

10 Top Tips to get a great solar & battery solution

What does it take to get a great renewable energy system?



Company Profile



SUNERGY
SOLAR & BATTERIES



Sunergy Solar

Sunergy is your local solar power specialist serving Bendigo and central Victoria. We've been in business since 2010 and have installed thousands of solar systems in homes, businesses and community buildings throughout the area. We pride ourselves on quality workmanship and product choice.

Sunergy is proud to offer a great range of solar power systems, including:

- ✓ On-grid solar and solar and batteries
- ✓ Off-grid power solutions
- ✓ Heat pump hot water
- ✓ EV chargers
- ✓ Servicing and repair of existing systems

Sunergy works hard to ensure each customer is 100% satisfied. We only offer quality products and first-class service at the best price and install only the most reliable solar power systems we know will last the distance.

Sunergy has grown immensely over the years; a large portion of this growth is thanks to referrals. We have finance options available, making it easy to get solar sooner.

Tony Smith & Luke Smith - Sunergy Solar & Batteries

What does it take to get a **great solar & battery quote?**

Solar and home storage batteries are becoming increasingly popular in Australia, and it's no surprise that this will continue to occur.

Not only can solar help reduce your electricity bills and make your home eco-friendlier, but a solar/battery combo can also help increase the value of your home.

However, if you are thinking about going renewable energy and want an excellent installation, here are 10 key tips to consider when asking for a quote.

A person wearing a grey jacket is writing on a clipboard with a green pen. The clipboard has a document with some text and a diagram. In the background, there are server racks and a desk lamp. The scene is lit with a warm, yellowish light from the desk lamp.

Tip #1

Understand your energy usage patterns

The most important piece of information that a solar & battery installation company needs to know before supplying you with a quote is your energy use patterns.

Increasingly, we are seeing very high tariffs between 3pm and 9pm which is making batteries make more and more sense.

Why export your solar for 5c, and then have to buy it back for 50c or more? It doesn't make sense to us either!

For the installer, understanding your energy usage will aid in their PV system sizing process and location of the panels. At Sunergy, we can also access your smart meter interval data to accurately determine your nighttime consumption and thus size a battery if that's what you want.

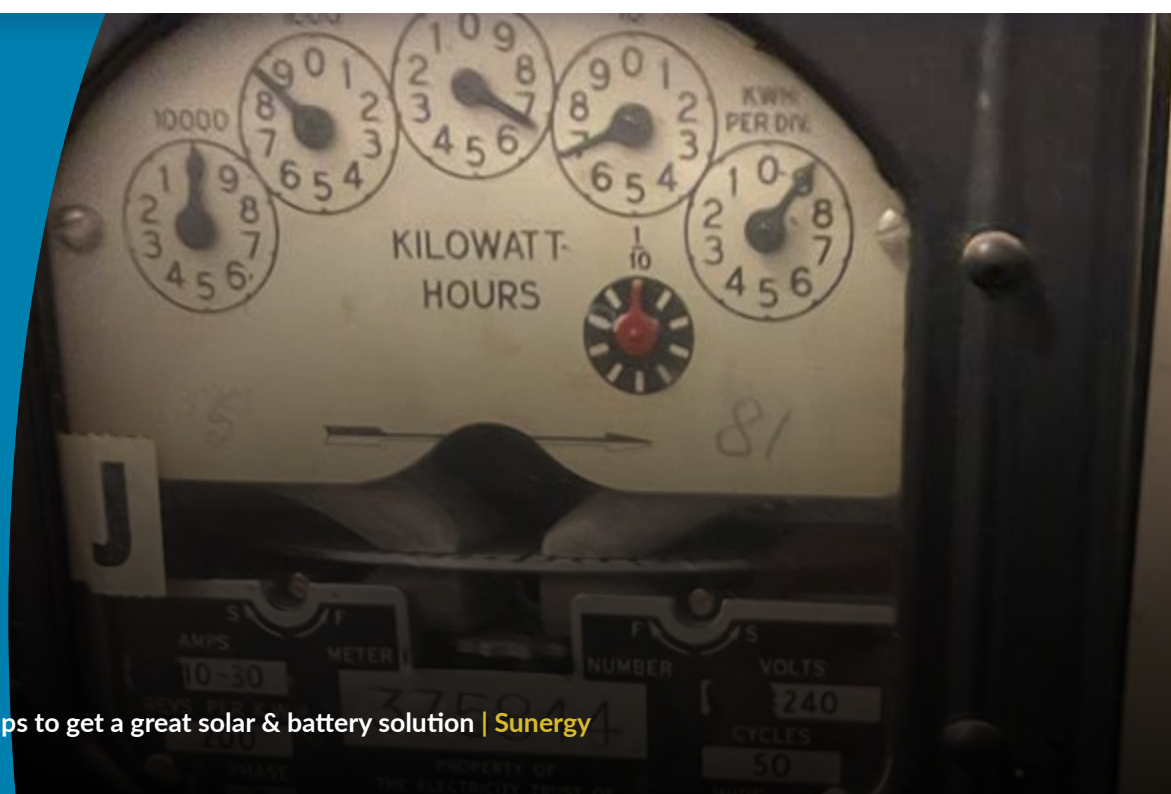
All we need from you is a recent electricity bill (all pages), plus your views as to if (and when) you're planning any of the:

- ❓ An EV?
- ❓ Swimming pool?
- ❓ Converting from gas to electric heating?
- ❓ Heat pump hot water?
- ❓ Retiring or otherwise spending more time at home?
- ❓ Are your 11 and 12-year-olds about to turn into energy-guzzling teenagers?

We will use your usage data and information from above to ensure your solar system (and battery) is sized correctly.

Finally, check whether your solar proposal includes consumption monitoring; this allows you to actively manage self-consumption and gain the maximum benefit from your solar investment. Without consumption monitoring, you are flying blind.

Most Sunergy solar installations include consumption monitoring as standard unless site conditions prevent this (e.g. no internet available, insufficient room in your switchboard, solar inverter and switchboard are on separate buildings).





Tip #2

Know your roof condition & check the proposed panel layout

To get the best results, your solar installer needs to understand various aspects of your roof. In general, a solar system will produce the most amount of energy if it is facing north or northwest. Panels installed on the east suit morning consumption, and north-west or west-facing panels support air conditioning consumption in the afternoon. In saying this, most roofs will be able to have solar installed; it just means the installer will have to do an extra analysis of your roof orientation.

Therefore, they must understand your roof's orientation and the details of your roof cladding, whether tile or metal. The type of roof will affect the hardware required and the maximum size of your system.

For example, if you want a battery, EV charging, swimming pool, etc, your solar must be larger than "standard" to charge your house or EV battery, run your pool, etc.

As part of the quote, you wish to see your roof layout with the panel location marked to appreciate your new system's aesthetical aspects. If your roof is KlipLok, please inform us as soon as possible.

If you have a tile roof, spare tiles are required on the installation day.



Tip #3

Don't get surprised by unexpected extra costs

A few photos from you will allow us to assess the condition of your switchboard and whether any upgrades are required. It is best to know that in advance!

Suppose the photos indicate further investigation is required (and especially if batteries are part of the system). In that case, we will have one of our in-house installers undertake a site inspection to confirm cable runs and work out the position of the required equipment.

Some solar companies use unqualified “sales consultants” to perform site inspections. Our in-house solar-qualified electricians perform Sunergy site inspections. Companies that don't send an installer for a technical assessment should be eliminated from the quoting process.





Tip #4

Is the solar company you are speaking with the right fit?

In solar and batteries, two types of companies install and supply systems.

1. Solar sales companies
2. Professional installers

Solar sales companies sell solar and then subcontract the installation to the cheapest sub-contractors they can find. The issue with this is that usually, the sales team has no solar qualifications, and the company has zero technical resources to provide post-sales support. Electricity retailers and large national cheap solar players fall into this category. Slick salespeople run at least a few sales companies operating in Bendigo without solar qualifications or accreditation.

Professional installers are generally medium-sized businesses with dedicated in-house staff for sales, installations and support. They have a brick-and-mortar office and welcome a visit to their showroom to explain products and technology to you. Such local quality-focused companies are usually known for excellent after-sales service. Unlike solar sales companies, professional installers hold a Registered Electrical Contractor license and have in-house solar-accredited electricians on staff for after-sales support. Solar sales companies generally have zero qualified technical support, meaning they can't help you if you need technical support.

Tip #4

Which company should I choose?

We recommend you choose Sunergy, your local energy specialist. The reason is that reliable after-sales service is essential to a long-lasting solar system's journey. Type one sales-only companies rarely excel in after-sales service, and most don't even have the capability or resources to provide it! They are often too busy selling the next system to worry about past customers. So we say - **Go with an installation company - not a sales company.**

One quick tip: Only CEC-approved panels and inverters and racking with AS1170.2 wind loading certification can be used if you seek to claim the [Federal STC subsidy and Solar Victoria Rebate](#).

However, having an accredited installer using equipment on the CEC-approved list does not guarantee a quality installation that performs adequately. Nor does it mean your most valuable asset (your home) won't be damaged by corner cutting via the cheapest sub-contractor the sales company could find.





Tip #5

Check out the companies you consider for the job

Unfortunately, the solar, battery, heat pump hot water and EV charging sectors have been infiltrated by fly-by-night operators. You need to make sure you pick the right installation company.

We suggest only engaging a company that ticks the following boxes:

- ✓ The company has been in existence for at least eight years. Sunergy has been going since 2010.
- ✓ Are they local? Do they have a showroom, a real Bendigo-base office, and employ licensed and accredited electricians (not sub-contractors)?
- ✓ Check out the Google Reviews – anything below a 4.2 rating is not too impressive. But don't just look at the score - check out what the reviews say because some reviewers are competitor trolls writing fake negative reviews. Any company will have one or two poor reviews if the reviews are fair dinkum – read how that company has tried to address it. If they are all five-star reviews, be sceptical because the company may have used paid review writing services to fake that result.

Tip #5

- ✓ If possible, ask them about any customers whom they installed recently or 12 months ago and ask if these customers would be ok to talk to them. If so - talk to them and check out the service and results
- ✓ Get the company to explain their after-sales service and make notes. How long does it take for a warranty claim inverter to be replaced? Who will install it?
- ✓ Do not go with companies that give you a one-size-fits-all quote, deadlines on specials, too cheap pricing, employ pushy salespersons on commissions, and give you the “last chance for this great special” deadline.
- ✓ Do not purchase from door-to-door solar salespersons if the price is clearly below market rate because the only way these prices can be achieved is with sub-standard equipment and installations.
- ✓ Finally, avoid anyone who claims the panels are “Tier One”, says they will deliver a bill buster system to you, or claims “You will never have an electricity bill because their panels work under the moonlight.”



Tip #6

The quote should list all the equipment you are purchasing in detail

Watch out for the slick sales person with the "She'll be right answer to everything". Your quote should in detail list the number of panels, their brand, and wattage. Same with the inverter and battery solution. Is it string, micro-inverter, or a solution with optimisers? What brand, and what is the inverter capacity? What brand racking do you get? What are the battery's model number and capacity?



Tip #6

Quotes that just say panels or racking are not as helpful as those that give you the brand and product details.

Finally, are there extra costs not included in the quote, such as meter upgrades, special safety equipment for steep and high roofs, or travel fees? Make sure you ask, “Are there any extras I might be expected to pay for, or is your price fully inclusive of all matters and possible issues?”

Tip #7

Study the quote in detail

Quotes usually have a deadline, e.g., valid for 14 days. One of the reasons that this period is chosen is that the solar industry has a high level of volatility in the cost of materials. Also, the STC rebates change each December based on the installation date (not the contract signing date).

Every drop in the value of the Australian dollar can have a significant impact on the overall system cost.

So make sure that when you ask for quotes, you are ready to make a decision soon after as otherwise the job might have to be requoted.





Tip #8

The quote or attached material should list all the various warranties you get

Panels have a product warranty from 15 years to even 30 years. This is a long time. Inverters should again have a product warranty. Five years should be the minimum; ten years is what you want.

Battery warranties can be more complicated as warranties are typically expressed in terms of cycles or megawatt hours (MWH) of throughput. The more cycles and the more MWH warranted, the better.

Then there are the balance of system and workmanship warranties. The balance of the system includes cable, conduit and switches; five years is reasonable. Workmanship warranties should cover water ingress and roof leaks, etc., for five years, but be prepared to have a laugh in puzzlement at two-year-old companies offering 20- year workmanship warranties, especially if it's a sales company with no in-house installers to give effect to their silly promises... Simply put, the workmanship warranty must be realistic (i.e. pass the pub test).

Also, make sure the workmanship warranty stays with the installation company.

Sales companies use sub-contractors and then try to palm the workmanship warranty off onto them. However, that isn't helpful because the sub-contractor has no contract with you. Make sure you ask who is responsible for honouring the workmanship warranty. It must be the company that sells you the system, and if they don't have in-house resources to do that, press them for how exactly that will work (hint: it probably won't).

With your product warranty, it is essential not to be tricked into thinking that a cheap solar panel or inverter is good just because they have an extended warranty. A warranty is worthless if the manufacturer is unwilling or unable to back it up. If that manufacturer doesn't have a direct Australian presence, you have no warranty, only a nice piece of paper.

The best way to avoid trouble down the track is to choose quality, as your chance of having a warranty claim is far less with quality products, and if you do, you have an excellent probability of satisfaction.



Tip #9

The quote should give you a detailed system output estimate

On the internet, a website called youenergyanswers.com offers a calculator that estimates the output of your solar system for each month of the year.

The calculator takes the weather station data of over 800 stations across Australia to calculate predicted solar hours and solar generation. Sunergy will also give you an expected annual and monthly system output, considering any shading issues in your situation.

The quote should then take this information plus your smart meter interval data and electricity rates (if available) and make predictions of annual savings that could be achieved.

If a performance estimate is not included in the quote – ask the installer to supply it. First, because the Clean Energy Regulator requires it and second, so you can check actual vs estimated output in future years.



Tip #10

Who do you call if there is an issue?

The handover material should clearly state whom you call for after-sales service and warranty matters. First, you want to deal with the installation company, not the manufacturer. Do not let yourself be fobbed off to the manufacturer.

They often have time-consuming processes, and you are not an expert. They can tell you fibs or half-truths, and you cannot tell the difference. You want the company that sold you the gear to look after you – and the Australian consumer law backs you in this desire.



Sunergy follows all the important guidance given in this guide.

Contact us for free advice or an obligation free quote

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