

The Solar Hot Water Rebate is a key part of the Australian Government's Energy Efficient Homes Package, under the Nation Building – Economic Stimulus Plan.

Under this program, the Australian Government is offering a rebate of \$1,600 to install a solar hot water system or \$1,000 to install a heat pump hot water system. The new hot water systems must replace electric storage hot water systems in existing privately owned homes. Installing a low emissions hot water system can save a family up to \$700 in energy costs each year.

The boosted Solar Hot Water Rebate under the Energy Efficient Homes Package began on 3 February 2009.

This booklet provides revised guidelines from 5 September 2009 until 30 June 2012 or until the date when program funds have been fully allocated, whichever occurs first.

Eligible heat pump hot water systems purchased or installed on or prior to 4 September 2009 may be eligible for a \$1,600 rebate if proof of purchase or installation on or prior to this date is included with the application.

Eligible systems must generate 20 renewable energy certificates (RECs) or more at the time of purchase at the installation address.

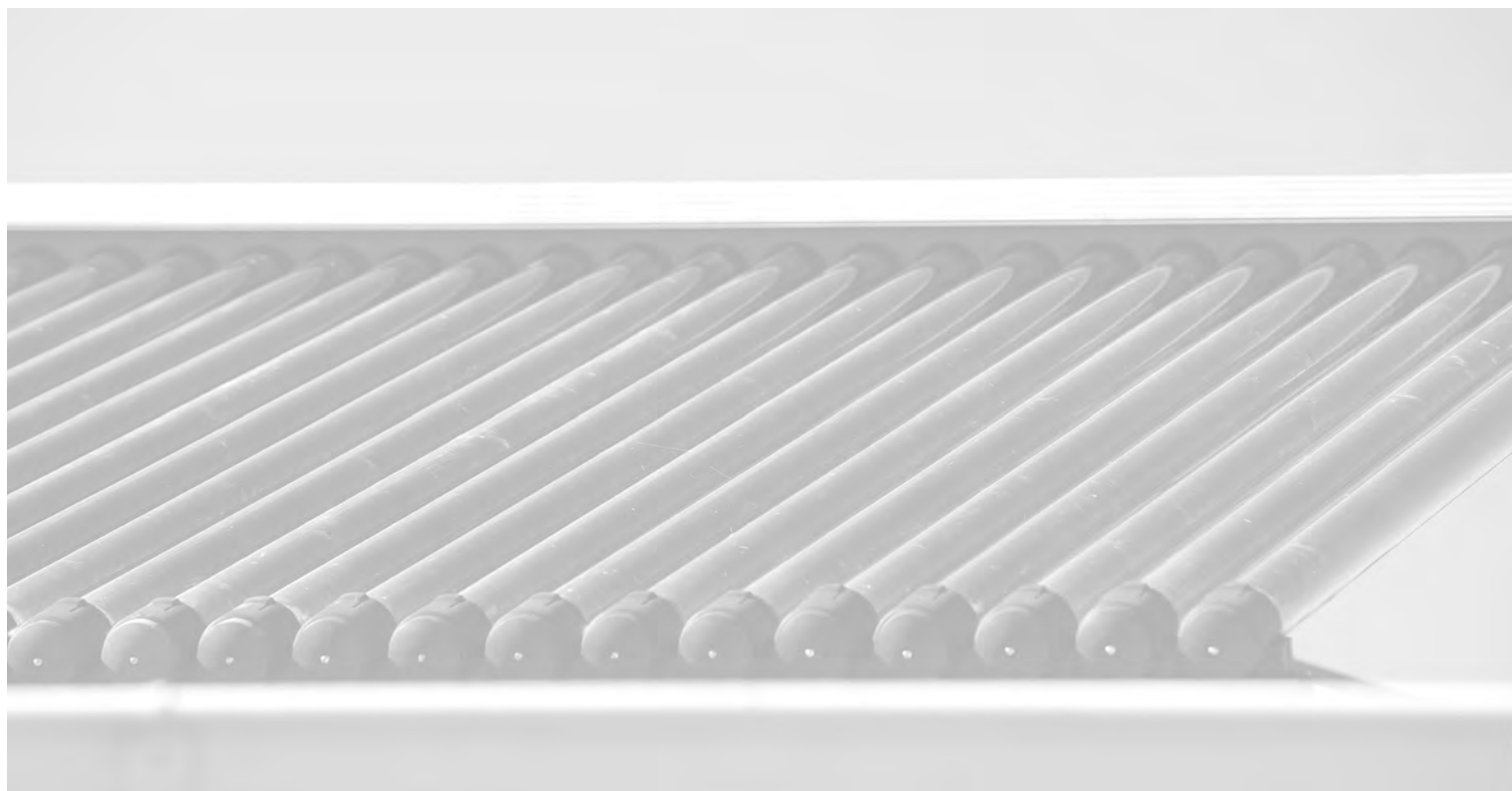
The rebate is in addition to RECs which are assigned to most solar and heat pump hot water systems sold in Australia. RECs can provide a discount of around \$1,000 on the up front cost of the average solar or heat pump hot water system.

Program Guideline Updates

Version 5	Date of issue: 2 November 2009	Date applicable: 2 November 2009 until 30 June 2012 or until the date when program funds have been fully allocated, whichever occurs first.
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PART 1

Solar Hot Water Rebate Overview

Why is the Australian Government giving a rebate?

Water heating is the largest single source of greenhouse gas emissions from the average Australian home, with electric storage hot water systems accounting for around 23 per cent of household emissions (excluding the family car). This rebate is specifically targeted at the removal of existing electric storage hot water systems.

The rebate is in addition to renewable energy certificates (RECs) which are an incentive provided by the Australian Government to encourage all households to reduce their emissions by installing a solar or heat pump hot water system. A number of RECs - generally 20 or more - are assigned to most domestic solar and heat pump hot water systems sold in Australia. These certificates are usually provided as a point of sale discount of around \$1,000 by retailers.

What do you need to do?

1. Read the guidelines in this booklet and carefully assess your eligibility for the rebate.
2. Replace your existing electric storage hot water system with an eligible low emissions hot water system (solar hot water or heat pump).
3. Complete an application form (you will be filling out most areas of the form).
4. On the day of installation ask your installer to complete Sections 3 and 4 of the application form.
5. Submit the completed application form by post ensuring that you:
 - attach a copy of the receipt for the purchase of the new system
 - have the form countersigned by the installer
 - nominate a BSB number and personal bank account number for the electronic payment of the rebate.

Incomplete application forms will be returned to the applicant without processing. The application form must be submitted within six months of the installation of the new system.

What are renewable energy certificates (RECs)?

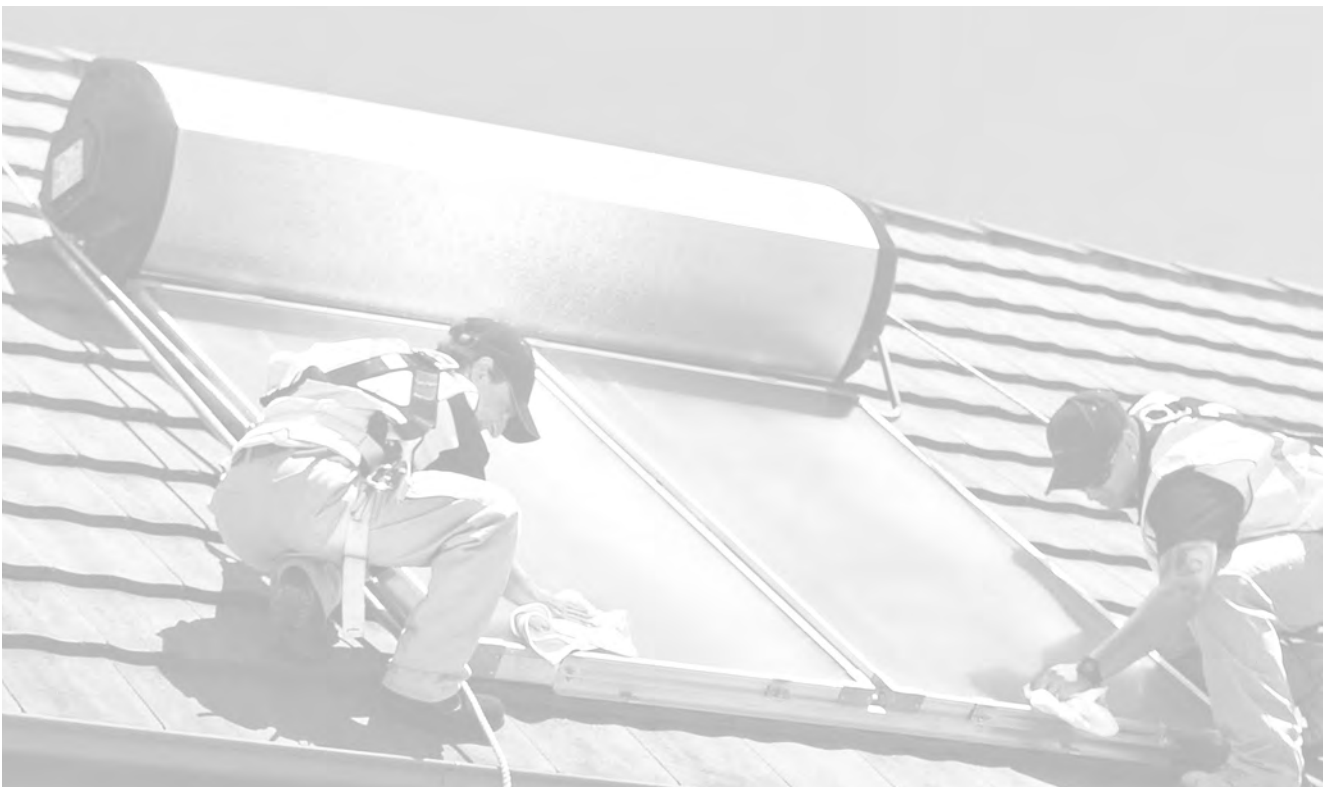
Under the Australian Government's Renewable Energy Target – a scheme set up under Commonwealth law to promote the development of renewable energy – new solar and heat pump hot water heaters may be eligible to create renewable energy certificates (RECs). Householders can create and trade these certificates on their own, but it is more common for Registered Agents to create and trade RECs on behalf of householders. The RECs benefit for consumers usually comes as a point of sale discount. Most retailers will advise potential buyers how many RECs are provided by each solar or heat pump hot water system model and how much each of those RECs are worth at today's prices (the price of RECs vary according to market forces). The retailers then provide a discount to the buyer, meaning the cost of the hot water system to the householder is reduced.

The Solar Hot Water Rebate is given to systems that earn 20 RECs or more at the time of purchase at the installation address. Hot water system retailers can also advise on the number of RECs assigned to a system.

Information about eligible systems and RECs is available on the Office of the Renewable Energy Regulator website:

- Renewable energy certificates
www.orer.gov.au/recs
- Solar hot water heaters
www.orer.gov.au/swh
- Register of Solar Water Heaters
www.orer.gov.au/swh/register.html

overview



PART 2

Solar Hot Water Rebate Guidelines

The Solar Hot Water Rebate provides eligible applicants with a rebate of \$1,600 for installation of an eligible solar hot water system, or \$1,000 for installation of a heat pump hot water system on, or after 5 September 2009. The eligible system must have replaced an electric storage hot water system at an existing principal place of residence.

The boosted Solar Hot Water Rebate under the Energy Efficient Homes Package began on 3 February 2009.

This booklet provides revised guidelines from 5 September 2009 until 30 June 2012 or until the date when program funds have been fully allocated, whichever occurs first.

The Australian Government reserves the right to change the rebate amount or any other aspect of the guidelines.

Eligibility requirements

The information contained in the Solar Hot Water Rebate guidelines (on pages 4–6 of this booklet) in its entirety forms the eligibility criteria for the rebate. In order to qualify for a rebate, applicants must fully comply with all the eligibility requirements in these guidelines.

Final decisions regarding rebate eligibility will be made by the Australian Government.

Applicant requirements

To be eligible to obtain a rebate the applicant must:

- not have previously received assistance from the Home Insulation Program, or the Homeowner Insulation Program, at this address; and
- be an Australian citizen or permanent resident aged 18 years or over; and
- submit an application, attaching a copy of proof of system purchase, within six months (184 days) of system installation; and

- be the owner or tenant of the dwelling where the system was installed at the time the system was installed (Please note: a tenant should not install a system without approval from the owner of the dwelling); and
- be the purchaser of the system or have written permission from the purchaser to apply for the rebate; and
- correctly complete and submit an application form and agree to the terms and conditions listed on the application form.

Only one rebate will be granted per eligible system. In the case of multiple applications for a single system, the rebate will be paid to the first eligible applicant.

System requirements

To be eligible to obtain a rebate, the hot water system must:

- be installed in Australia at a principal place of residence; and
- be installed by a suitably qualified person (for example an electrician and/or plumber); and
- be installed on or after 3 February 2009, as certified by the licensed installer; and
- be a new and complete hot water system that replaces an existing electric storage hot water system previously operational at the dwelling, as certified by the licensed installer (exception: if your home was destroyed in the February 2009 Victorian bushfires, you may be eligible for the rebate for your newly rebuilt home on the same site, provided the home also includes a 2000 litre rainwater tank (compliant with Victorian 5-star building standards) which is connected to the dwelling for toilet flushing); and
- be a hot water system that is eligible for at least 20 renewable energy certificates under the Renewable Energy Target at the time and place of installation, as certified by the licensed installer; and

- be installed to the relevant building standards and government requirements, as certified by the licensed installer; and
- be fully functional, as certified by the licensed installer.

Rebates will *not* be eligible where:

- the applicant is not the owner or tenant of the dwelling where the system was installed at the time the system was installed; or
- the dwelling where the system is installed is not a principal place of residence (for example where the dwelling is a holiday home or a semi-permanent building); or
- the dwelling where the system is installed is state or territory public housing or is owned by a state or territory government; or
- the applicant is not an individual (for example where the applicant is a business or other organisation); or
- the system replaces or is additional to an existing solar or heat pump hot water system; or
- the system replaces a hot water system which was not originally designed as an electric storage hot water system; or
- the system will be used for non-domestic purposes or primarily for heating a swimming pool, spa or similar.

Final decisions regarding rebate eligibility will be made by the Australian Government.

Rebate application process

To claim a rebate the applicant must fully complete, sign and submit an application form (available at the back of this booklet, by calling 1800 808 571 or from www.environment.gov.au/solarhotwater) with the requested supporting documentation.

Incomplete applications will be returned to applicants without processing.

The applicant should allow eight weeks from the application being received by the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts for the application to be processed.

Applying for the rebate requires the applicant to submit a copy of proof of system purchase.

Applying for the rebate requires the applicant to agree that he/she will provide evidence to support claims made on the application form if requested.

Applying for the rebate requires the applicant to agree to allow an authorised inspector access to the system for audit purposes if requested.

Applying for the rebate requires a licensed installer to certify the following on the application form:

- system installation date; and
- the type of system installed; and
- that the system replaced an existing electric storage hot water system; and
- that the system is eligible for at least 20 renewable energy certificates; and
- that the system was installed to the relevant building standards and government requirements.

Definitions

The following definitions are applied for the purpose of this rebate:

Principal place of residence – a privately owned dwelling that is the primary residence of the owner or a tenant.

System – a new domestic solar or heat pump hot water system that is a complete model as listed in the Register of Solar Water Heaters administered by the Office of the Renewable Energy Regulator (available from www.orer.gov.au/swh/register.html). Eligible systems must have a unique tank serial number defined by the manufacturer.

Important notices

Applicants should not assume that they will receive a rebate on submitting an application. The Australian Government will decide whether an applicant satisfies the eligibility requirements as set out in these guidelines and reserves the right to request further information to make this decision.

The Australian Government may require the applicant to present reasonable evidence to support his/her application for the rebate. Requests from the Australian Government for evidence may be made after the payment of the rebate but must be made within twenty four (24) months of the application.

The Australian Government accepts no liability for any loss, damage or cost incurred as a result of, or arising from, the installation of a system which has been the subject of a rebate application, or the application process.

Personal information collected will only be used for the purpose of assessing applications and related purposes. This process may include the exchange of information with other government departments or agencies for compliance purposes, and/or reporting publicly on the performance of the rebate. Reports will be based on aggregate data and personal information will not be identifiable in such reports. Information will be used for the payment of the rebate to successful applicants.

The Australian Government takes no responsibility for any private arrangement between tenants and landlords with regard to the rebate. The tenant or landlord has no entitlement against the Australian Government in these circumstances.

Further information

Further information can be obtained from www.environment.gov.au/solarhotwater or by calling **1800 808 571**.



guidelines

PART 3

How to Apply

How do I apply?

To claim a rebate, you need to submit a fully completed application form. You will be filling out most areas of the form, but on the day of installation your installer will need to complete Section 3 and sign Section 4. This should take no longer than a few minutes and your installer is aware of the process and will have the required information.

An application form is available at the back of this booklet or can be downloaded from www.environment.gov.au/solarhotwater

Applicants must apply by mail to:

Solar Hot Water Rebate
Department of the Environment, Water,
Heritage and the Arts
GPO Box 787
Canberra ACT 2601

- An applicant has up to six months (184 days) after an eligible system is installed to submit an application form.
- The applicant should allow eight weeks from the application being received by the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts for the application to be processed.
- Incomplete application forms will be returned to the applicant without processing.

For more information please contact our national information line on **1800 808 571**.

Supporting documentation

Applicants must submit a copy of their purchase receipt with their application. The purchase receipt must clearly indicate whether the new system is a solar or heat pump hot water system. Whilst no other supporting documentation is required, the Australian Government may require the applicant or installer to present reasonable evidence to support their application. However, requests from the Australian Government for evidence may be made after the payment of the rebate and would be made within 24 months of the application.

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PART 4

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Solar Hot Water Rebate?

The Solar Hot Water Rebate provides eligible applicants with a rebate of \$1,600 for installing a solar hot water system in an existing home. A \$1,000 rebate is available for installing a heat pump hot water system in an existing home on or after 5 September 2009. The new hot water system must replace an electric storage hot water system which are the most greenhouse intensive of household hot water systems and generate the largest amount of greenhouse gas emissions.

The rebate encourages switching to alternative hot water technologies by addressing the up-front cost barriers to climate friendly systems, which also deliver low operating costs for the household.

The rebate is to help households replace existing electric storage hot water systems. Rebates are not available for replacing solar or gas hot water systems.

Am I eligible for more than one component of the Energy Efficient Homes Package?

The Australian Government's Energy Efficient Homes Package provides assistance to make homes more energy efficient by installing ceiling insulation or a solar or heat pump hot water system. The Solar Hot Water Rebate is one part of the package.

You can apply for **either**:

- the Home Insulation Program/Homeowner Insulation Program or
- a \$1,600 rebate for installing a solar hot water system or a \$1,000 rebate for installing a heat pump, depending on your needs. **You can only claim one rebate per address.**

If you accessed assistance to install ceiling insulation under the Australian Government's Low Emission Assistance Plan for Renters you may still be eligible for a Solar Hot Water Rebate.

More information on the package is available from:
www.environment.gov.au/energyefficiency

When can I apply for a rebate?

The \$1,600 solar hot water system rebate or \$1,000 heat pump hot water system rebate are offered for systems installed on or after 5 September 2009 until 30 June 2012 or until the date when program funds have been fully allocated, whichever occurs first, for eligible systems which replace electric storage hot water systems. Applicants must apply for the rebate within six months of their new solar or heat pump hot water system being installed. Systems installed or purchased (proof of purchase must be enclosed with your application) on or prior to 4 September 2009 may be eligible for \$1,600 for solar or heat pump hot water systems.

What is the deadline for applications?

Applicants must apply for the rebate within six months (184 days) of installing an eligible system.

Who can apply for the rebate?

Applicants for the rebate must be the owner or tenant of the dwelling where the system was installed. The application process is simple and straightforward and is completed at the time the new hot water system is being installed. Suppliers and installers of solar or heat pump hot water systems cannot apply for the Australian Government's Solar Hot Water Rebate on behalf of their customers.

Government agencies or occupants of public housing are not eligible for this rebate.

Can I apply for the rebate if I am renting?

Yes. The system for which a rebate is being claimed must be installed at a principal place of residence. An applicant can be the owner or the tenant of the dwelling.

A tenant should not install a system without approval from the owner of the dwelling. The sharing of any costs is a matter for the landlord and the tenant to negotiate.

Regardless of whether you are an owner or a tenant, all other eligibility requirements must be met.

If my system was installed before 3 February 2009, can I get the new rebate?

No. If your system was installed prior to 3 February 2009, you were only entitled to the rebate that was available at the time (ie means tested \$1,000 rebate). Applications for the \$1,000 rebate closed on 2 August 2009.

I installed my system before 3 February 2009, can I still apply for the \$1,000 rebate?

No, applications for the previous \$1,000 rebate closed on 2 August 2009.

I installed my system prior to 5 September 2009, can I apply for the Solar Hot Water Rebate on the new form?

Yes.

I purchased my new heat pump hot water system prior to 5 September 2009, but haven't installed it yet. How much money am I entitled to?

If you purchased your new heat pump hot water system prior to 5 September 2009 and you have proof of purchase (payment of a deposit will be considered to be evidence of purchase), then you may be eligible to receive \$1,600. You must include the proof of purchase with your application. You cannot apply for the rebate until the heat pump hot water system has been installed.

Are rebates available for new homes or those which are rebuilt?

In order to maximise environmental outcomes, solar or heat pump hot water systems installed on new houses are not eligible for the rebate. In comparison to existing housing stock, new homes are generally more energy efficient. Some state governments also regulate the energy efficiency of hot water systems installed in new homes. Furthermore, it is more expensive to install energy efficient hot water systems onto existing homes than onto new homes.

Houses that are rebuilt are classed as new houses and therefore are not eligible for the rebate.

An exception to this provision applies if you have built a new home, or rebuilt an uninhabitable home, on the same site as your home which was destroyed in the February 2009 Victorian bushfires, provided your newly rebuilt home also includes a 2000 litre water tank (compliant with Victorian 5-star building standards) connected to the dwelling for toilet flushing.

The Australian Government provides an incentive to all households to install climate friendly hot water systems in the form of renewable energy certificates (RECs). RECs are assigned by the Office of the Renewable Energy Regulator as part of the Renewable Energy Target scheme and reflect the deemed value of equivalent renewable energy generation over a ten year period. These certificates are tradable and commonly provide a discount of around \$1,000 from the up front cost of the average solar or heat pump hot water system.

Can I still apply for other State or Territory rebates?

Yes. An application for the Australian Government's Solar Hot Water Rebate will not be affected by any rebates that other governments may offer, except as outlined below. For details on other rebates, you will need to follow up with your relevant state or territory authority.

For newly rebuilt homes which are eligible for the rebate due to the February 2009 Victorian bushfire provision, your rebate will be capped to ensure that it, together with all other discounts (eg through renewable energy certificates) and other rebates, does not result in a benefit greater than the cost of the system.

Can I get the rebate for a system I install on my investment property?

Yes. The system for which a rebate is being claimed must be installed at a principal place of residence. This can be an investment property which must be the tenant's principal place of residence. It cannot be a holiday home. An owner may apply for a rebate on more than one property. A separate application must be submitted for each property.

The sharing of any costs is a matter for the landlord and the tenant to negotiate.

Regardless of whether you are an owner or a tenant, all other eligibility requirements must be met.

Are rebates available for holiday homes?

Rebates are not available for holiday homes. To ensure the largest environmental benefit will be achieved, the rebate has been designed to replace electric storage hot water systems in principal places of residence.

Is the rebate means tested?

No.

How will the payment be made?

Payment is made by electronic funds transfer into the personal bank account of successful applicants. Applicants must be the owner or tenant of the dwelling where the solar or heat pump hot water system was installed. The applicant provides a BSB and personal bank account number and the funds are directly deposited. Bank details will only be used to make the payment. Storage and disposal of bank account and other personal details will be managed in accordance with the *Privacy Act 1988*.

What is my BSB and bank account number?

A BSB number is a unique six-digit code that identifies the bank/financial institution and branch where your bank account is held. It can generally be found on your bank statement.

Your bank account number can also be found on your bank statement. Bank account numbers are always nine digits or less. They are not the 16 digit number that appears on your credit/debit card.

It is important that you enter the correct BSB and account numbers, otherwise payment cannot be processed.

If you are still unsure, your bank or financial institution will be able provide you with your bank account and BSB number.

When will my payment be credited to my account?

For successful applicants payment will be credited directly to their personal Australian bank account within eight weeks of the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts receiving a completed and eligible application form.

questions

What is a solar retrofit and why isn't it eligible for the rebate?

Solar water heater retrofit kits are used to add solar panels to existing electric storage tanks. Conventional tanks are not designed to be connected to solar collectors so retrofit kits are not as effective as a water heater designed specifically for solar, however, significant savings can still be made.

The Solar Hot Water Rebate provides rebates for solar and heat pump hot water systems that replace an existing electric storage hot water system. In order to be eligible for the rebate the solar or heat pump system must be a new and complete hot water system that is eligible for at least 20 RECs.

RECs are assigned by the Office of the Renewable Energy Regulator as part of the Renewable Energy Target (RET) scheme and reflect the deemed value of equivalent renewable energy generation over a ten year period.

The RET scheme does not allow individual parts of hot water systems to be tested separately because the efficiency of the total system can vary greatly with the effects of different ancillary parts and their installed arrangement (as a result solar water heaters currently eligible for RECs are complete systems). For this reason, a 'retrofit' system that is based around a previously installed component is not eligible for RECs and therefore not eligible for the Solar Hot Water Rebate.

Why does a licensed installer need to sign my application form?

As part of the application process we require proof that you are replacing an existing electric storage hot water system and have installed a hot water system that is eligible for 20 RECs or more. The installer can certify this and can also provide the tank serial number which is not always easy for the applicant to obtain. The installer also needs to certify whether a solar or heat pump hot water system has been installed.

questions

PART 5

Further Information

Further information can be obtained from:

Phone: **1800 808 571**

Website: **www.environment.gov.au/solarhotwater**

Solar Hot Water Rebate

Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts

GPO Box 787

Canberra ACT 2601

information