

Finn Peacock’s checklist for comparing solar power apples with apples.

Please fill this in as our installers provide you with quotes :)

**Most people have a great experience, but just in case:**

**#1** If your credit card comes with purchase protection insurance, check with your bank that the deposit is eligible, then pay the deposit with that credit card for added protection if something goes wrong between paying the deposit and installation.

**#2** Add the solar to your household insurance now - with cover from the day of installation in case there is (for example) a major hail storm the same day. It has happened!

Price and Conditions	Quote 1:	Quote 2:	Quote 3:
Company Name			
Price			
Include company’s physical address and other contact details?			
Includes ABN?			
Includes Electrical Contractor’s Licence?			
Includes name and licence of SAA Accredited Designer who did the design?			
Includes full design sketch (panel layout, inverter position)?			
Plain English, reasonable length contract?			
Is quoted price the guaranteed final price?			
Deposit amount:			
Balance payable when?			
Timeframe for install?			
Timeframe for final grid connection?			
Estimated annual energy yield is given in writing?			
What self-consumption ratio is assumed on any savings calculations?			
What <a href="#">electricity price inflation is used</a> to calculate payback?			
Explains your rights under Australian Consumer Law?			

Installation Company	Quote 1:	Quote 2:	Quote 3:
Site visit before install?			
Assessed any shade properly?			
Includes <a href="#">consumption monitor</a> ? Price?			
Looked at fusebox?			
Workmanship warranty (yrs)?			
<a href="#">Installer feedback score</a> :			
Subcontractors or Employees?			
Any good/bad experiences reported on <a href="http://whirlpool.net.au">whirlpool.net.au</a> (Google "[company name] Whirlpool") ?			

Note: Use [this table to compare panels](#) side-by-side.

Panels	Quote 1:	Quote 2:	Quote 3:
Brand			
Listed <a href="#">here</a> ?			
Manufacturer's Warranty (years): (Note: this is <a href="#">product warranty not the performance warranty</a> )			
Manufacturer has Australian presence/office?			
Good <a href="#">Solar Panel Reviews</a> from customers?			

<u>Inverter</u>	Quote 1:	Quote 2:	Quote 3:
<b>Brand</b>			
<b>Listed <a href="#">here</a>?</b>			
<b>Manufacturer's warranty (years)?</b>			
<b>Will be positioned in the shade or cool garage?</b>			
<b>Includes <a href="#">consumption monitor</a>? Price?</b>			
<b>Manufacturer has Australian presence/office?</b>			
<b><a href="#">1 input per roof area</a>?</b>			
<b>Good <a href="#">Inverter Reviews</a> from previous customers?</b>			

<b>Racking</b>	Quote 1:	Quote 2:	Quote 3:
<b>Racking Brand is specified and <a href="#">on this chart</a>?</b>			

<b>Batteries</b> (if applicable)	<b>Quote 1:</b>	<b>Quote 2:</b>	<b>Quote 3:</b>
<b>Size in kWh</b> (nominal energy capacity)			
<b>Power in kW</b>			
<b>Includes backup?</b>			
<b>Which specific appliances are backed up?</b>			
<b>If 3 phase home – 3 phase backup?</b>			
<b>Can charge batteries from panels during outage?</b>			
<b>Backup switchover time?</b>			
<b>Battery <a href="#">bypass switch</a> included (unless installer advises not required)?</b>			
<b>Battery payback calculated separately? <a href="#">Please read this</a></b>			
<b>If modular battery – do you understand cost of adding modules in the future?</b>			
<b>If you have an EV charger, will battery <a href="#">avoid discharging into EV</a>?</b>			
<b>Compatible with local Virtual Power Plants?</b>			
<b>Manufacturer has Australian presence/office?</b>			
<b>Savings estimate in writing?</b>			
<b>Warranty (years)</b>			
<b>Warranty (kWh)</b>			
<b>Warranted degradation (%) i.e how much capacity left when warranty expires</b>			

**IF YOUR ROOF HAS ANY SHADE:** I strongly advise a [shade survey](#) with a ‘Suneye’ (or similar device). These surveys are time-consuming for the installer, so in my experience the best way to arrange this is: **1)** choose your favorite installer. **2)** pay a deposit on the understanding that it is 100% refundable if the shade analysis shows too much shade. **3)** Get shade analysis done by chosen installer. **4)** Decide if you are happy with energy loss due to shade. Proceed if you are happy.

**Buying Batteries?** You can compare [batteries side-by-side here](#).

**Finally:** The solar buying process from:

- applying for permission to install solar
- to upgrading your meter
- and getting final permission to power up your system

...varies depending on where you live and who your local electricity network company is. [I explain the process for each state/territory here](#). Even though your installer will handle most of this for you – it's useful to understand the sequence of events.