



Australian Government
Department of the Environment,
Water, Heritage and the Arts

National Solar Schools Program Guidelines

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Contents

Part 1: National Solar Schools Program overview	3
Objectives	3
Funding available	3
The applicant	3
The project	4
Program duration	4
How it works	4
Part 2: How to register	5
Part 3: How we determine your eligibility and funding	6
School eligibility	6
How we determine your funding	6
Part 4: Planning your project	7
Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs)	8
Part 5: Eligible items and activities	9
Table 1: Eligible items, activities and conditions	9
Part 6: Lodging your claim	11
GST	11
Funding limitations	11
Part 7: Solar power system requirements	12
Competent designer and installer	12
System design and installation	12
Warranty	12
Smart meter and display	12
Part 8: Other requirements	13
Use of harvested rainwater	13
Permissions and approvals	13
Insurance	13
Tax implications	13
Disclosure of information	13
Acknowledgement	13
Reporting and acquittal	14
Part 9: National Solar Schools Program contact details	15
Part 10: Useful contacts	16

PART 1

National Solar Schools Program overview

The National Solar Schools Program will help Australian schools take practical action to tackle climate change by offering grants of up to \$50 000 (GST exclusive) to install solar power systems, rainwater tanks and a range of renewable energy and energy efficiency measures. Schools will be able to improve their energy and water efficiency as well as reduce their ongoing energy costs. In particular, for schools with a mains power supply, surplus electricity generated by solar power systems on weekends and during school holidays may be able to be sold back to the electricity grid for extra electricity and greenhouse savings.

1.1 Objectives

The objectives of the National Solar Schools Program are to:

- allow schools to:
 - generate their own electricity from renewable sources
 - improve their energy efficiency and reduce their energy consumption
 - adapt to climate change by making use of rainwater collected from school roofs
 - provide educational benefits for school students and their communities
- support the growth of the renewable energy industry.

1.2 Funding available

Schools installing a minimum 2 kilowatt (kW) solar power system are eligible for a grant of up to \$50 000 (GST exclusive) for the installation of eligible items.

If no solar power system or a system of less than 2kW is installed, a grant of up to \$30 000 (GST exclusive) is available to be spent on eligible items.

Schools that have received Green Vouchers for Schools funding will have this amount deducted from their National Solar Schools Program grant.

1.3 The applicant

Government and non-government schools are eligible for a grant under the National Solar Schools Program if they are state registered primary and/or secondary schools and eligible to receive Australian Government general recurrent grants payments under the *Schools Assistance (Learning Together — Achievement Through Choice and Opportunity) Act 2004*.

Educational institutions that are not eligible for a grant include kindergartens, early childhood centres, preschools, TAFE colleges and universities.

PART 1 continued ...

1.4 The project

National Solar Schools Program grants are available for the installation of a range of renewable energy generation, water and energy efficiency measures, including:

- solar power systems
- rainwater tanks
- small wind turbines
- small hydro power generators
- solar hot water systems
- energy efficient lighting
- ceiling fans
- door and window draught seals
- ceiling, wall and floor insulation
- sensors, timers and thermostats
- automatic door closers and automatic sliding doors
- external window fittings
- skylights
- shade awnings
- smart meters and displays.

Part 5 'Eligible items and activities' provides a comprehensive table of the items that are eligible for funding.

1.5 Program duration

The program operates from July 2008 and runs until 30 June 2015. Schools making a claim in the last six months of the program must finalise their works and reporting requirements by 30 June 2015.

1.6 How it works

There are three very important steps to claiming your National Solar Schools Program grant.

- Registration (Part 2)
- Planning your project (Part 4)
- Lodging your claim (Part 6)

PART 2

How to register

To register you need to complete the online registration request on the National Solar Schools Program website. Registrations are to be made only by employees of the school.

You will be asked to provide:

- a contact person's details, including phone numbers and email address – the contact person must be an employee of your school and authorised to submit the school's registration
- the correct legal name of your school
- your school's Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) identifying number – this number identifies your school to the Australian Government (see Part 10 'Useful contacts' for assistance with this number)
- your school's ABN (see Part 10 'Useful contacts' for details of how to find your ABN)
- your school's location address (not a post office box)
- an indication of when you will begin your project.

You will receive an email to acknowledge your registration request. We will provide you with a Project ID – please keep this safe as you will need to quote it if you contact us. Please do not give your Project ID to anyone else, for example, a commercial operator, as your school retains responsibility for management of the grant process.

PART 3

How we determine your eligibility and funding

When you submit your National Solar Schools Program registration request we will determine your school's eligibility for a grant and the maximum amount of funding available for your school.

3.1 School eligibility

Government and non-government schools are eligible for a grant under the National Solar Schools Program if they are state registered primary and/or secondary schools and eligible to receive Australian Government general recurrent grants payments under the *Schools Assistance (Learning Together – Achievement Through Choice and Opportunity) Act 2004*.

Educational institutions that are not eligible for a grant include kindergartens, early childhood centres, preschools, TAFE colleges and universities.

Schools listed for closure within twelve months of lodging a claim are not eligible for a grant.

We will determine your eligibility as a school from data provided by the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR).

3.2 How we determine your funding

Schools installing a minimum 2kW new solar power system, or a minimum 2kW extension to an existing system, will be eligible for a grant of up to \$50 000 (GST exclusive).

If no solar power system or a system of less than 2kW is installed, a grant of up to \$30 000 (GST exclusive) is available to be spent on eligible items.

A multi-campus school that has a combined campus population of 1 000 or more full time enrolled students is eligible for an additional National Solar Schools Program grant. Combined primary and secondary schools are deemed to have multiple campuses even if they are co-located. The level of funding is determined by the installation of a 2kW solar power system.

For example, if a multi-campus school with 1 000 or more students installs:

- two solar power systems of at least 2kW each, it is eligible for up to \$100 000 (GST exclusive)
- one solar power system of at least 2kW, it is eligible for up to \$80 000 (GST exclusive)
- no solar power system or a system of less than 2kW, it is eligible for up to \$60 000 (GST exclusive).

For schools that have claimed a grant under the Green Vouchers for Schools guidelines, a National Solar Schools Program grant is up to \$50 000 (GST exclusive) less the amount of Green Vouchers funding received. The remaining National Solar Schools Program grant can be spent on any eligible items.

PART 4

Planning your project

When you have registered and received confirmation that your school is eligible for a National Solar Schools Program grant and you know the maximum amount of funding for your school, you can begin researching and planning your project.

You will need to:

- think about the best solution for your school
- investigate the costs involved for different options
- check your proposal meets your school's governance requirements (e.g. any requirements stipulated by a state or territory education department)
- contact your school's assets management unit, if applicable
- seek advice from appropriately qualified people
- investigate any necessary permits
- seek itemised quotes for the various aspects of the project.

A National Solar Schools Program grant is a one-off payment. If you do not use your full entitlement when you make your claim you will not be able to claim the remainder at a later date.

It is in your school's best interests that you carefully research project options so that your school gets the best value from its grant. Schools are encouraged to conduct energy and water use efficiency audits to assist them with planning their projects. These audits are not eligible for funding by your National Solar Schools Program grant. State and territory education departments may be able to assist or schools may choose to conduct a self-audit (see Part 10 'Useful contacts'). The Australian Sustainable Schools Initiative (AuSSI) provides resources for schools to plan their projects (see Part 10 'Useful contacts' for AuSSI's website address).

You are required to seek value for money for your grant. We recommend that you contact at least three suppliers for the major components of your project. Schools are encouraged not to enter into any commitments with a supplier until they have obtained a range of quotes. These quotes should be itemised in line with the relevant budget components of the claim form. A detailed description of the claim form is available on the National Solar Schools Program website. We may ask for copies of quotes. Quotes sought for solar power systems must be from designer/installers accredited by the Australian Business Council for Sustainable Energy (BCSE).

We advise you not to give your school's National Solar Schools Program registration details to any commercial operator. Registrations and claims are made through the official National Solar Schools Program website (see Part 9 'National Solar Schools Program contact details'). This site displays the Australian Government logo.

National Solar Schools Program grants are not retrospective. Funding will not be provided for commitments made, items purchased or installed, or any work undertaken before entering into a funding agreement with the Australian Government National Solar Schools Program. You must not purchase items or start work until a funding agreement has been signed.

When you lodge your claim you should submit accepted quotes with realistic start dates to minimise the likelihood of costs increasing by the time you start the project. Cost escalations will not be met by the program.

PART 4 continued ...

Projects funded under the National Solar Schools Program must meet certain requirements:

- The funding claimed must be related to the supply and installation of eligible items.
- Works must be carried out at a clearly defined school site.
- All installed items must be new and meet relevant Australian Standards.
- A solar power system must be installed by a designer/installer accredited by the Australian Business Council for Sustainable Energy (BCSE).
- All other work (for example, electrical or plumbing) must be completed by suitably licensed people.
- All work must meet Australian, state and local government regulations.
- All necessary approvals and permits must be obtained.

You are encouraged to use your National Solar Schools Program project as a resource to improve awareness and understanding of energy and water use in your school and in the wider school community. To advance learning goals, a smart meter and display are compulsory items when installing solar power systems. Meters may be connected to a state government sponsored interactive website. Your state or territory education department may also be able to assist your school include energy and water efficiency learning goals in your curriculum. The AuSSI program provides useful resources for improving your school's sustainability (see Part 10 'Useful contacts' for AuSSI's website address).

4.1 Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs)

The Mandatory Renewable Energy Target (MRET) supports the reduction of Australia's greenhouse gas emissions by increasing the proportion of Australia's electricity generated from renewable sources. This is achieved through a market-based scheme that trades in Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs), which may be created by the installation of solar hot water heaters and Small Generation Units (SGUs).

The following National Solar Schools Program eligible items may create RECs:

- solar power systems
- small wind turbines
- small hydro power systems
- solar hot water systems
- heat pump hot water systems.

Owners of solar hot water systems, heat pump hot water systems and SGUs may be able to create and sell RECs to help offset the cost of installing renewable energy technology. Your school may assign the right to create RECs to a registered agent in exchange for an upfront discount on the purchase price of the system or a delayed cash payment.

For more information about RECs, please refer to the Office of the Renewable Energy Regulator (ORER) website (see Part 10 'Useful contacts').

PART 5

Eligible items and activities

The National Solar Schools Program funds on-ground works. We will only fund items and activities listed in the table below. In particular, we will not fund project administration and coordination, planning, research, energy or water use efficiency audits, design, educational activities, promotional activities, reporting, auditing or any costs you incur in obtaining quotes or preparing and submitting a registration or claim.

Table 1: Eligible items, activities and conditions

On-Ground Works	Eligible items and activities	Conditions
Solar power system	<p>Purchase and reasonable installation costs including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Photovoltaic (PV) panels Frames and supporting equipment Inverter Monitoring equipment Balance of system requirements Delivery Installation 	<p>For installation on new and existing buildings. Includes extensions to existing solar power systems.</p> <p>System must be installed by a BCSE-accredited designer/installer (see Part 10 'Useful contacts').</p> <p>Must be connected to a power grid, if available. Where a grid is not available additional enabling equipment may be required and is eligible to be claimed.</p>
Solar power system related items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smart meter and display Web-linked PV system monitoring 	<p>A smart meter and display are compulsory requirements of the installation.</p> <p>Interactive websites, available for PV monitoring, can be found on the National Solar Schools website.</p> <p>Does not include the cost of a computer.</p>
Solar or heat pump hot water system	<p>Purchase and reasonable installation costs including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Solar hot water system Solar heat pump hot water system Delivery Installation 	<p>For installation on new and existing buildings.</p> <p>The hot water system must be a complete model as listed on the Office of the Renewable Energy Regulator (ORER) website (see Part 10 'Useful contacts'). It is expected that the system will be eligible for 20 or more Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs) under the Mandatory Renewable Energy Target (MRET) at the time of installation.</p> <p>It must have at least a five year warranty and can be connected to showers, kitchen and laundry facilities.</p> <p>The system may comprise more than one unit.</p>
Other renewable energy generation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small wind turbines and associated towers, control equipment, dump loads, cable and circuit protection, delivery and installation Small hydro power generators and associated penstock, piping, control equipment, dump loads and circuit protection, delivery and installation 	<p>Installation to provide electricity to new and existing buildings.</p>

On-Ground Works	Eligible items and activities	Conditions
Energy efficiency items	Installed items must improve the energy efficiency rating of an existing school building.	
	Automatic door closers; automatic sliding doors	On external doors or doors to unheated or vented areas.
	Ceiling fans	Energy efficient models; must be spaced and sized appropriately.
	Draught seals on doors and windows	Standard commercial products.
	Energy efficient lighting	Replacing incandescent with compact fluorescent lamps or LEDs; upgrading existing fluorescent lighting to current standard.
	External fittings on windows	Double glazing, shutters.
	Insulation in walls, floors and ceilings	Safety standards must be met if disturbing toxic dust.
	Sensors, timers and thermostats – movement sensors for interior lights; daylight sensors for exterior lights; thermostats and timers for cooling and heating systems	Timers must be programmable to a minimum 7 day cycle. No item is to be installed if it creates a safety issue.
	Shade awnings	Must be retractable in temperate climates.
	Skylights	Must not be permanently vented; must include shaft insulation to reduce unwanted heat transfer.
	Smart meter and display	Compulsory items for solar power system installations.
	Solar thermal heating system	Must supplement existing heating and reduce energy generated by fossil fuels.
Rainwater tanks	<p>Purchase and reasonable installation costs including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rainwater tank Pipes Pump Delivery Installation 	<p>For installation on new and existing buildings.</p> <p>Tank to store water harvested from a roof only (not surface or ground water).</p> <p>Harvested rainwater must not be for potable use. An exemption is available where mains water is not available. (See Part 8 'Other requirements').</p> <p>We will only fund pipes to connect roof catchment to tanks and from tanks to non-potable applications such as toilets, irrigation systems and washing machines.</p> <p>We will not fund the installation, repair or upgrade of roofs, guttering, irrigation systems, toilets or other fixtures (e.g. taps)</p> <p>The water collected in a rainwater tank is not for potable use and therefore cannot be plumbed to the hot water system funded by this program.</p>
Safety items	<p>Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equipment enclosure First flush filter Mosquito guard Pump cage Safety fencing 	<p>Safety items must be directly related to the eligible items funded by the National Solar Schools Program.</p>
Other necessary items	<p>Required fees and permits, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local council development application (DA) Fees payable for inspection of grid connection 	<p>We will only fund approvals or permits necessary for the project funded by the National Solar Schools Program.</p>

PART 6

Lodging your claim

A National Solar Schools Program grant is a one-off payment. You will lodge your claim on the National Solar Schools Program website. You must acknowledge you have read these guidelines to proceed to lodge your claim. Claims are to be made only by employees of the school. To make your claim you will need to provide:

- details of your preferred itemised quote or quotes that cover all the relevant items and activities – this will be the amount of requested funding (do not send quotes to us)
- details of items and activities for which you are requesting funding – the eligible items and activities listed in Part 5 are the only items and activities we will fund
- delivery timeline – the expected start date should be within eight to twelve weeks of lodging your claim and the project should be finished within six months of receiving funding to avoid cost overruns
- authorised person's details – the person who can sign a funding agreement on behalf of your school
- a declaration that, to the best of your knowledge, your school is not listed for closure in the following twelve months.

When we have determined you are spending the grant on eligible items and activities, we will provide you with a funding agreement covering the conditions of the grant, including final reporting and acquittal requirements.

A person authorised to sign contracts on behalf of your school must sign two copies of the funding agreement and have their signature witnessed on both copies. You will then post both signed copies to the National Solar Schools Program. We will sign both copies and return one to you before depositing the funding into your nominated bank account.

6.1 GST

Your claim for funding will be based on quotes that are inclusive of GST and identify the GST amount payable.

When completing your claim form you will need to provide:

- the GST inclusive amount, and
- the amount of GST.

We will pay you the amount exclusive of GST plus a 10% allowance for GST even if some items do not attract GST.

It is your school's responsibility to ensure that tax obligations with regard to GST are fulfilled. For more information contact the Australian Taxation Office (see Part 10 'Useful contacts').

6.2 Funding limitations

National Solar Schools Program grants are not retrospective. We will not reimburse you for items you have purchased or installed, or any work you have undertaken, prior to the start of a funding agreement with us.

We will not fund items and activities that have already been paid for by someone else, for example, any other government program or any organisation or individual.

We will not fund items and activities that you are obliged to install or undertake to meet any Australian, state or local government regulations, for example, to meet the minimum energy efficiency rating on new school buildings.

Variations to the project scope will not be funded. The eligible items you list for funding when you claim your grant will be the items funded.

If, due to exceptional circumstances, for example, a natural disaster, the cost of the work increases by the time you complete the project, you can apply for approval to fund the additional cost. You must not assume that approval to fund the additional cost will be automatically given. Approval will only be granted if:

- you supply us with a written explanation for the additional cost and documentation to substantiate your claim
- we consider it appropriate in the circumstances to fund the additional cost.

PART 7

Solar power system requirements

7.1 Competent designer and installer

To be eligible for funding, the solar power system must be installed by a person accredited for design and installation of photovoltaic systems by the Australian Business Council for Sustainable Energy (BCSE). See Part 10 'Useful contacts' for where to find the list of accredited designers and installers.

A licensed electrical contractor must carry out the electrical work associated with the wiring in the building and in the power system, in compliance with regulations in the state or territory in which the installation is undertaken.

7.2 System design and installation

The solar power system must be permanently mounted in a robust manner and 'hard-wired' into the building's electrical circuitry.

All the equipment in the installed system must be new and meet the relevant Australian Standards.

All systems, components and equipment must comply with, and be designed and installed in accordance with all relevant Australian Standards or, where these do not exist, with the relevant international standard. Australian Standards include but are not limited to:

- AS/NZS 3000 – Electrical installations
- AS 4509 – Stand-alone power systems
- AS4086 – Secondary batteries for use with stand-alone power systems
- AS 4777 – Grid connection of energy systems via inverters
- AS/NZS 5033 – Installation of photovoltaic (PV) arrays (currently under review)
- AS/NZS 1170 – Structural design actions
- any other standard called upon by the above or other relevant standards.

Photovoltaic modules must be certified to IEC61215 or equivalent.

System installation must also meet all relevant codes of practice, building codes, local government and legislative requirements.

For upgrades to existing systems, the entire system must comply with all current safety and installation requirements.

On completion of installation the school must obtain an installation report from the installer. A final payment to the installer should not be made until a satisfactory installation report has been provided. A report template is available from the National Solar Schools Program website.

7.3 Warranty

The supplier must provide a performance statement setting out agreed load and other system parameters from the supplier. A minimum ten-year performance warranty must be offered on solar panels installed as part of the system. The onus is on the school to obtain a warranty from the supplier.

It is essential for stand alone systems that a detailed load assessment is undertaken and the appliances to be connected are agreed in writing. Where a generator is part of the system design, the expected run time must be stated.

7.4 Smart meter and display

A smart meter and display are compulsory requirements of the installation.

PART 8

Other requirements

8.1 Use of harvested rainwater

Harvested rainwater must not be for potable use. This condition may be waived in special circumstances for schools in rural or remote areas where mains water is not available. Schools should not assume they will be exempt from this condition and should contact the National Solar Schools Team to request an exemption.

8.2 Permissions and approvals

Before you start your on-ground works, you must:

- have approval from the National Solar Schools Program for your project and have a signed funding agreement with us
- have the written permission of any land/property/building/asset owners, land managers, and others directly affected by your project
- meet any procurement and assets management requirements set out by your state or territory education department (if applicable)
- meet environmental, heritage, legal, health, insurance, building and planning requirements under Australian, state, territory and local government laws.

8.3 Insurance

You are liable for the risks associated with your project. If you accept a National Solar Schools Program grant, you must indemnify us and we may require evidence of insurance cover including public liability insurance to the value of not less than \$10 000 000 and appropriate personal accident, workers' compensation and volunteer workers' insurance.

8.4 Tax implications

You should consider the tax implications of a government grant as most government grants are taxable. We recommend you seek advice from a financial or tax adviser. You could also contact the Australian Taxation Office's Business Call Centre on 13 28 66 or refer to www.ato.gov.au.

8.5 Disclosure of information

We collect information from you to assess and manage your project. We may give some or all of this information to other Australian, state or territory government departments or use it to promote the National Solar Schools Program. The name of the grant recipient and the project details may be disclosed in documentation, such as media releases, and be made publicly available on our website. The name of the contact person may be made available to government and Ministerial staff or agents. By submitting your registration and claim, you are acknowledging and agreeing to these disclosure requirements.

8.6 Acknowledgement

You are required to acknowledge the grant provided by the Australian Government through the National Solar Schools Program at any media event related to the project and in any publication (including online) produced as part of the project.

PART 8 continued ...

8.7 Reporting and acquittal

You will need to keep records of your activities and take photographs of your completed project. You must account for your grant expenditure and keep proper accounting records for all project expenditure.

When the project is completed you are required to submit a final report including:

- an installation report for any solar power system
- copies of receipts for expenditure, itemised in line with the components of your claim *or* an independently audited financial statement
- photos of the completed project
- an outline of the energy, water efficiency, educational and awareness raising activities undertaken by the school
- an estimate of the energy and water savings achieved as a result of participating in the National Solar Schools Program.

If the installed solar power system is smaller than the minimum of 2kW required under the program guidelines, then your school is no longer eligible for the \$20 000 photovoltaic component of the grant and will be liable to repay that component.

PART 9

National Solar Schools Program contact details

National Solar Schools Team
Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts

GPO Box 787
Canberra ACT 2601

Phone: **1800 703 831**

Email: **nationalsolarschools@environment.gov.au**

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

PART 10

Useful contacts

Association of Building Sustainability Assessors
www.absa.net.au

Australian Business Council for Sustainable Energy (BCSE) – for accredited solar power system designers/installers
www.bcse.org.au/default.asp?id=119

Australian Business Register (ABR) – to find your school's ABN
[www.abr.business.gov.au/\(q5zswe553qhpmqo3o43g045\)/main.aspx](http://www.abr.business.gov.au/(q5zswe553qhpmqo3o43g045)/main.aspx)

Australian Sustainable Schools Initiative (AuSSI) – for energy and water efficiency resources
www.environment.gov.au/education/aussi/index.html

Australian Taxation Office Business Call Centre
13 28 66
www.ato.gov.au

DEEWR Schools Service Point Helpdesk – for assistance with your school's DEEWR number
1800 677 027

Greenhouse Challenge Plus – for energy audit tools
www.environment.gov.au/settlements/challenge/members/energyaudittools.html

Office of the Renewable Energy Regulator (ORER) – for information on RECs created by solar hot water systems and SGUs
www.orer.gov.au



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