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## Jump in houses for sale that offer cut-price home energy bills

By [Elizabeth Redman](#)

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### KEY POINTS

- There has been a rise in the number of homes with solar panels listed for sale.
- The main reason people install solar panels is to save money.
- Previous research has shown energy efficient homes sell for a premium.

A rising number of homes listed for sale come with energy-efficient features such as solar panels and battery storage, new figures show.

A bid to save money on energy bills has driven the uptake of rooftop solar in recent years, along with an increase in time spent at home.



The number of energy-efficient homes for sale is on the rise. ISTOCKPHOTO

Home buyers looking for efficient options have more choice, with more than 101,000 properties with solar panels listed for sale in Australia in the 12 months to May, analysis by real estate agency Ray White shows.

This is higher than the almost 80,000 listed in the corresponding period in 2020.

Properties for sale with battery storage are less common but growing fast, reaching 3366 this year from 1819 in 2020.

A smaller number of homes were labelled as “off grid”, at 1362 this year up from 809 two years earlier.

Ray White data analyst William Clark attributed the rise to government rebates and an increase in public awareness of environmental issues, on display at the recent election.



“It is not a surprise at all to see some households swing that way in terms of how they are retrofitting their house and what house they are choosing to buy,” he said.

For someone selling their home, when it comes to offering features that reduce energy bills, “more is better”, he said. If it were ever to become compulsory to report a home energy rating as part of a sales listing, that would drive retrofitting of homes, he added.

The data also revealed the suburbs with the highest number of green home listings.

In Victoria, outer suburbs with new housing developments ranked highest, including Tarneit, Clyde North and Sunbury.

In NSW regional areas topped the list, in Port Macquarie, Tamworth and Dubbo, and similarly in Queensland, with Buderim on the Sunshine Coast and Upper Coomera on the Gold Coast alongside Narangba on Brisbane’s outskirts. Western Australia’s top three are Baldivis, Ellenbrook and Halls Head.

Absent from the list are the relatively well-off inner-city neighbourhoods where environmental issues have been a high priority at the ballot box.

Solar Victoria CEO Stan Krpan, who oversees the state’s Solar Homes government grants program, was not surprised, after researching why his customers install solar panels.



More and more homes for sale have solar panels. WOLTER PEETERS

“The number one reason is to save money,” he said. “The number two reason is obviously the environment.

“The closer you get to the centre of Melbourne, the less penetration of solar there is.”

Tarneit has had the biggest uptake of the program since it began in 2018, alongside other outer suburbs with new housing developments, although he said some inner-city homes may not lend themselves to solar panels easily because of heritage restrictions, slate roofs, a southern orientation or overshadowing issues.

He said when it comes time to sell a home, solar panels are attractive to buyers, who will often pay a premium.

A recent Domain report found the median price paid for a house with energy-efficient features was [\\$125,000 more than one without](#).

Previous research examined 27 global studies on energy-efficient homes and found the price premium was typically between 5 per cent to 10 per cent, and sometimes as much as 27 per cent.

A study of home sales in the ACT found a 9.4 per cent premium was paid for seven-star houses, when compared to a three-star home.

There has been a steady increase in interest in more sustainable homes, said Andy Marlow, director and architect at Envirotecture, an architecture firm specialising in sustainable design.





There has been an increase in interest in energy-efficient homes, experts said. ISTOCK

He said energy-efficient features can improve a home’s resale value, but sales evidence for the deepest green homes is slim. Most people who undertake an ultra-sustainable build or renovation do not sell because there is nothing else for them to buy, he said.

He referred to a training program for real estate agents that helped them highlight specific features of a home that improve energy efficiency – as well as talking about regular inclusions such as granite benchtops, they could also talk about sustainable features such as double glazing.

“Twenty-five to 28 per cent of Australian homes have got solar panels on them,” he said.

“There will be a point where we won’t talk about it because it will be like having a roof.”

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