



# Northern Territory – How to get value for your solar PV system and feed-in tariffs explained

This factsheet provides information about how to maximise the value of your solar power through feed-in tariffs and the set-up of your solar power system.

## What is a feed-in tariff?

A feed-in tariff is a payment made in exchange for electricity that is fed into the electricity grid from the generation of renewable energy, such as solar PV, hydro, or wind turbines.

## Retailer-paid feed-in tariffs

Retailers can offer feed-in tariffs, which may be at different rates. Retail electricity offers may include several components such as the daily fixed charge for being connected to the network, the electricity usage charge, any discounts applied to the fixed or usage charges, and the feed-in tariff for electricity you export to the electricity grid.

## How is the retailer-paid feed-in tariff rate determined?

As there is no current regulation on feed-in tariffs in the Northern Territory, retailers are responsible for setting these rates. The main retailer for the Northern Territory, Jacana Energy, currently offers a 1-for-1 rate which matches the consumption charge for electricity. At the time of writing, these rates were 26.05 cents per kWh for residential customers, and 30.32 cents per kWh for commercial customers.

As Jacana Energy is owned by the NT Government, its rates have been set in accordance with Government policy, noting that the NT Government has indicated that it will review the rates as part of its Roadmap to Renewables plan. Privately owned retailers are not required to offer feed-in tariffs.

## Which feed-in tariffs are now closed to new applicants?

The Australian Government funded the Solar Cities programme to promote the use of renewable energy through solar PV. This programme targeted a number of cities around the country, with the programme being launched in Alice Springs in March 2008.

The Alice Solar City programme saw a total of 700 solar PV systems being installed on homes and businesses, and closed at the end of June 2013.

## Do I have to change my meter?

If you were a customer of the Alice Solar City programme, you do not have to change your meter because you will already have a smart meter installed which can provide net metering. This means electricity generated with your solar PV system is first used to meet any household consumption that takes place at the time of generation. You then receive a feed-in tariff for exporting any electricity in excess of your consumption to the electricity grid as agreed with your retailer.

If you were not a customer of the Alice Solar City programme, you will need to check what type of meter you have to see if it is compatible with feed-in tariffs.

## Smart meters and regulation changes

There may be benefits in installing a 'smart' meter (also known as a digital meter), including the ability to receive feed-in tariffs

Most customers currently have 'basic' meters (also known as accumulation meters), which can only measure total accumulated electricity usage.

A basic meter cannot tell how much you consume at a particular time, as it only measures the accumulative electricity usage. On the other hand, a smart meter measures your electricity use every 30 minutes. You may then be able to access information about your electricity consumption via your retailer or other means.

By monitoring household electricity consumption, solar PV customers can better manage their electricity use and schedule consumption to maximise the use of their solar PV generated electricity, instead of unnecessarily purchasing electricity from the electricity grid.

### **Make the most of your solar power**

To maximise the value of your solar PV generated electricity, consider some of the following options to ensure you are using your own generated solar power before paying to use electricity from the grid. This can be done by using timers on appliances such as dishwashers and washing machines, and running these appliances during daylight hours. If heating or cooling in your household is powered by solar PV

generation, consider pre-heating or pre-cooling your house to take advantage of unused solar electricity generated in daylight hours. This can be done by programming electric heating or cooling appliances to switch on early in the day, but set at a relatively conservative temperature.

### **Battery storage**

Batteries allow households to store solar power for use during non-daylight hours. However adding battery storage to your household may involve a high upfront cost. The overall value of investing in battery storage will differ based on the upfront cost, the retail rates available and your location.

Differences in the weather and the size of your solar PV system will determine the amount of electricity your system will generate. Smaller renewable energy systems mean less unused electricity is generated to store and use when the sun is not shining. Make sure you compare the overall benefits with the total costs before investing in battery storage, and speak to your retailer to determine if battery storage affects your eligibility for any feed-in tariffs you receive.

#### **More information**

For more information about Solar PV systems, visit NT Government's Power Water Corporation  
<https://www.powerwater.com.au/customers/save>

#### **Other contacts**

Indigenous Infoline 1300 303 143

For information in languages other than English call 13 1450 and ask for 1300 585 165

Speak and Listen users phone 1300 555 727 and ask for 1300 585 165

TTY users phone 13 3677 and ask for 1300 585 165

Internet relay users connect to the National Relay Service (<http://www.relayservice.com.au>) and ask for 1300 585 165

#### **Australian Energy Regulator**

Infoline 1300 585 165

Website [www.aer.gov.au](http://www.aer.gov.au)

Energy Made Easy [www.energymadeeasy.gov.au](http://www.energymadeeasy.gov.au)

Australian Competition and Consumer Commission

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