



Free Report – Reading Time: Less than 5 minutes.

3 Common Solar Scams, and How To Avoid Them.

Australians love solar power.

At the end of 2015 there were over 1.5 million solar panel systems in Australia and most of them are installed on suburban homes.

While many installers are providing a high quality product, the booming industry has attracted plenty of scammers and cowboys.

Scammers always rely on the consumer's lack of knowledge about solar panel installations.

With the right information you can avoid being scammed, ripped off or paying more than you should for a solar panel system for your home or business.

SCAM No.1 – The “Massive Discount” Scam

This scam is usually sold through door-to-door salespeople or sometimes telemarketing phone calls.

The salesperson has a slick, well-rehearsed script, carefully designed to guide you through a step by step process where the inevitable outcome is you signing on the dotted line for a hugely over-priced solar system.

The sales pitch may overstate the performance of the proposed system and use misleading descriptions of the components and warranties to make the whole deal seem too good to be true.

The price is finally revealed to the consumer, and it's always high.

But, at this critical moment in the sales process the salesperson steps in with the killer punch to try and seal the deal.

"Just let me call my manager and see if we can do better on the price ..."

The manager is called, and after a short conversation, guess what ...? It's great news for you!

If you agree to sign up today they will give you a **\$3,000 discount!**

And ... If you agree to put a sign on your fence (to show the whole neighbourhood what a sucker you've been) another **\$1,000 off the price!**

To secure this fantastic deal you must sign up today, right now, this very minute.

After all these amazing discounts, the final price is still about twice the cost of a locally installed system.

Last year we saw a client who took up the discount offer and signed a contract for \$13,000 for a 4KW system.

Our price at the time, using better quality components, was around \$7,000.

There is a cooling off period of 10 days for solar installation contracts so even if you have signed up under pressure from the salesperson, there is an opportunity to back out of a bad deal.

The cooling off period had lapsed for the person who called us, but they would still be around \$5,000 better off to forfeit their \$1,300 deposit and start again with a local installer.

The Massive Discount Scam relies on the consumer not having any idea what a solar system should cost, and denying you the opportunity to compare proposals from other suppliers.

The discounts are designed to get a signature on the contract right now, and to fool the client into thinking they are getting a great deal.

Another problem with solar systems sold door to door is you are buying an off-the-shelf system recommended by a salesperson, not by a qualified installer who can take all aspects of your installation into account when designing the best system for your individual needs.

How To Avoid This Problem

Get advice from more than one source and don't sign up for anything from a door to door salesperson. And remember, if you do get pressured into signing,

there is a 10 day cooling off period where you can back out and get your deposit back.

SCAM No.2 – The Switchboard Upgrade Scam

You've decided to invest \$5,000 in solar panels and today is the day they are being installed.

The truck rolls up the drive and guys start unloading the gear. The supervisor wanders over and opens your switchboard. Uh-oh! Bad news.

“We can't hook up to this old board. It will have to be upgraded.”

They quote you \$1,800 to upgrade your switchboard and say they can't do the solar installation without it.

The truck is in the drive, loaded with panels and gear, 3 guys are standing there watching you, waiting for your decision.

You haven't allowed for this in your budget. They have really put you on the spot by asking you to make a decision right now.

Once again, you don't have time to compare offers from other companies.

Is \$1,800 a good price for a new switchboard? (Hint – Probably Not!)

If you go ahead with the upgrade it's an extra \$1,800. If you don't go ahead you lose your \$500 deposit.

This situation could actually be due to incompetence rather than a deliberate rip off, but the effect on you is the same. It's an unexpected extra cost that you haven't allowed for.

It's the result of having a salesperson sell you a system, rather than a qualified installer.

Commission salespeople don't have the knowledge and qualifications to properly assess your electrical installation and probably won't know if your switchboard is suitable or not.

How To Avoid This Problem

Get an on-site inspection by a qualified installer who is actually going to do the work. They can look at every aspect of the job, such as roof area, angle and

orientation, shading issues, your pattern of power usage and of course your current switchboard and electrical installation.

It's the best way make sure you are getting the best system for your particular circumstances.

SCAM No.3 – The German Panel Scam

In reality there are very few solar panels made in Germany these days.

Most of the large manufacturers have gone broke or ceased making panels because they can't compete with the lower production costs in China.

The common perception is, that solar panels made in Germany are higher quality and more desirable than panels made in China. Some solar companies try to trade off that "German Made" appeal.

Some solar sales companies will outright lie to you and tell you their panels are **"Made in Germany."**

Some solar sales companies will be more subtle and have strategies that give you the impression that they are supplying German made panels, without actually saying so.

They may claim their panels are "German Engineered" or German Designed".

There might be a German ".de" website listed on their sales literature and packaging.

Their panels might have a German sounding name such as Hanover Solar, German Solar AG or Munsterland Solar.

Don't be fooled - all of these brands are actually made in China.

(There is even a brand called Canadian Solar, but as you probably guessed they're not made in Canada either.)

If you splashed out the extra cash for real German made panels you would certainly be getting a good product ...

... but there are plenty of high quality solar panels made in China.

Unfortunately price is not a good indication of quality. Some solar sales companies charge very high prices for lower quality panels and inverters.

How To Avoid This Problem

Be sceptical of any salesperson who offers you "German Made" or "German Engineered" panels.

Ask for a detailed list of all components in any proposal you receive.

Google the products and read the reviews and country of origin info and you will quickly get an idea of the quality and reliability of the components.

Talk to a local installer and ask them about the quality of the panels and inverters they supply.

Summary

It seems the more a solar sales company advertises on TV the more wary you should be of their offer.

Some well-known, national brands have been prosecuted and fined for "false, misleading and deceptive representations" with regard to country of origin, performance and supposedly discounted prices of solar panel systems.

They've even been convicted of producing fake client testimonials.

The Solution

To avoid falling victim to one of the many solar scams there are 3 things you should do.

1. Don't sign any contract offered by an unsolicited door to door salesman or telemarketer.
2. Do get your information about solar panels from more than one source.
3. Get a detailed proposal from a local installer who will actually be doing the job if you decide to go-ahead.

Questions To Ask

Make sure any proposal you receive has a detailed performance projection that shows the predicted output from the solar panels across a whole year.

Ask about the brand and manufacturer of the panels and inverter in the proposal and do some research on the internet.

Also research the installer and see what history and reviews they have online.

Ask about warranties and performance guarantees.

And remember, your warranty is only as good as the installer and supplier.

Will the supplier or installer still be around in 10 years to honour your warranty claim?

Go Local

You will usually be better off using a local installer who has an established business based on providing good service to clients in your local area.

There are plenty of fly-by-night cowboys who buzz in and sell and install a bunch of cheap systems (cheap components, not necessarily at a cheap price) and then disappear back to the mainland leaving you holding the bag if something goes wrong.

A local installer will be around for you to talk to you if problems arise.

If problems arise, would you rather deal with a local established business, or a mainland or overseas call centre?

A local installer can make a complete assessment of your particular circumstances and recommend a solar system that suits your individual needs, not the one-size-fits-all solution of a commission salesperson.

By going local you will get a better deal and avoid the shonky operators who are only out to make a fast buck.

For a free, on-site assessment and no-obligation proposal, on a custom designed solar panel system, by a Clean Energy Council accredited installer ...

Phone Mance Electrical on [6331 4711](tel:63314711)

Email admin@manceelectrical.com.au

Visit our website at www.manceelectrical.com.au

