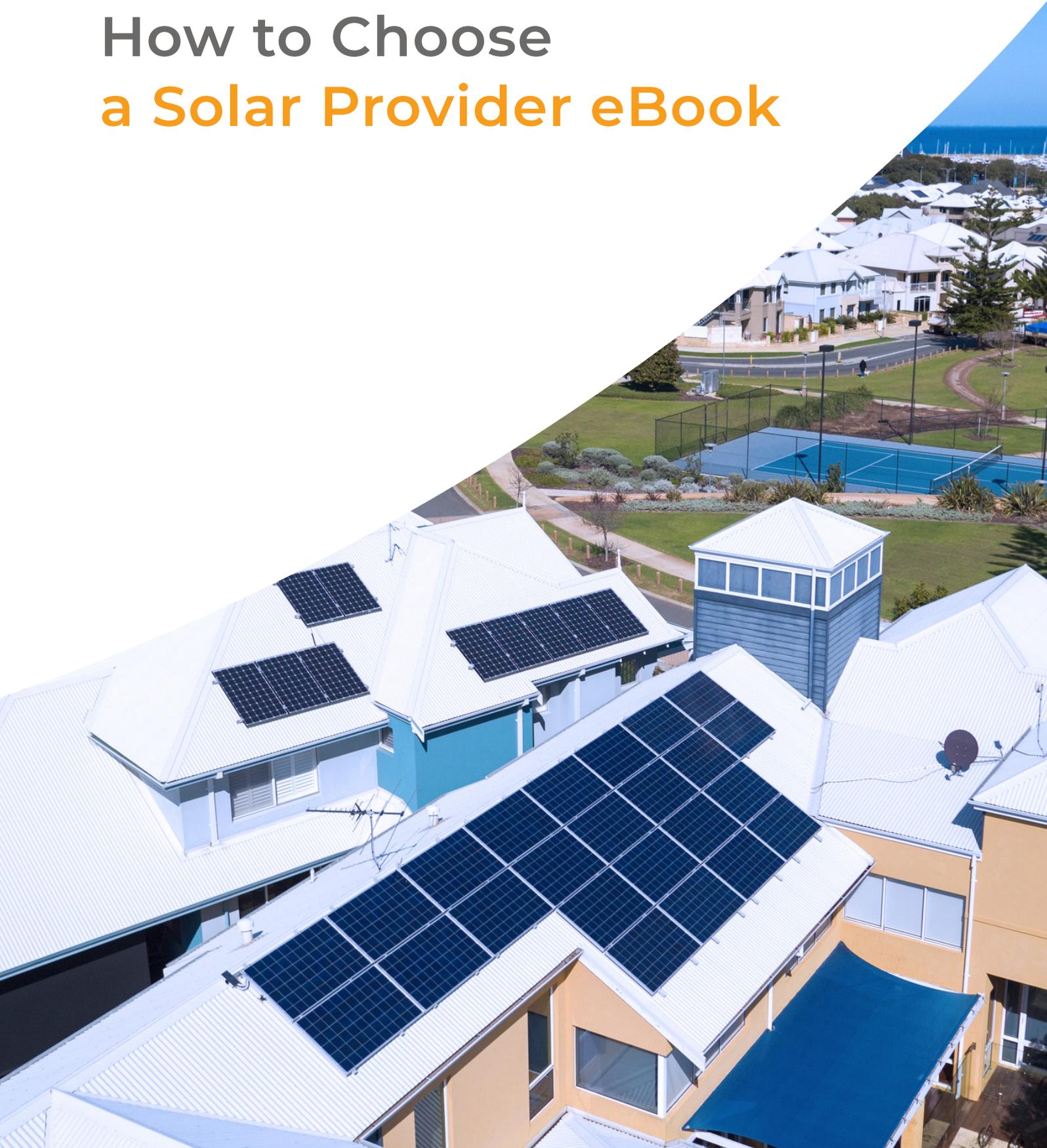




How to Choose a Solar Provider eBook





How to Choose a Solar Provider eBook

Copyright © 2019 by Infinite Energy

All rights reserved. No part of this publication text may be uploaded or posted online without the prior written permission of the publisher.

For permission requests, write to the publisher, addressed "Attention: Permissions Request," to enquiries@infiniteenergy.com.au

Contents

- 01 How to Choose a Solar Provider eBook

- 02 Do Your Online Research

- 03 Shop Around

- 04 Check for a Commercial Track Record

- 05 Accreditations & Certification

- 06 About Infinite Energy

- 07 Your Solar Company Checklist:
 11 Questions to Ask a Solar Provider



How to Choose a Solar Provider eBook

While the uptake of solar has increased significantly over the last few years, so have the number of solar providers. However, not all solar companies have the level of expertise, high-quality products and installations, financial backing and reliable customer service that is required to continue operating. As a result, many solar operators come and go. In fact, by our count, **more than 500 have come and gone since 2011.**

In an industry that is largely pressured by consumer expectations for low prices, many solar providers are driven to think that selling cheap products and cutting installation corners will help them to maintain some kind of business model, but unfortunately excessive warranty claims catch up with them very quickly. For many businesses, closing the doors and moving on is the easiest thing to do, leaving it up to clients to try to obtain warranties themselves and organise to have their systems fixed.

It's a common consumer misunderstanding that the length of the product warranty is all the reassurance they need. However, a 25-year warranty is no good if the cheap brand of panels or inverters don't have representation in Australia. This effectively means you have no warranty if the importer (or your solar provider) is not around. It's unfortunate to say, but for the many customers that ring Infinite Energy with this issue, their best option is to scrap their solar system and start again; not the financial or environmental outcome they had in mind when they purchased the system.

To ensure you avoid the above situation at all costs, here are our tips to help you choose the right solar provider.



Shop Around



Check for a
Commercial
Track Record



Confirm
Accreditation



Do Your Online
Research



11 Important
Questions

Do Your Online Research

Doing your research is vital in any investment, and solar is no different. To ensure you aren't caught out, we strongly advise you do some online research to find out more about the company you're considering purchasing a system through.



Check the Address

The first thing you can do to confirm the legitimacy of a company is to check the address. All reliable solar companies will have a physical office that you can attend, not just a PO box.

It's a good idea to Google search the address to check whether it's been listed as a fake 'virtual office'. You can also check the Google Street View to see that it's not just a storage shed or the home address of a backyard operator.



Read the Reviews

Often, if someone has been scammed by a company or have had a very negative experience, they will make this known to warn others through a review. Google, Facebook and other online platforms are excellent places to look for reviews about a company. When looking at reviews, look across as many platforms as possible to get a holistic view of customer feedback. If one platform is attracting a lot of negative reviews, a company may start directing customers to somewhere else that appears more complimentary.



Check their Business Registration

If you're seeing a few red flags, we recommend you go on to the government ABN search site abr.business.gov.au. You'll be able to see how long the company has been around for, as well as any other information that's made available for public viewing.

If you believe that the ABN number you've been given is fake, you can double check by following these guidelines:

- An incorrect number (An ABN has 11 digits/no letters/first digit never 0).
- Sequential numbers, repeating numbers or unusual number patterns.
- Invoice details that don't match the details of the person you believed was supplying you or the type of supplies you are receiving.



Mobile Phone Numbers Only

This is a key giveaway of a backyard operator – many just use a mobile phone number and have no land line. A genuine solar company should have a customer service or reception phone number listed, especially if they have a physical office. You can often find the number of a business on their website.

Shop Around



Get Multiple Quotes

To ensure you're receiving a fair price, it's a good idea to get multiple quotes from different providers and compare the inclusions. Your quote price will vary depending on the brands you choose, the size of your system and the quality of the equipment being used for your installation. Although choosing a cheaper quote may seem like a good idea in theory, you can end up paying for it later if you need to make a warranty claim or if the system has not been installed to the right standards. You should also review the terms and conditions on every quote, and don't sign a contract that doesn't outline what these are.



Visit the Showroom

On top of just a physical office, most reputable solar companies will have a showroom you can visit to view their selection of products. This allows customers to also chat with staff to get more information and ask questions. Never be afraid of asking too many questions, as this will not only provide you with more knowledge but also give an indication of how well the consultant knows their stuff.



Check the Warranty

Always ask for warranty details in writing. Generally, a supplier will provide you with a 25-year performance warranty, as this is the industry standard. Performance warranties are a guarantee that the products will perform at 80% by the end of the 25 years and won't deteriorate beyond this point. The second warranty to enquire about is the product warranty, this is considered to be the more important of the two. Product warranties cover, if not to your own fault, all cases where a panel fails or stops performing as well. This entitles you to a repair, replacement or a refund. For solar panels, we recommend a product warranty of 10 years minimum. Most decent solar panel brands will have significantly higher than this. The inverter warranty should be at least 5 years, but the longer the better. As mentioned earlier, your warranty should always be backed by an Australian entity.

If the manufacturer of the solar product doesn't have an office in Australia, it is the responsibility of the importer to fulfil the warranty should you need to make a claim. However, if the importer has gone out of business, then it is up to your solar retailer to handle the case. If you've gone for a company that doesn't have the financials to support such cases, then you can become very stuck. In addition to the above warranties which are provided by the products manufacturers, Infinite Energy also offers a 5-year "Whole of System" warranty. If your system experiences any fault or defect in relation to the products supplied or the installation workmanship, Infinite Energy will repair your system at no cost to you. The Whole of System warranty covers all additional parts of the system, as well as any damage caused by contractors in the installation process. Infinite Energy is one of the few solar providers that offer this warranty.

Check for a Commercial Track Record

A solar company successful in Commercial Solar is more likely to stay in business long-term. This is because large commercial solar projects (100kW+ in size) require a high level of expertise in solar design and installation.

As a result of the large investment required for these systems, commercial clients tend to have a very rigorous selection process to ensure not only a quality installation, but also after-sales support should it be required.

Backyard or unstable solar operators don't tend to pass through the stringent procurement processes of larger companies, so a lack of systems installed over 100kW is an indicator that the business may not have the expertise, stability and quality required to operate in this part of the solar market.



Accreditations & Certification



Clean Energy Council Accreditation

The **Clean Energy Council** (CEC) is an industry body for renewable energy in Australia. The not-for-profit organisation aims to assist both consumers and businesses in the industry, developing guidelines and having input into the development of Australian Standards.

The Clean Energy Council Solar Retailer Code of Conduct is a voluntary scheme for solar retailers, enabling them to show their commitment to solar industry best practice and responsible sales and marketing activities.

Authorised by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC), the code aims to lift the bar higher than the minimum requirements set by government regulations and bring about a better standard of service within the solar industry. The many companies that are unable to pass the audit to become a '**CEC Approved Solar Retailer**', rely on their CEC Membership or CEC Accredited Installer status, both are a lot easier to obtain.



Our Commitment to Quality and Safety

By choosing Infinite Energy you gain the peace of mind your dealing with one of the few solar companies that holds both **CEC Approved Solar Retailer** status and **Quality ISO 9001** certification. This involves passing yearly audits to prove we follow industry best practices and provide our customers with consistently high-quality service.

In addition to our commitment to always providing a high-quality of service, Infinite Energy has also achieved **AS/NZS 4801:2001** certification for the operation of an Occupational Health & Safety Management System. The implementation of such a system helps Infinite Energy complete all projects, including solar installations, to the highest safety standards, protecting our business, our employees and our clients. There are very few solar companies that meet the standard of the CEC Approved Solar Retailer Program, and also hold a Quality ISO 9001 certification and AS/NZS 4801:2001 certification.

About Infinite Energy

At Infinite Energy we have:



Ten-year track record of both installing solar systems and honouring warranty claims. Chances are, there is an Infinite Energy solar power system in your neighbourhood - [click here](#) to see some of the installs we have done in your area.



A dedicated Service Department to assist customers with any issues.



A 5 year "Whole System" Warranty provided by Infinite Energy locally (over and above manufacturer's warranty).



Accredited Service Partner Status with major manufacturers like Fronius, SunPower and Sonnen.



Clean Energy Council Approved Solar Retailer Accreditation and Quality ISO 9001 certification.



A physical Office and Solar showroom you can visit in South Perth.



A large number of commercial solar projects under our belt. In fact, we're the 4th largest installer of commercial solar projects in Australia. See some of our recent projects [here](#).

Your Solar Company Checklist:

11 Questions to Ask a Solar Provider

We have developed this guide to assist you in making the right decision when selecting a solar company to install your solar system.

- 1 Does the company sell products from manufacturers who have a significant presence in Australia?

It will be very difficult to make a warranty claim against a manufacturer if they have no presence in Australia.

Infinite Energy only uses panels from manufacturers who have a significant presence in Australia.

- 2 Are the solar panels supplied and branded by a large reputable manufacturer?

Be aware of “self branded” panels. You have no way of doing any research on the manufacturer, their process, or quality control. This is often a way of dressing up inferior products. Choose panels from large well known manufacturers where there is an abundance of information (& scrutiny) available.

Infinite Energy only uses panels from large international manufacturers.

- 3 Do all the products that make up the system (panel manufacturer, inverter manufacturer, mounting system manufacturer) have a website and is information about them freely available on the Internet?

Be very skeptical about providers where there is little or no information about their company & products.

Infinite Energy only use products from large international manufacturers.

- 4 What panel mounting system will be used on my roof and are all the parts corrosion resistant aluminium or stainless steel?

The mounting system is a critical component of a solar system that is often overlooked when choosing a system – it should secure the panels for the life of the system. Inferior mounting systems can pose a serious safety issue as time progresses.

Infinite Energy only uses top of the range mounting components which are corrosion resistant aluminium and are backed by a 10 year warranty.

Your Solar Company Checklist:

11 Questions to Ask a Solar Provider

5 What electrical cables will be used in the system?

This is very important but an area where many solar companies will cut corners by using 2.5mm cable or a 4mm AC cable (not DC cable). This can be a safety issue and greatly affect performance of the system.

Infinite Energy uses DC manufacturer labeled cable from the array to the inverter location. 4mm earth cable from array to the main earth neutral link.

6 Does the solar company have a physical office in Australia that you can visit?

Be aware of “back yard operators” who work from home and only use a PO Box address. Also be aware of companies who conduct telephone / web based sales without a presence in Australia. Will these companies be around for servicing or warranty issues in the long term?

Infinite Energy has offices in South Perth – Western Australia and in Murarrie – Queensland which customers are welcome to visit.

7 Will the solar company visit your home and provide a no-pressure consultation?

Buying a solar system is a significant investment and shouldn't be rushed. Be skeptical of any company offering “today only” deals. Quality systems from reputable companies will be available tomorrow. Be equally skeptical of a company that won't visit your home prior to sale. Ask yourself how they will resolve any issues after you've installed a system.

Infinite Energy pride ourselves on our consultative approach. We'll visit your home to help you get the best system for you in a time frame that suits you.

8 Does the solar company run a significant operation with a dedicated in-house team to deal with any issues pre or post sale?

Many companies have started selling solar systems over the phone and internet with no local support where anything could go wrong. They will often just subcontract your job to any electrician willing to do the job for the cheapest price who has no stake in the outcome of the job.

Infinite Energy has offices in WA and Queensland which customers are welcome to visit. We have a dedicated operations team who handle warranty issues and after sales service.

Your Solar Company Checklist:

11 Questions to Ask a Solar Provider

- 9 Can the solar company give you accurate production estimates including financial projections such as return on investments and payback periods?

Be skeptical about nice rounded production estimates like “the system will produce 8 units a day”.

Infinite Energy uses industry recognised modelling tools using local meteorological data to provide production estimates so you can make an informed decision.

- 10 Does the solar company provide dedicated after sales support?

Purchasing a solar panel system is a significant financial investment which will only pay off if the system produces as it should. Ask how the solar company resolves any after sales service issues and in what time frame.

Infinite Energy has a dedicated after sales team and a 21 day issue resolution policy.

- 11 Is the solar consultant knowledgeable and confident in answering questions (including these) about the system they are recommending?

All of Infinite Energy’s solar consultants are highly trained in recommending the best system to suit your needs. We don’t just sell standard systems but will tailor a solution for you.



If you have any questions or would like to discuss your solar options with one of our energy consultants, please [contact us](#) today.



1300 074 669



enquiries@infiniteenergy.com.au



www.infiniteenergy.com.au