

Two ‘identical’ solar quotes, thousands of dollars apart — and the federal discount shrinks again in January

Quotes for the same-sized rooftop solar system are varying by up to \$3,000, an energy efficiency provider warns, as the federal certificate scheme that discounts every install begins its legislated wind-down.

SYDNEY, 22 July 2026 — Australian households comparing rooftop solar quotes are being urged to look past the headline price, with quotes for apparently identical systems differing by thousands of dollars — and the federal discount that offsets the cost set to shrink again on 1 January.

A 6.6 kW system — the most common residential size — currently sells for around \$5,500 to \$8,000 installed after the federal Small-scale Technology Certificate (STC) discount. One installer may advertise it under \$6,000 while another quotes more than \$8,500 for what looks like the same product.

“The headline price on a solar quote is rarely the real number. Between the STCs, equipment choices and installation requirements, two 6.6 kW systems can differ by thousands of dollars. Buyers simply need to know what questions to ask,” said Josh Liptak, Managing Director of Sydney-based [Efficient Energy Group](#).

The gap usually comes down to what the headline number leaves out: the panel and inverter brands actually being installed, mounting and switchboard work, monitoring, and the length of product and workmanship warranties. A cheaper quote is not automatically worse — but quotes that name no specific models, cite only “Tier 1 equivalent” equipment, or pressure customers to sign on the day are warning signs.

The timing pressure is real. The STC scheme applies its discount upfront, with the certificates typically assigned to the installer. But the scheme is legislated to wind down to 2030, and the number of certificates a system earns steps down every 1 January — meaning the same system attracts a smaller discount each year that passes. Households collecting quotes across the new year can see the rebate change between one quote and the next.

“The STC scheme has played an important role in making renewable energy more accessible for homeowners. But the discount gets a little smaller every January, so anyone comparing quotes should check the certificate value is current — and that it’s actually been applied,” Liptak said.

Efficient Energy Group recommends households compare quotes on a like-for-like basis — system capacity, named panel and inverter models, warranties, estimated annual generation and any extra electrical work — rather than the bottom line alone. A guide to [what solar panels cost in Australia in 2026](#) is available on the company’s website.

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About Efficient Energy Group

Efficient Energy Group is a Sydney-based energy efficiency provider accredited under the NSW Energy Savings Scheme and Victorian Energy Upgrades program, delivering commercial lighting, air conditioning, hot water and refrigeration upgrades across NSW, Victoria, South Australia and Queensland, and helping households understand solar pricing and government incentives.

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