

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Rebates

Why did the solar PV rebate close on 9 April 2019?

In August last year, the Victorian Government announced that it would provide solar PV rebates for 24,000 households. With over 30,000 applications currently in our system, the program is already oversubscribed. Therefore, we are closed for new applications for the Solar PV rebate for this financial year. Solar hot water rebate applications are still open.

Applications for solar PV will re-open on 1 July 2019, along with a no-interest loan component to complement the solar PV rebate. Rebates for solar batteries and solar for renters will also open from 1 July 2019.

All solar PV eligibility and rebate applications lodged prior to the program closing will continue to be processed by Solar Victoria.

When will the Solar PV rebate be available again?

Applications for solar PV will re-open on 1 July 2019, along with a no-interest loan component to complement the solar PV rebate. Rebates for solar batteries and solar for renters will also open on 1 July 2019.

You can register to receive updates for the Solar Homes program at solar.vic.gov.au/subscribe.

Why and how are you managing the number of rebates available?

The priority of the Solar Homes program is a safe and orderly expansion of the residential solar industry in Victoria. To support this expansion, Solar Victoria will consult with industry to develop a streamlined approach to the rollout of the Solar PV rebates for each year of the program.

Further information about rebate availability and scheduled releases into the future, will be provided shortly.

The guiding principles will be: clear notice, market information and equality of access for approved Solar Retailers.

Do I have to follow the "Notice to Market" from 1 July if the customer received eligibility approval prior to 1 July?

The Notice to Market was published on 27 March 2019 listing the new mandatory requirements that apply to installations from 1 July 2019.

The eligibility approval date on an application has no impact on the requirement to comply with the Notice to Market.

The mandatory requirements listed in the Notice to Market apply to all installations from 1 July 2019.

A key change applies to inverters requiring power quality modes. As at February 2019, 95% of all inverters installed under the program already met the new Notice to Market requirements.

From 1 July 2019, do customers still need to obtain eligibility before installing a solar system?

Yes.

Approved Solar Retailer Code of Conduct

Why do businesses have to be a Clean Energy Council Approved Solar Retailer to be eligible for the rebate?

Solar Victoria is committed to ensuring that people taking part in the Solar Homes program get quality service from the state's fast-growing solar sector. Achieving this will also instil further community confidence in the industry.

Solar Victoria wants to ensure retailers taking part in the program are adhering to a high standard with the customer's best interest at the centre.

For many consumers, solar is a complex and new product. Determining the system they are being offered is fit-for-purpose, and whether the price reflects the product's quality is challenging and requires retailers to provide transparent and easy to understand information. The Code of Conduct provides standards to ensure Retailers are consistent in their approach to this.

Victoria already has a range of consumer laws to help protect people from misleading and deceptive conduct, unconscionable behaviour and contracts, as well as pressure tactics, however gaps remain.

Introducing this mandatory requirement for solar retailers will reinforce other consumer protections, which can be applied after work is done or in the event of a problem with the installation, workmanship or warranties.

Requiring retailers to become signatories of the Clean Energy Council (CEC) Solar Retailer Code of Conduct will ensure the industry adheres to consistent standards in relation to customer service by establishing a minimum standard and reducing consumer risk.

The same requirement is currently in place for similar programs in Queensland and South Australia.

Are there any other industry retailer codes you will accept?

At this time, only the Clean Energy Council's Approved Solar Retailer Code of Conduct is considered suitably comprehensive. This code has been in place since 2013 and was re-authorised by the ACCC in 2015. The CEC publishes the results of its investigations into breaches of its retailers' Code.

Alternative existing codes have been reviewed. However, these were considered inadequate at the time.

This does not mean Solar Victoria will not accept alternative codes in the future. Other codes may also be considered; however, they must promote high standards and consumer protection, provide an enforcement mechanism to ensure the process is robust, and be approved by the ACCC.

When does my business have to be a Clean Energy Council Approved Solar Retailer by?

The most active 150 solar retailers, by sales volume under the Solar Homes program, must be a CEC Approved Solar Retailer by 1 July 2019.

All other Solar Retailers wishing to take part in the Solar Homes Program must be a CEC Approved Solar Retailer by 1 November 2019.

You will have received an email from Solar Victoria to notify which category you are in. If you are unsure of your category, please contact us on 1300 363 744.

Solar Victoria Portal

What is the Solar Victoria portal?

A one-stop portal for consumers, retailers and installers to easily manage eligibility and rebate claims under the program.

The Solar Victoria Portal provides the capability for Solar Retailers to be paid for the rebate/loan amounts that customers are eligible for.

Why do I have to register via the portal?

From 1 July the Solar Homes Program is moving to a 'Point of Sale' model, which means that the customer should only be charged for the cost of the system minus any rebate and loan amount. The Solar Retailer should

then make a claim to Solar Victoria for payment of the rebate and loan amount via the Solar Victoria Portal.

Registration on the portal is essential to ensure that your business is captured as an approved retailer for the Solar Homes Program.

Registration in advance is key for Solar Victoria to correctly register business and contact details, as well as bank account details to issue rebates.

The portal also enables Solar Retailers to provide details of customer quotes, which Solar Victoria will use to assess the rebate amount and interest free loan amount that an applicant is eligible to receive.

It will streamline the rebate process, with quality checks built into the system to minimise the risk of incomplete transactions becoming idle.

Who must register via the portal?

All Solar Retailers wanting to take part in the Solar Homes Program will need to be registered on the portal by 1 November.

The most active 150 solar retailers, by sales volume under the Solar Homes program, must be a CEC Approved Solar Retailer **AND** registered on the portal by 1 July 2019 to participate in the Solar Homes program.

How will I know when I can register?

We are inviting all Solar Retailers to register on the portal from 9 May 2019.

Newly approved Solar Retailers will receive an invitation to register once confirmation of their approval has been received by Solar Victoria from the Clean Energy Council.

When do I have to register by?

If you are one of the programs 150 most active retailers you must be registered before 1 July to participate in the program. All other retailers have until 1 November 2019

If I don't have to be CEC approved until November can I still register for the portal?

Yes

What happens if I don't register through the portal by my due date?

If you do not register by your due date you will not be able to participate in the program.

Solar Retailers who are not registered will not be able to receive rebate payments for applications submitted after their due date.

What if I install a PV system before I register on the portal?

From 1 July, 2019 rebate payments will only be made for customer installations that have been confirmed as eligible via the Solar Victoria portal prior to installation. Any installations that do not have eligibility confirmation will not be paid a rebate.

How long does it take for my registration to be confirmed?

Registration is a real-time digital process. If you fill in the correct details, your registration will be confirmed immediately.

What documents/evidence do I need to provide for my registration to be successful?

The registration process simply requires you to enter your company information, accept the terms and conditions of participation in the program, and provide your banking details.

No documents are required to be uploaded for registration, however, you should take care that your payment details are entered correctly so that the rebate can be paid to the correct account.

How do I know if I am registered properly?

You will receive a confirmation email from the Solar Victoria Portal.

Does my business have to be a Clean Energy Council Approved Solar Retailer to use the portal?

No. While all Solar Retailers must be registered on the portal as of 1 July to claim a rebate, only the most active 150 solar retailers will have to have Approved Solar Retailer status. All other Retailers will have until 1 November to attain Approved Solar Retailer status.

How long will it take for a customer to confirm rebate or loan eligibility?

Once the Solar Retailer has input the transaction details (quote details, customer address) into the Solar Victoria portal, the customer eligibility information (household income, property valuation) must be provided by the customer and certified by the system.

If the required documentation has been provided the portal will automatically issue an eligibility notification to both the Retailer and Customer. The portal will permit up to 3 months between installation and rebate claim. If you have difficulty navigating the system, please contact Solar Victoria on 1300 363 744.

Is the portal able to be integrated into my accounting software?

Unfortunately, this is not a feature of the Solar Victoria Portal.

Payment

Once job paperwork is uploaded and complete, how long will it take to get paid?

Subject to receiving final applications by the 1st of each month, payment will be made by the 15th of each month.

What happens if it takes longer than specified to receive a rebate?

Retailers can contact Solar Victoria on 1300 363 744 to enquire about the status of rebate payments.

General

What is changing in the Solar Homes program from 1 July 2019?

Several changes are occurring from 1 July 2019. These include:

- Installations must comply with Solar Victoria's "Notice to Market" (published 27 March 2019)
- The most active 150 solar retailers must be a CEC Approved Solar Retailer to be eligible to take part in the Program
- All rebates must be claimed via the "Solar Victoria Portal"
- Applications for solar PV will re-open on 1 July 2019, along with a no-interest loan component to complement the solar PV rebate
- Rebates for solar batteries and rental properties will also open on 1 July 2019