



What do I need to consider when selecting a solar power system?

General information on selecting and installing a solar power (photovoltaic) system is available at:

- www.climatechange.gov.au/en/government/initiatives/~~/media/publications/renewable-energy/solar-pv-factsheet.ashx
- www.cleanenergycouncil.org.au/cec/resourcecentre/Consumer-Info/solarPV-guide.html
- www.livinggreener.gov.au/take-action/save-energy/install-solar-power
- www.yourhome.gov.au/technical/fs67.html

Apartment and townhouse owners should consider a range of issues including but not limited to:

- unshaded northerly aspect roof space and competing uses
- roof access and material
- structural strength of the roof
- fencing off panels on a flat 'active' roof top
- size and location of panels and impact on views of other residents
- ensuring the integrity of the waterproof membrane is

maintained or reinstated, particularly when mounting panels on flat roofs

- weight, size and location of inverter (converts DC power from the panels to AC power for connection to the electricity meter) being installed
- cabling connecting panels to the inverter and the inverter to the meter will generally run through a conduit on a building's external façade and/or through an internal service shaft. The type of conduit, route taken, method of affixing it, and the size of any holes in common property floors and walls and their impact on waterproofing need to be considered. The holes can also impact the integrity of fire safety separations between owners' lots and the common property
- age of electricity meter – where an old accumulator meter is in place, this will be replaced by a new interval meter to measure electricity use. Where customers are on the regulated retail tariffs, the default supply tariff for interval meters is time of use. If customers wish to opt out of the time of use tariff they should contact their energy retailer. An additional interval meter will be installed where solar power is to be exported to the electricity grid
- any impact the system may have on the building's insured value and consequently the premium paid by the owners corporation
- information required for owners corporation approval - specific details of where each component will be situated, that the proposed locations can support the weight, what drilling will be necessary, how cabling will be run and shielded, what measures will be taken to waterproof any penetration of common property walls, roofs and floors, and that fire safety separations are not compromised. Diagrams should be provided for completeness
- where an individual owner is proposing to install solar on common property for personal use, a by-law is required to ensure the owner is responsible for the installation and maintenance of the system, as well as to protect the amenity and safety of all residents and building users. Refer to GO

SOLAR Strata owners corporation approvals frequently asked questions sheet available at:
www.reduceyourfootprint.com.au/gosolar.

What solar power incentives are available?

Owners and/or owners corporations may be eligible for Renewable Energy Certificates* (RECs) from the Australian Government. These RECs can be assigned to the solar supplier in exchange for an upfront discount on the purchase price. More information is available at www.orer.gov.au/sgu/index.html.

Note that bonus RECs may also be available under the Australian Government's Solar Credits Scheme*. Individual lot owners can apply for the Solar Credits Scheme, however the Office of the Renewable Energy Regulator (ORER) does not currently consider an owners corporation's common property to be eligible. Owners corporations should check with ORER for the latest details if they are considering installing solar power.

* Eligibility conditions apply.

Additionally, owners and/or owners corporations may be eligible to be paid a 'gross feed-in tariff' for all the solar generated electricity exported to the grid under the NSW Solar Bonus Scheme*. An agreement is entered into with an electricity supplier for installation of the appropriate 'gross' meter and payment of the income. Further information is available at www.industry.nsw.gov.au/energy/sustainable/renewable/solar/solar-scheme/faq.

Alternatively, the owners and/or owners corporation can choose to use the solar generated electricity within the property and be paid a 'net feed-in tariff' for any excess solar electricity exported to the grid. Note, it is currently more economical to choose a 'gross feed-in tariff'. Further information is available at: www.industry.nsw.gov.au/energy/sustainable/renewable/solar/solar-scheme/faq.

Who pays the cost and who earns income from the system?

Where an individual owner proposes to install a solar power system on a strata building, the individual owner usually pays the installation costs and receives the 'feed-in' income from the export of solar power to the electricity grid. The owner may be required to bear the costs of preparing the necessary by-law as outlined in the GO SOLAR strata owners corporation approvals frequently asked questions sheet available at: www.reduceyourfootprint.com.au/gosolar.

Where an owners corporation proposes to install a solar power system on a strata building, the owners corporation pays the cost of installation. Any 'gross feed-in' income from the export of solar

power to the electricity grid that is paid separately is paid into the owners corporation's sinking fund account.

What funding can the owners corporation use to purchase a solar power system for common use?

The Sinking Fund will be used by an owners corporation to purchase and install a solar power system for common usage in accordance with its 10-year sinking fund plan.

If the expenditure cannot be met from the Sinking Fund, the owners corporation can raise a special levy or take out a loan. Some organisations that specialise in strata finance are listed in the Institute of Strata Title Management's Strata Directory at www.istm.org.au.

Is the income taxable?

Where an individual owner installs a system and receives the income from the export of solar power to the electricity grid, the income does not currently have to be declared for taxation purposes.

Where an owners corporation receives the income from the export of solar power to the electricity grid, no clear advice has been received by GO SOLAR as to whether the owners corporation or the individual owners making up the owners corporation need to declare the income for taxation purposes.

All taxation information should be checked with a strata accountant or the Australian Taxation Office at www.ato.gov.au. Additionally, beneficiaries of Australian Government entitlements should check the repercussion of any income received with Centrelink.

Is Council approval required?

To check whether Council approval is required contact your local Council or refer to GO SOLAR Council Approvals Frequently Asked Questions sheet available at:
www.reduceyourfootprint.com.au/gosolar.

What accreditation should a solar supplier have?

Ultimately, a Clean Energy Council (CEC) accredited specialist solar power provider will be able to advise whether solar power is suitable in each circumstance. Randwick, Waverley and Woollahra Councils have selected a CEC accredited GO SOLAR preferred solar power provider who can provide you with a free site assessment and quote as well as an exclusive GO SOLAR discount for a quality product and service.

Visit www.reduceyourfootprint.com.au/gosolar to register for your free information pack or site assessment and quote.

The solar proposal should be discussed with the strata manager and/or executive committee prior to requesting a site assessment and quote.

Terminology

By-law

By-laws are a set of rules that all people living in the strata scheme must follow. They apply equally to tenants and owners and can be made or changed to meet the needs of all owners and to assist with running the scheme.

Lot

A lot is an individual property such as an apartment in a strata title apartment block and generally includes everything including and within the inner surface of the boundary walls, the under surface of the ceiling and the upper surface of the floor.

Common property

All the areas of land and building not included in any individual property or 'lot'. Common property generally includes the roof. To confirm, ask the managing agent or check the strata plan.

Owners corporation

The owners corporation comprises all the owners of the 'lots' in a scheme. Its responsibilities include the maintenance and repair of common property and the management of the scheme's finances.

Executive committee

The executive committee is made up of elected owners who oversee day-to-day issues on behalf of the owners corporation. They may work in collaboration with a strata managing agent (if one has been appointed).

More information is available at:

www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/Tenants_and_home_owners/Strata_schemes/Common_property_and_the_lot.html.

Disclaimer

This information was prepared by Green Strata Network and GO SOLAR and is intended as a guide only. Randwick, Waverley and Woollahra Councils and Green Strata Network are not responsible for the use of this information. The information is correct as at October 2010 and is subject to change.