

How to save on your electricity bills, help increase the value of your house and achieve better environmental outcomes by purchasing quality solar equipment.

Check out: LGenergy.com.au or call LG Solar direct on 1300 152 179

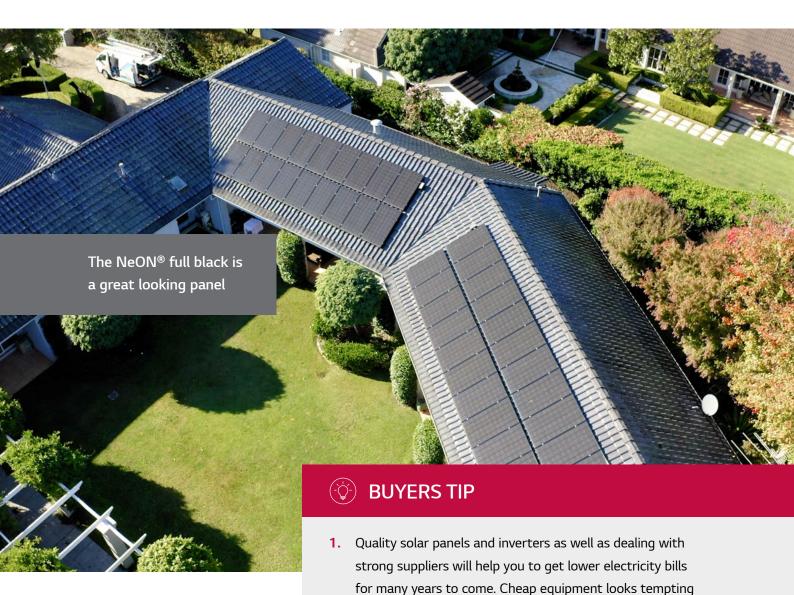
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What This Guide Will Offer

This guide will provide you with the knowledge to choose whether you want solar and enable you to choose the best installer and product for your needs. You will be able to understand your solar consultants and critically assess them and their offer.

More detailed information is available on LGenergy.com.au via our FAQ video series. This guide walks you through many aspects of solar energy and helps you make an informed decision.



be true.

but all too often has been shown to be simply too good to

The

Inverter Solution

Our electricity system uses 240V alternating current (AC), but the electricity generated by solar panels consists of variable direct current (DC).

Inverters transform DC electricity generated from panels into AC electricity for use in the home. They connect to the solar panels and come in two main types; small 'micro' inverters on each panel or 'string' inverters where six or more panels are connected to a single larger inverter (about the size of a small travel case – the ones you can take on board of a plane).

Choose a quality Inverter solution to go with quality panels.

As the inverter works just as hard as the panels it is important to have both of these major solar system elements work in harmony.

The more established the inverter manufacturer and the bigger the service partner network, the more likely warranty claims will be dealt with smoothly.

Cheaper inverters can sometimes be waiting for repairs or parts for months, if the repair will be performed at all. During the waiting period you will miss out on electricity savings from your solar system - as it is not working.



BUYERS TIP

- 2. All solar panels need to be connected to either a string or micro inverter. However, another solution that sits in the middle of these options is a string inverter with 'power optimisers' on some or all panels. Like micro inverters this is a great way to combat panel shading. All these technical solutions can create a great solar system.
- **3.** 5kW inverter can carry an extra 1/3rd panel capacity, up to 6.650kW. This overrating up to 33% will not affect the inverter warranty.
- **4.** LG panels work especially well with SMA and Fronius string inverters, with Enphase micro inverters and with Solaredge and Tigo optimisers.

Ask your authorised LG Energy
Partner for advice on which of the
available inverter options is the
most suitable solution for you.
Quality inverter/micro inverter
solutions LG recommends include
Fronius, SMA, Enphase and
Solaredge brands.

Direct sunlight will put extra heat on the inverter and possibly shorten its life. Micro inverters and optimisers will be installed on the underside of the panels and have to endure temperatures up to 90 degrees in the middle of summer. If string inverters are a good solution, an installation position in a cool garage or a shaded spot on the outside of the building is preferred. A hot north or west facing wall sitting in full sun is not ideal but if that's the only possible wall create a protective awning for the equipment.

Inverters ready for disposal.

BUYERS TIP

- 5. Insist on an installation position for the inverter which keeps this electronic equipment out of the full sun during the day. If not possible request a shade awning to be part of the install.
- **6.** For solar systems to have a long life in the harsh Australian climate it requires a quality inverter. Unfortunately, lower quality inverters and panels have succumbed to Australian conditions and have failed in large numbers in as little as 2 to 3 years.
- 7. Cheap inverter solutions, just like inferior panels are regularly given long warranties to dress them up as quality. Watch out for extended warranties when accompanied by very low pricing you are not buying long lasting equipment. Disreputable solar companies have been keen to give a very long warranty on a cheap item, as they will close and 'phoenix' before you can claim. Such companies do not expect to be around for that long. Unfortunately this is a common practice in the solar industry.*
- 8. Some solar "experts" advise to couple a quality inverter with budget panels this is not recommended. LG advise pairing quality panels with quality inverter options. Both budget inverters and budget panels may fail relatively quickly and within their warranty period, however, fault detection on panels is particularly difficult and expensive to diagnose.

^{*} Over 750 installation companies have been liquidated since 2011, as per ASIC liquidation register.

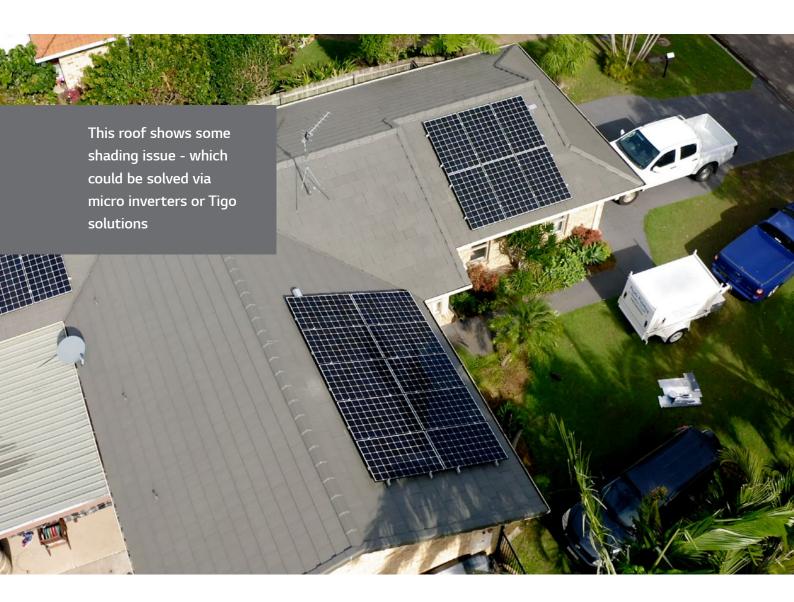
Solutions for Roofs That Have Some Shadow

Using micro-inverters or power optimisers on each panel, instead of one large string inverter (where multiple panels are connected to one inverter), can help with shading issues. With every panel optimised to achieve its maximum electricity output, the losses associated to shade can be reduced by as much as 80%.

Recently it has been claimed that half cut cell technology is superior in shadow situations, because as long as only half the panel is in shade, the other half of the panel still performs ok. This is overstating the benefits as overall if there are shadow issues in the installation situation, micro inverters or optimiser solutions should be applied. Half-cut technology alone

would mean a significant loss of overall system output due to the shading with the use of optimisers or micro-inverters.

If you believe that you have a shadow issue, talk to your LG Authorised Installation Partner about the technical solutions on the market suited to your specific circumstances.



Solar Panel Technology **An Overview**

Many of the solar budget companies claim that their panel and technology is great and they offer the "latest technology". Unfortunately the "latest technology" is not always the best technology or the most suitable technology for you. As you are spending thousands of dollars, it is worthwhile to undertake proper research. The offer of cheap technology might just be technology that the installer has already purchased from the distributor and waiting in their shed for a customer. The various panel technologies are:

POLYCRYSTALLINE PANELS

Polycrystalline is a technology which had its heyday between 2010 and 2016 - because the technology is cheaper to produce. Due to restrictions in efficiency it is now considered outdated and cheap technology.

MONOCRYSTALLINE PANELS

Monocrystalline is currently the leading technology, but within this technology there are significant differences.

MONO PERC SOLAR PANELS

This technology assists in improvements in performance, but also has the potential downside of a faster degradation over longer periods especially when exposed to hot temperatures, humidity and very bright light.

MONO N-TYPE SILICON PANELS

These use cells that are usually more efficient and perform better in a wider light spectrum than Mono Perc. They use a more pure form of silicon and for this reason raw materials and cells are more expensive. Usually the better quality panels like LG use N-type silicon.

BIFACIAL SOLAR PANELS

Bifacial solar panels have cells which are double sided and feature a clear back sheet. This combination allows the capture of the reflected light behind the panel as well as the direct light from the sun. For this reason bifacial panels can produce more electricity as the spill light from the roof will 'bounce' some sunlight back towards the rear of the panel increasing the generated energy. All LG NeON® 2 panels have bifacial cells, and even the white backing sheet models still collect some spill light on the rear of the cell.

SPLIT CELL (HALF CUT) SOLAR PANELS

A new technology. Laser cutting a solar cell in half has the effect of halving the output per cell, but dividing the resistance by 4. This means electron flow is easier and this technology allows a higher wattage per panel. There are nevertheless potential issues such as hotspots if the half cut cells are mismatched. So this technology requires high quality control.



LG panels offer the N-type, double sided cell & bifacial technology

Check on the **Component Manufacturer**

In solar, the panels, inverter and mounting framing give long warranties. Regularly in the past these warranties were sometimes found to be worthless, as the manufacturer has left the country quickly after serious failures of many of their product, many years before the warranty period expired. Over 50 inverter manufacturers have come and gone and over 300 panel manufacturers have left the industry since 2011.

None of these manufacturers had, what's known as "skin in the game", meaning they had no other operations than this single product.

Some solar panel manufacturers entering the Australian market first setup their distribution channels and worry about customer service later. This has led to many unhappy customers who are left trying to contact the head offices to claim on their 10, 12 or even 15 year product warranty, let alone their

25 year performance warranty also known as output warranty, which is hard to claim.

Relying on your solar installer to look after the warranty is not always an option as we've seen many residential solar installers (including the large ones) go out of business well within the lifetime of the systems they are installing.

LG Solar is very different in this regard. There is a "lot of skin in the game" As a fully legally connected part of LG Electronics, LG solar are part of the close to \$1 billion annual sales in Australia & NZ. We have been in Australia for 26 years - as LG Electronics and world wide our parent company LG has been in operation since 1958 - 62 years of experience.

LG Electronics have a fully developed logistics department in Sydney, warehouses across Australia, offices in every mainland State, and stores a compatible model of every panel sold in Australia since 2010*. This is an industry leading track record for any panel manufacturer selling in Australia today.

LG Solar thinks of itself as a "safe harbour - in a stormy solar sea".



One of the largest roof top solar systems in Australia with over 7000 panels was completed in 2019 in Moorebank, NSW with LG NeON® 2 panels

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BUYERS TIP

9. Check what type of local representation your solar panel manufacturer has. Are there 10 staff in a virtual office, where they use hired furniture - or are they a big established business with long term commitment to Australia. This question can make a big difference to the value and quality of your solar system in years to come LG solar is known as a "safe harbour - in a stormy solar sea".

^{*} As of February 2020.

Metering Options for Your Solar System

There are two fundamental steps to take when connecting your solar system to the grid.

STEP 1

Your electricity network company will specify what type of meter is required to measure your solar generation and energy consumption.

Your LG Energy Partner will be able to explain the details to you. You may be required to pay for the cost of the new solar meter and its installation in addition to the cost of your solar system. Prices can be a few hundred dollars, so you should make sure that the solar electricity meter supply and connection is included in the quote for your new solar system.

STEP 2

Shop around for a competitive rate for exported electricity from your solar system with your electricity retailer. This is called a 'feed- in tariff' (FIT) and varies by retailer and location. If your existing electricity retailer does not offer an attractive solar FIT, you may wish to consider changing to a retailer who does. Your solar system installer will be able to advise you on who offers the best FIT in your area and assist you with the process.

BUYERS TIP

10. Your LG solar system is rated according to the number of Watts it can produce per hour. The output wattage is measured in laboratory when 1000W of light intensity per m2 is directed at the panel. The reality is that in many parts of Australia light levels vary between 600W to 800W per m2.

As a result many 300W panels for example will not produce the full 300W capability on many occasions. So the panel rating is rarely achieved in full during real life conditions as the light level, dust particles, clouds and other natural issues will affect the quality of light that your PV panels receive. For example 20 x 350W solar panels will create a 7,000W/7 kW solar system.

In regards to overall system output on an average day with intermittent clouds this 7kW system will produce approximately 5 kW per hour in the best sun irradiation hours of the day. The system will only achieve 7kW per hour on a very sunny day, below 25 degrees, in the middle of the day and a clear sky, after rain for example.



Solar and Batteries

For most households the older, smaller solar systems common 5+ years ago are usually not big enough in kW size to supply the household and a battery with sufficient renewable energy. Such a system would not support achieving a fully charged battery big enough to supply the typical household energy needs.

The most commonly applied solution is to add a 2nd solar system with batteries. This 2nd system would then include a hybrid inverter which can charge the battery. In some instances the new hybrid inverter can also take the solar power from your old smaller system to charge the battery.

Please note: If you change an older system's inverter with anything other than like for like the solar system installer will have to change the whole solar system to the new Australian standard – as per legal requirement.

Often the cost of this upgrade is more than the remaining value of the solar system. Also the installer via this upgrade, then takes on the legal liability of your older system, and some installers do not wish to have that responsibility; therefore getting older systems upgraded can be a difficult endeayour.

Since 2015 solar storage batteries have reduced in cost to the point that pay back for many households is coming down from more than 10 years towards 7 years.

Nevertheless installing battery storage for your solar system could double the price of the system. Costs for quality battery storage is for around 6.5kWh between \$6,500 to \$7,500 and for 13kWh between \$10,000 to \$14,000. Prices have been steady for the past two years.

A typical payback period of a solar battery is about 7 years plus. Comparing this with a solar system without a battery, a top quality LG system has a typical payback of around 4-6 years and will last about 25 years (with some inverter replacements in future years).

In some states you can now get a subsidy or interest free loan to purchase a battery. Contact your LG installation partner to explain the options available to you.

If you are building a new home or if you seek not to suffer blackouts a battery can be the right solution now

At LG Solar we believe that in future years most residential solar systems will include a battery as part of the solar system package. Discuss with your LG Energy Partner if batteries are feasible in your circumstances, or if you should get a "battery ready" system. Please check here for the closest installer near you.

LGenergy.com.au/dealer



LG Chem - our sister company - is a leader in solar battery technology

Important Information You Should Know About Solar Warranties

Over time solar panels will show degradation and produce a little less electricity each year. In order to give purchasers some reassurance about the level of degradation, an Output Warranty is offered by most manufacturers. Some solar panel manufacturers give a warranty of 25 years that guarantees a certain proportion of the panels original performance. Many competing panels in early 2020 guarantee an output of 85% after 25 years. (LG NeON® 2 offers over 90% output remaining after 25 years).

Unfortunately, this "Warranty" can easily cause confusion. Please note an Output Warranty IS NOT a Manufacturer's Warranty on the actual panel. For example, if in year 13 your panel fails completely, then the Output Warranty may not cover the faulty panel. A panel has to be in working order to claim an Output Warranty.

In many sales promotions the 25 YEAR Warranty is highlighted but when you read the details of an Output Warranty, you will have to pay for getting panels off the roof, shipped for testing and then also pay for the return and reinstall.





Often the compensation for a poor performing panel is less than \$100, when the customer had to spend many hundreds of dollars on install/un-install and testing the panels. Therefore this warranty only has a low value. Be aware of glossy 25 Year Warranty stickers. It is the 10, 12 or 25 year (LG is 25 years) Manufacturer's Product

Replacement Warranty not the Output / Performance Warranty that counts.

It is also important to get in writing the various component warranties including installer workmanship guarantee, schedule of when deposits and progress payments are due.

HOW CAN I UTILISE MY SOLAR SYSTEM IN THE BEST WAY?

The best solar system outcome can be achieved if as much solar power from the system is selfconsumed. Households that use a lot of electricity during the day, or can set their appliances to run on timers - to be programmed to run during the day - gain the best benefit from solar panels. High self consumption can see very short paybacks of 5 years or less - generating future returns on the initial investment of around 20% per annum, when one paid \$8,500 for a system and gained a \$1,700 annual saving.

If you are at home during the day or have pool pumps which run many hours in the day, your selfconsumption can be as high as 70% (with exports only 30%) and a solar power system installation is likely to be a very good investment. If you are not at home during the day, and therefore use less energy, the system payback is typically longer.

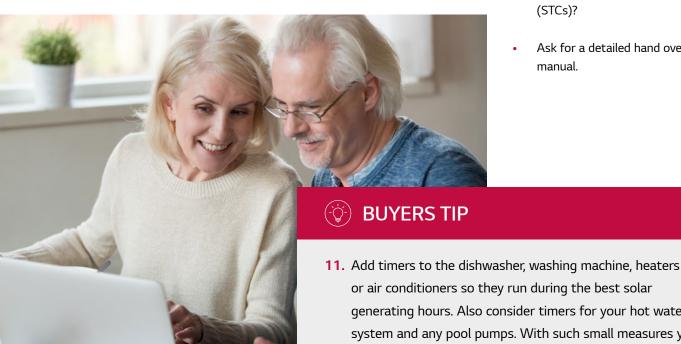
QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE YOU BUY

Asking your solar installer a few essential questions may make a big difference to the service and benefits you receive. Make sure you get the answers in writing.

- What is the estimated monthly and annual production in kWh of my system in its installation position?
- What is the estimated solar electricity production in the best and worst months? Also please check out the LG output calculator on

LGenergy.com.au/solarcalculators/solar-systemoutput-calculator

- Who will service and maintain my solar system, in case something goes wrong? Get an address and contact details in writing, preferably of someone reasonably local.
- Get clarity as to what the responsibilities of each party are. Including the installer, manufacturer and consumer.
- Who is responsible for connecting your solar PV system to the electricity grid? Is it the installer or another subcontractor? When will it happen?
- Who is responsible for your meter change? Make sure this is clarified. Quality installation companies usually offer to accommodate the whole job.
- Ask how the installer will credit your solar rebate (STCs)?
- Ask for a detailed hand over manual.



or air conditioners so they run during the best solar generating hours. Also consider timers for your hot water system and any pool pumps. With such small measures you can gain solid savings and more quickly recoup the cost of a solar system installation.

The 5 Steps to a Quality **Solar System Installation**

1. ENERGY ASSESSMENT

Firstly, a LG Solar Partner will come to your home, sit down and complete your personalised energy assessment. You will need to have ready your most recent energy bills and have all the decision makers present. This will then ensure they can gather all the relevant information to tailor a system to meet your needs. The most current electricity bills will ensure the size of the system matches your requirements.

2. THE QUOTE

A detailed quote giving a number of options will be presented to you. If you require payment options please clearly spell this out in your initial consultation/s.

3. GOING AHEAD

Once you decide you want to go ahead, the LG partner's administration team will get started with organising all the background work involved in making sure your solar installation goes as smoothly as possible. This starts with your connect application. This is when the installer asks for permission from your network distributor to put solar on your home. Your network distributor looks after the electrical grid in your area.

Once your application has been submitted it usually takes some

time to receive an approval. When the approval has come through the solar installation on your property can commence.

4. THE DAY OF INSTALL

On installation day our partners will load up your LG solar system and head to your property. They will usually arrive between 7:30am and 9:30am, but will confirm the precise time with you. An installation can take anywhere between 5 to 8 hours, and in the case of larger systems can take more than 1 day.

Once the solar power system installation is complete the installers will perform some tests on the system to make sure that everything is functioning correctly. They will then explain to you how

your system works and how to use it correctly. This is called the system handover. You should also get a folder with hand over and warranty information.

5. METER INSTALLATION

The final step to the solar installation process is the installation of your meter. In order for this to happen you and your installer will need to provide some information to your energy retailer and network provider. This will occur soon after your installation. Once the forms have been sent off and meter connection permission has been granted the meter install will take place. In some states meters will be installed by the installation company and other states by the energy retailer.



Solar System - Long Term **Maintenance**

Don't just install and forget! Too often things that are out of sight are out of mind, as is the case with rooftop solar panels. We suggest a regular check of the panels, inverters and line voltage is done at least every 5 years.

Make sure you have appropriate system monitoring as part of the system. Keeping an eye on your energy production and usage can tell you if your system is performing as expected. LG solar is offering a solar output calculator which allows you to see if your system performs per expectations. Check it out at:

LGenergy.com.au/solarcalculators/solar-systemoutput-calculator

DOES MY SYSTEM NEED CLEANING?

Clean panels mean that your solar power system will perform at the optimum capacity. A dirty or leaf covered panel will drop the efficiency and generating power of the solar power system.

It is estimated that a dirty panel looses around 5% efficiency compared with a clean solar panel. So if you are in a very dusty or high traffic location do consider to have your panels cleaned every few years. On the other hand if your area receives regular flushing rain, then extra cleaning might not be required.

LG never recommends for end customers to climb on the roof to clean their solar panels. Get a qualified tradesman to do it for you. Your LG panels are self-cleaning in the rain due to the type of glass used on the solar panel and our panels will require low maintenance.

A few things to keep in mind when you get the panels cleaned.

- The goal is to get the glass clean and clear as possible so you don't want to scratch it with abrasive soap or abrasive cleaning sponge
- 2. A soft cloth/sponge and some soft small amount of biodegradable soap can be used. If the panels get cleaned frequently then you might just get away with washing them straight with water.
- Do not use high pressure washing equipment on solar panels.



12. LG solar recommends to have the system inspected at least every 5 years

A professional should check the following:

- Analyse overall performance using onsite records and monitoring data
- Check cabling for integrity and measure voltage levels
- Visually Inspect panels for damage, fractures, moisture penetration or corrosion
- Visually inspect inverters for damage and check output and past months output
- Inspect junction boxes for damage and integrity
- Check alignment and rigidity of the framing system



Solar **Summary**

Some helpful hints for a positive solar experience.

- Undertake some solar research via our Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on LGenergy.com.au by studying this extensive solar guide.
- 2. Do your research about brands and prices. There are some very cheap offers in the market, but these cheaper deals can hide poor quality equipment that are made to appear like quality products. You are looking for a product that lasts 25 years so that your financial investment is repaid over and over. Also find out about the company offering the very cheap deals, they are usually solar sales companies, not solar installation experts.
- 3. Do not give into pressure selling and deadlines. It's one of the oldest sales tricks in the book. If the sales person cannot give you the time to make a considered decision, then what are they fearful you will discover about the deal if you spend some time doing a bit of research? If the company has just come into town for a solar deal, they may be gone after the install and you



may be on your own. Please buy from reputable solar companies. In years to come you might need their solar expertise and support.

system size. LG Authorised solar installation partners that you can trust will sit down with you, take their time and complete your personalised energy assessment. They will analyse your electricity usage for the past months before they provide you with an appropriate quote.

An LG Solar partner of a trusted company will help you choose the right size system for your needs. They will

- consider your electricity bill, your property and your daily usage. They will not offer you a standard package advertised on a website. The system will be designed for your particular energy use.
- 5. How big is your roof and how big a solar system can it fit? Try our roof size calculator to work out how big your solar system can be on your specific roof. To check the calculator results contact your local LG dealer to have the data confirmed via a site inspection.

LGenergy.com.au/solarcalculators/solar-systembased-on-roof-size

- Remember to allow some reserve space for when you install a solar storage battery for night time solar power use, and then again for more battery storage capacity. You may to charge an electric car in future years. Your quality solar system is built to last 25+ years. Go back 25 years to the days of Macintosh computers, dot matrix printers and ghetto blasters to consider what the next 25 years may herald and how your home power needs may grow.
- 7. A performance warranty is not the same as a product replacement warranty; There are different warranties that you get with your solar system: the panel performance warranty, the warranty for your panels and the warranty for your inverter and for the installation component of the system- being the workmanship warranty.

- Some salesperson emphasise the 25 year performance warranty on cheaper panel product. This warranty is weak and does not warrant that the panel lasts for 25 years. The cost of proving the panel has poor performance and trying to claim the warranty can costs more than the value of the panels.
- The only meaningful warranty is the Product Replacement Warranty which is in the LG case 25 years. This means for a period up to 25 years from the time of purchase LG will ship a compatible replacement panel for free and pay for the replacement labour.
- 8. Solar systems vary in quality and size and so does the price. Set yourself a budget. As a rule of thumb each kW of a good quality solar system will cost in the range of \$1,200 to \$1,500 for a residential system up to 10 kW.

- You can find a system for \$600 to \$900 per kW but you are looking at a much lower grade systems with less output productivity and much shorter working life. This may cost you more in the future in repairs and replacements.
- 9. Use your rebate wisely.
 You are making a 25 years
 or longer investment, so
 please consider quality and
 real warranty support over
 everything else. And remember
 a solar system with a good
 brand name and performance
 at the time you sell your home
 may increase your property
 value.
- 10. Panel Technology We recommend the high efficiency N type mono-crystalline solar panels, as this is the technology used most often in quality solar systems in the world today. It is also very efficient in low light and very hot temperatures and has a low degradation over 25 years.



- Make sure that the manufacturer has a local legal entity in Australia and is diversified, and therefore not just reliant on their solar business.
- 12. Promoting the Bloomberg Tier 1 Ranking; The Bloomberg's Tier 1 ranking is NOT a measure of solar panel quality in any way. It is an international bankability label and is often abused in solar to indicate a product's quality level. If a company promotes the Tier 1 status of their product it's maybe a warning bell indicator.
- 13. Should you have an issue in years to come, a manufacturer with no links and contacts in Australia will be hard to communicate with, when it comes to your warranty related consumer rights.
- 14. Less trustworthy companies can promise you good quality components that the company has the option to then swap for cheaper no-name ones just before the install. This will be covered by the conditions of sale which state in the fine print that the supplier is allowed to swap the components for "equivalents".
- 15. Make sure your installer does not cut corners with the solar system installation. Often the contractor is paid per job (not per hour) so they may rush the job to increase profit. For example one can put a bracket

- on the roof every 50cm, every 1mtr or every 2mtr. All methods will look the same from the ground, but have a big difference in the wind resistance of the solar system on your roof.
- **16.** Do not get pressured by sales persons to sign a deal then and there. Use reputable and established local businesses and take your time to make a considered decision.
- Many cheaper priced solar companies only employ sales staff and project managers. They don't employ their own electricians.

Your house is often your biggest asset. Using an LG authorised partner means - you know exactly who the responsible company and person is, should there be any issue or repairs in future years.



After a few years - cheap solar can disappoint

18. Choose a quality Inverter solution to go with quality panels: An inverter is the heart of your solar system. It will have a direct impact on the efficiency of conversion from solar power to usable electric power of your system.

The more efficient the inverter solution, the better the energy conversion process will be. The bigger and more established the manufacturer, the more likely warranty claims or required repairs will be dealt with smoothly.

BUYERS TIP

13. Consider this old home truth – buy quality buy once, buy cheap buy



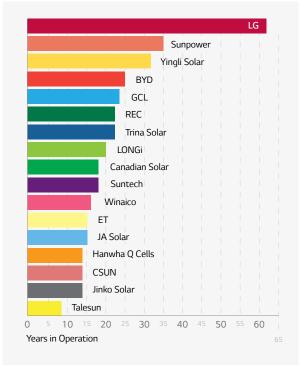
Solar Industry Overview

The Warrantor's 2018 Sales in Billions of US Dollars*

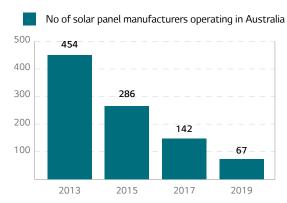


Years in Operations

Global Manufacturing Companies:



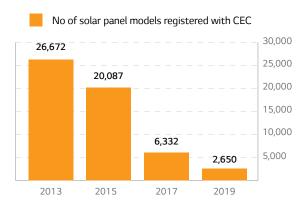
Reducing Number of Solar Panel Manufacturers (2013 - 2019)



Fewer and fewer Solar Panel Manufacturers operating in Australia

Number of manufacturers offering solar modules with 25 year performance warranty, registered by the Clean Energy Council – indicating how many have come and gone – leaving customers very exposed.

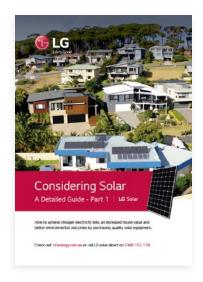
Vastly Reducing Number of Approved Solar Panels (2013 - 2019)



Panel models listed on CEC approved list reducing strongly

The drastic reduction of solar panel models means over 20,000 panels offered for sale only a few years ago are now not supported and have no warranty.





Now that you have read "Considering Solar - A Detailed Guide - Part 2" you might want to go to LGenergy.com.au to secure "Considering Solar - A Detailed Guide - Part 1". The 1st part explains the key benefits of solar, the financial realities, learn about panels and mounting systems.

A great guide to help you making an informed choice.

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For further information or to find an Authorised LG Partner please see: **LGenergy.com.au**

