Repowering Our Homes: Energy Bill Savings Plan

POLICY OVERVIEW

Every Australian should be able to live in a home that is safe and affordable to heat, cool and cook in, whether they rent, own their home, or live in a house, unit or an apartment.

Right now, too many Australians are doing it tough, with higher household energy bills driven by the profiteering of big, private energy companies and the whims of market forces.

More than 3 million Australian homes have already taken back control of their energy bills using rooftop solar and many more are cutting their bills by switching to energy-efficient, electric appliances and batteries to power their heating, cooling, cooking and transport.

But many more people, especially those on lower incomes, are missing out on this opportunity to cut their bills.

It's time to empower every Australian to cut their energy bills by harnessing the power of Australia's abundant sun, right in their own homes.

We need urgent investment from the Federal Government to:

- ☑ Lower energy bills for everyone. For good.
- ☑ Enable more prioritised support for those doing it tough, like low-income homes, private renters, tenants in public and social housing, as well as First Nations, multicultural, and regional and remote communities.
- ☑ Build healthier, safer homes that are easier to heat and cool, with better indoor air quality.
- ☑ Create new high-quality, safe jobs and secure careers in household energy.
- ☑ Reduce climate and air pollution.

Our plan to cut energy bills for good:

1 Cut power bills now

With an **urgent $5bn investment to deliver immediate subsidies and finance to reduce or eliminate the upfront cost of home energy upgrades,** and rooftop solar and batteries for millions of Australian households hit hardest by the cost of living crisis.

2 Invest in an all-electric & efficent future

With a **minimum of $50bn over 10 years to repower Australian homes and communities** with rooftop solar, batteries, electric appliances and thermal improvements to help cut energy bills and reduce climate pollution for everyone.

3 Share the benefits fairly

With **targeted support and investment that prioritise those who are struggling the most** with high electricity bills, such as low-income homes, renters and communities experiencing disadvantage, coupled with strong protections like minimum rental standards and industry labour standards for workers.

To combat the skyrocketing cost of living, bring down energy bills and cut climate pollution, we need a **$50+ billion investment over the next decade** to

Repower Australian Homes

1. Cut power bills now	2. Invest in an efficient, all-electric future
$5bn of immediate investment in FY24/25 to increase access to solar, batteries, electric appliances, and thermal improvements.	**Planning, policy and investment over the next decade to support households and communities with the shift.**

• **Funding** to accelerate home energy upgrades for 1.2 million low-income homes to access thermal efficiency and electrification retrofits by 2030/31, including:
  ◦ Fully fund all social housing, prioritising First Nations housing.
  ◦ Fund a series of programs for low-income owner occupiers and private rentals.
• **Expand and improve finance delivery**, including low-interest loans to help an additional 1 million middle-income households to electrify.
• **Targeted incentives and subsidies** via new and existing government programs, including First Nations community power, and electric vehicle charging in lower socioeconomic regions, apartments and workplaces.
• **Funding to strengthen federal agency capabilities** to coordinate investment, policy, standards and regulations, provide oversight functions for delivery partners, and enable education and communication, as well as coordination across states.
	• **Tailored package of funding and finance mechanisms, prioritising those who are struggling the most, may include:**
	  ◦ **Expansion of upfront subsidies and incentives** through new and existing government programs.
	  ◦ **Inflation-indexed loans** repaid on the sale of property.
	  ◦ **Rates based finance** via local government.
	  ◦ Fully funded upgrades of **public and First Nations-controlled housing.**
	  ◦ Grant funding supplemented with low-cost finance to **community housing providers**.
	  ◦ **Substantial subsidies** for low-income owner occupiers, and zero-interest loans, where appropriate.
	• **Electrify community infrastructure and transit** (e.g. schools, early learning, hospitals, public transport etc).
	• **Connected, place-based, community engagement and information services** (e.g. expanding the Mobile Community Energy Hub in Western Sydney and Local Energy Hubs for regions).

3. Share the benefits fairly

Policy, investment and regulation to enable the shift and make sure no one is left worse off

The above must be tied to conditionalities and enablers to support:

- Mandatory minimum **energy standards for rentals**, coupled with renter protections.
- Mandatory **disclosure of energy performance**.
- Mandated minimum **energy performance standards for appliances**.
- **Fair labour standards that guarantee well-paid, safe and secure careers, with best practice training**.
- **National accreditation framework** for residential electrification upgrades, including a licensing and training program to ensure safe, high quality installations.
- Greater investment in **skills development, education and training** to expand and diversify the electrification workforce.
- **Energy market reforms** to ensure the benefits of repowering homes flow to consumers and help government investment in homes go faster and further.

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Australians can upgrade their homes with solar, electric appliances, batteries and thermal improvements to slash cost-of-living expenses, cut climate pollution, and improve housing and health outcomes. The basic economics already stack up. But without significant further policies, it won't happen fast enough, and it will leave too many homes behind. Fortunately the solutions to bring everyone along are broadly agreed across multiple sectors.

Dwelling Type^	Potential Interventions
Owner-occupiers and landlords (70% of Australians who own ~92% of dwellings)	Expand and improve finance delivery (e.g. the Household Energy Upgrades Fund) to offer stronger incentives and implementation support to mitigate upfront costs, for example: • Expanding subsidies and incentives through new and existing government programs (e.g. the Solar Victoria program or government-backed addition of batteries to the Small-scale Renewable Energy Scheme). • Inflation-indexed loans repaid on sale (e.g. Electrify Everything Loans Scheme). • An Environmental Upgrade Finance (EUF) program offering long-term, low-cost finance on home energy upgrades repaid through council rates.
Low-income owner-occupiers (~6%)	Substantial subsidies, supplemented with zero-interest loans, where appropriate. These can be delivered via new and existing programs, with multiple delivery partners, for example: • State Government (e.g. ACT Home Energy Support Program). • Local Government (e.g. Environmental Upgrade Finance).
Private renters (30%)	Conditional incentives and finance options mentioned above, in combination with: • Mandatory energy performance standards for rentals, coupled with renter protections. • Mandated minimum energy performance standards for appliances (already planned in Vic and ACT). • Tax reform to incentivise repair and replacement of major appliances to be energy efficient and electric.
Social housing (public and community housing) (~4%)	• Fully funded thermal efficiency, electrification and solar upgrades to all public housing by 2031. • Establish a grant scheme (funding 90% or more if required) supplemented by low-cost finance to community housing providers to fund home energy upgrades.
First nations housing (<1%)	Fully funded upgrades to align dwellings to minimum standards, and development of community solar infrastructure, including phasing out diesel and reforms to network connection rules to provide First Nations communities with the right to develop and generate their own electricity.
Strata households (29%)	Mandated retrofit quotes, targeted retrofit subsidies and further work to identify tailored support needs.
New builds (200,000+ per year)	Ensure the next update to new build standards (ideally 2025) aims to achieve zero carbon homes, with best practice thermal efficiency, all-electric (including EV charging support), and powered by renewables.

^Note that given overlaps in the above categories, the percentages do not add up to 100. The table presents a range of potential implementation solutions, with no "one size fits all" approach. The most suitable and impactful solution will differ for different households, depending on their circumstances, household income, where they live, and property condition. Further work may be required to identify the best solutions for other housing types including strata, defence housing and rural properties on single wire earth return systems (SWER).

Key Enabling Package

Federal Government Agency

Responsible for coordinating investment, policy, standards and regulations, providing oversight functions for delivery partners, and enabling education and communication, as well as coordination across departments and states, with funding contributed from state governments to be determined.

DELIVERY PARTNERS

State governments & agencies	Community-led programs	Private providers	Local government
e.g. Solar Victoria	e.g. Voices For Power	e.g. Brighte	e.g. Eastern Alliance for Greenhouse Action

WORKFORCE & INDUSTRY SUPPORT PACKAGE

Training & apprenticeships	Local procurement & incentives	Accreditation & licensing	Labour protections & standards
• Fund TAFE and industry-registered training to address labour shortfalls • Expand and diversify apprenticeship training • Post-trade upskilling	• Support for suppliers building workforce capacity and diversity • Domestically manufactured solar panels, batteries, and electric appliances	• National accreditation and licensing framework for residential electrification upgrades to ensure safe, high quality installations	• Minimum apprenticeship and training ratios • Industry labour standards • Access to portable entitlements

What could more household renewable energy deliver?

$1,390
in annual bill savings after installing rooftop solar [1]

45.8GW
of new energy capacity[2]

18,000
new jobs[3]

40Mt
of climate pollution avoided[4]

1. Solar Citizens & Australian PV Institute (2024), 'Rooftop solar potential of Australian housing stock'
2. Solar Citizens & Australian PV Institute (2024), 'Rooftop solar potential of Australian housing stock'
3. Clean Energy Council (2024) 'Powering homes, empowering people: A national Consumer Energy Resources roadmap'
4. Rewiring Australia (2024) based on analysis of Solar Citizens / APVI (2024) and DCCEEW National Greenhouse Accounts Factors (2023)