



How to Get Solar on Your School (NSW)

Solar my School (SmS)

Solar my School is an initiative helping schools reduce energy bills, educate students and shrink schools' carbon footprint with solar power.

The program was jointly founded and run by Randwick, Waverley and Woollahra Councils. It is offered to Councils around Australia under licence.

Solar my School provides independent support and guidance to primary and secondary schools looking to power their buildings with renewable energy.

Who is eligible:

SmS's Council teams currently work in selected areas of Greater Sydney and New South Wales.

Getting Solar with Public Schools

- Engage with your local Council and find out if they are a part of the SmS program and if they will pay your school's fee to participate. Some Councils may pay the whole fee, others may offer a subsidy and some may not have a budget to support the school. It's always worth asking!
- Your school can use SmS regardless if the local Council cannot sign up to the program. Schools can contract and pay the SmS fee themselves if their local Council will not.
- Once you have engaged with SmS you should be contacted by them to arrange a free-to-you solar feasibility report.
- Within the report you will receive a couple options for your school and need to decide which system size would work best.

- Once you decide on the system size you want, you need to look at the funding side of things. Currently the DoE will pay for 50% of the solar for you. The rest of the funding is for the school to come up with. The funds need to be in place prior to contacting the DoE to manage the tender and installation (SmS can help liaise with the DoE).
- Contact SmS to learn about various grants you could apply for and contact your P&C to see if they could help you with the fundraising options.
- Once you have secured the remaining 50% of funding SmS will help you apply for the internal funding and work with the DoE to tender and install the solar system. For public schools you do not have an option of selecting your own providers.
- Once the installation is complete SmS will help organise celebration and educational opportunities for students and help with community communications.

Getting Solar for Public Schools without SmS

- It's worth knowing that currently the DoE will pay 50% for a solar installation regardless if you go through SmS or not. It's just a lot more work for whomever is organising it.
- A solar feasibility report needs to be organised for the school. You will need to contact the DoE for options.
- Figure out which system you want and how you plan to finance the installation.
- Once you have your portion of the funding, contact the DoE to apply for the internal funding and to go through the tender and installation process.
- Last, a post installation inspection report should be completed.



Getting Solar via SmS for Independent Schools

- Engage with your local Council and find out if they are a part of the SmS program and if they will pay your school's fee to participate. Some Councils may pay the whole fee, others may offer a subsidy and some may not allow it for Independent schools. It's always worth asking!
- SmS will arrange a free-to-you solar feasibility report.
- Once you decide on the system size you want SmS can help advise on different finance options or grant opportunities, and help apply for them.
- Once the school has the funds SmS will help tender with contractual documentation to seek quotes.
- SmS will help with independent evaluation to choose a quality supplier and system.
- Support in seeking planning approvals where required.
- Arrange for a post installation inspection report and ensure a quality system has been installed.
- Once the installation is complete SmS will help organise celebration and educational opportunities for students and help with community communications.

Getting Solar for Independent Schools without SmS

- Find a dedicated person at the school to manage the solar project.
- You will first need to arrange a solar feasibility report which should provide you with a couple options.
- You will then need to finance the project. Fundraising within your school community and grants are some options if your school doesn't have the funding available.
- Once the funding is in place you will need to start the tender process, seek quotes and contractual documentation.
- You may need to seek planning approvals.
- Organise the installation.
- Arrange for a post installation inspection report to ensure a quality system has been installed.

Getting Solar via SmS for Catholic Schools

- Engage with your local Council and find out if they are a part of the SmS program and if they will pay your school's fee to participate.

- Contact the sustainability lead or procurement manager at your Diocese for Catholic Schools and ask them if they offer support to schools to go solar powered. They may even be doing a systematic rollout of solar in your area.
- Let them know you have been in touch with Council and/or a SmS representative and explain the type of support they can offer through the SmS program e.g. get a feasibility report written. Perhaps they will pay your school's fee to participate, or offer financial assistance towards a system.

Getting Solar for Catholic Schools without SmS

- Contact the sustainability lead or procurement manager at your Diocese for Catholic Schools and ask them if they are offering support for schools to go solar powered. Ask if they are doing a systematic rollout of solar in your area.
- If they are, you should explain your school is interested and seek permission to get solar on the school. Find out what sort of financial assistance will be provided and what options for reports and installation Catholic Schools are using.
- A solar feasibility report needs to be organised for the school, funding, tender and installation in this order. Last, a post installation report should be completed.

Grants available to help fund solar for schools

[NSSP Australia Grant](#)

[NSW Community Building Partnerships Grant](#)

[Local Schools Community Fund](#)

Fundraising options

- Write to your local community businesses or RSL to see if they would want to support your school on their solar journey.
- Organise a community event (movie screening, bake sale, fun run).
- Set-up a Go Fund Me page for the school's P&C which could be circulated around the local community.
- Organise a pre-loved book, toys or clothing fairs.

If you have read through this and have any other questions, please don't hesitate to reach out at schools@zerosydneynorth.org. We've put solar on schools in the past and know the ins and outs. With all things in this quickly advancing sector, rules/fees/guidelines often change quicker than I can write. The purpose of this guide serves only as an outline of how best to streamline the process and to offer guidance on how we've done it in the past.