

# Hot water shouldn't cost the Earth.

## Water Heating - Frequently Asked Questions

### Why is the South Australian Government targeting water heaters?

The South Australian Government has introduced standards to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions and water use associated with water heaters. Household water heating is typically the largest use of energy in a home and a significant source of greenhouse gas emissions. Improving the water efficiency of showers provides both energy and water savings.

### What are the standards all about?

From 1 July 2008, plumbers need to ensure the domestic water heaters they install meet greenhouse gas and flow rate standards. In most cases, especially from July 2009, low greenhouse emission water heaters such as high efficiency gas, solar and electric heat pump units will need to be installed. The standards will, however, allow conventional electric or low-efficiency gas units to be installed in some homes. Operating water heaters do not have to be replaced until they reach the end of their working life. Shower outlets connected to installed water heaters need to have a flow rate of 9 litres per minute or less.

### Are electric water heaters banned?

No. Some homes will be able to continue to install conventional electric water heaters. For those homes where this will not be allowed, electric heat pumps or electric boosted solar water heaters can be used. Solar and electric heat pump water heaters may use an electric element as a backup for when there is insufficient renewable energy available.

### Where can a conventional electric water heater be installed?

Conventional electric water heaters can be installed to serve an apartment in a multi-storey building, an established house in Remote South Australia or as a like for like replacement in Regional South Australia.

For houses in Metropolitan / near Adelaide areas, like for like replacements of internal electric units, such as electric gravity fed water heaters, are permitted. For electric water heaters located outside (or in a shed or garage), a like for like replacement is permitted, so long as the water heater being replaced is within three metres to windows or doors of a neighbours house (not a shed or garage).

Some other conventional electric replacements are permitted. For more information, see <http://www.dtei.sa.gov.au/energy/waterheaters/>.

### What is an electric heat pump water heater?

An electric heat pump water heater works in a similar way to a reverse cycle air conditioner to extract energy from the air to heat water. By doing this, it uses much less energy than a conventional electric water heater. Electric heat pumps, like solar water heaters, attract a range of government rebates and incentives.

### Can I still use an off-peak tariff (formerly J tariff) under the new standards?

Yes. Conventional electric, solar and electric heat pump water heaters may be run on the off-peak tariff, provided they meet the requirements for off-peak connection.

### What if the water heater fails under warranty?

A like for like replacement is permitted if a water heater is replaced under warranty.

### Do water efficient showerheads work with all types of water heaters?

When you arrange for a plumber to install a water heater, you should ensure that you select a water heater that is compatible with a water efficient shower head, unless you are installing a gravity fed system. Most newer continuous flow water heaters are compatible with water efficient showerheads. Check with the manufacturer.

### **Do I have to connect to gas?**

No, you are not required to connect mains gas as a result of the standards. There are electrically-powered options that meet the standards, such as electric-boosted solar and electric heat pump water heaters.

### **How can I compare the efficiency of different types of water heaters?**

Natural gas and LPG water heaters have an energy rating from 1 to 6 stars, which is shown on the product and available at [http://www.aga.asn.au/product\\_directory](http://www.aga.asn.au/product_directory).

For solar and electric heat pump water heaters, the number of Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs) the system is eligible for is used as a measure of the water heater's efficiency. The number of RECs for individual models can be found at <http://www.orer.gov.au/swh/register.html>.

### **Are storage gas water heaters banned?**

No. If the system achieves the necessary star rating, it does not matter whether it is storage or continuous flow.

### **How do the standards apply to hostels, retirement villages, nursing homes, etc.?**

Self-contained dwellings in a retirement village, whether attached, semi-detached or detached (but not one dwelling on top of another), and small hostels of under 300m<sup>2</sup> in which no more than 12 people live, are treated the same as a house for the purpose of these standards. Buildings where one dwelling is on top of another are treated as apartments.

Buildings with common areas, such as larger hostels and nursing homes, are outside the scope of the standards.

Note that one property or facility may include a mixture of the above types of buildings. In such situations, each water heater installation needs to be considered separately.

### **What support is available to assist home owners?**

Those who choose a solar or electric heat pump water heater may be eligible for financial support:

- *Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs)*, can be sold or traded to help reduce the cost of a solar or heat pump water heater. Total RECs can be worth anywhere on average from \$1,000 to \$1,400 depending on the system.  
Phone: (02) 6159 7780  
Website: <http://www.orer.gov.au>
  
- *The Federal Government's Energy Efficiency Homes Package* rebate of \$1,600 is available to eligible homeowners or tenants replacing a conventional electric water heater with a solar or heat pump system with at least 20 Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs). This rebate is not available to those already applying for the Federal Government's \$1,600 home insulation rebate.  
Phone: 1800 808 571  
Website: <http://www.environment.gov.au/solarhotwater>
  
- *The State Government's Solar Hot Water Rebate* of \$500 is available to eligible homeowners who hold either a Centrelink Healthcare Card, a Centrelink Pensioner Concession Card, or Department of Veteran Affairs Card, who are having a heat pump or solar water heater installed.  
Phone: (08) 8204 1888  
Phone (country callers only): 1800 671 907  
Website: <http://www.dtei.sa.gov.au/energy>

In addition, SA Water provides a rebate for water efficient shower heads.

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For more information visit  
<http://www.dtei.sa.gov.au/energy/waterheaters/>.



**Government of South Australia**  
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Energy and Infrastructure