov.au/rebates-assistance and click on your state.

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Seniors update

in welcome news for pensioners the Federal Government announced in May that solar "credits" appearing

on electricity bills are now exempted from a pensioner's income test.