

South Australia's Home Battery Scheme

Batteries for residences in an embedded network

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If you live in a residence that is part of an embedded network, you may be considering how a battery could help reduce your energy costs, and how you can access a subsidy for the cost of the battery under the Home Battery Scheme.

How do you know if you are living in an embedded network? An embedded network is a privately owned and managed electricity network that often supplies all residences in a specific area or building. Embedded networks generally buy or generate electricity in bulk and then sell it to customers inside their network. If your residence is within an embedded network, you and all others around you may have to buy your electricity from the same provider.

With the right guidance and expert advice, a battery can help reduce your reliance on electricity from the grid, help you maximise the benefits of solar panels on your roof, and power all or at least some parts of your residence during an outage. With subsidies and low interest loans available to help pay for the battery through South Australia's Home Battery Scheme, you could find that a home battery is well within reach.

But like many things, a battery might be right for some people and not for others. So just like any significant purchase, it's important to do your research before you commit.

WHAT TO KNOW

The following checklist has been designed to step you through some of the items to think about, and where to go for help in answering them. By working through this checklist, you'll be more informed about your choice and be ready to speak in more detail with your Embedded Network Operator and a Home Battery Scheme Qualified System Provider.

We also recommend you read the information available at the Clean Energy Council's "Buying Battery Storage" webpage at cleanenergycouncil.org.au/consumers/buying-battery-storage.

Think about the future, even if you are only getting solar right now.

If you are only looking at solar right now but are interested in how it could work with a battery in the future, discuss this with your System Provider and Embedded Network Operator, and still consider the rest of this checklist. The way your solar is sized, designed, and installed, or even your decision about getting solar or which company to choose, could be influenced by your future plans for a battery. You'll also be better informed about how your solar will or won't support a battery later on.

A **Qualified System Provider** should ask you some questions about what you are looking to achieve with solar, your plans for a battery later on, and how certain those plans are or are not. Based on your answers they should be able to tell you how they have designed and would install your solar to accommodate a battery, or what changes you would need to consider in the future to help a battery be installed to further reduce your electricity bills. Your **Embedded Network Operator** will also be important to speak to early, as they will be able to advise you on the rules and regulations for installing solar and a battery in their embedded network.

Check you will have enough solar generation to feed a battery.

A battery stores excess generation from your solar panels ready for use at other times – such as during cloudy periods or when the sun goes down. If you don't have much or any excess generation from your solar, you may find that a battery can't do much for your energy costs.

A **Qualified System Provider** should ask you some questions about your available roof space for solar panels, and analyse at least a few electricity bills and tell you if you'll have enough excess solar generation to feed a battery.

Understand how your Embedded Network Operator might change your tariffs.

Installing a battery might result in your electricity retailer changing the prices you pay for electricity (otherwise known as your 'electricity tariff'). Before you have a battery installed, it's important to understand how your tariff might change, and if that change will affect the financial benefit the battery can provide.

Your **Embedded Network Operator** should be contacted before you sign a contract for a battery to check what new tariff might be applied, and a **Qualified System Provider** should indicate how the new tariff might impact the benefits expected from your battery. Your electricity retailer should also be contacted after the battery has been installed to confirm that the agreed tariff has been applied.

Understand the process and costs for network approval.

For most homes, part of the process to have a battery installed includes receiving approval from SA Power Networks (SAPN) for the battery to be connected to the grid. However for homes in an embedded network, you may also need to receive approval for the battery from your Embedded Network Operator. Receiving these approvals ensures that your battery can be safely connected to embedded network infrastructure, does not impact on any existing agreements the Embedded Network Operator has with SAPN, and is connected in line with relevant Standards and Acts.

Talk to your **Embedded Network Operator** first to check if you need their approval for your system, and if you will need their assistance to also seek approval from SAPN. Their assistance might be required if you do not have a National Meter Identifier (NMI) for your residence. Following this discussion, speak to a **Qualified System Provider** about the information you have received and ask them to work with the Embedded Network Operator and SAPN to confirm the process and any costs which might be involved in getting approval to connect to the network.

Understand what other approvals you might need.

Depending on your circumstances, you may also need approval from your strata or village manager (or other similar body) to install solar or a battery. Your **Embedded Network Operator** should be able to advise you of these additional approvals and who to contact about them. If you have a **Strata or Village Manager**, you could also speak with them.

Ask what the battery will be able to power during an outage.

If a goal is to have a battery that can provide power to your home during an outage, it will be important to understand how your battery will do this, what it will be able to power, and if there are any additional costs for the feature.

A **Qualified System Provider** should talk you through what the battery brand/s you are considering can and cannot do during an outage, and what extra costs might be involved. In many cases you should expect that a battery might be able to power things like lights and powerpoints during an outage, but will be unlikely to power your whole home or help with items like air-conditioning.

Consider where a battery can be safely installed.

Safety is an important consideration when looking at where a battery can be installed at your home. Your installer will need to consider things like ventilation, weather, fireproofing, proximity to heat or ignition sources, potential for impact from other items, and manufacturer's guidelines when determining where your battery can be safely installed.

A **Qualified System Provider** or the **battery manufacturer** will be able to guide you on the things to consider for a safe installation location. As a guide, you should expect that the battery will have to be installed outside or in a garage or under a carport. If it is installed outside, you may also need to consider additional weatherproofing or how you can take advantage of existing shading and structures. Installations in a garage or under a carport could also require extra safety measures (like bollards) to reduce the chance of impact.

WHAT TO DO NEXT

As this fact sheet shows, there are many things to consider when it comes to batteries for residences in an embedded network. But with the right information and knowing your options, it could be an investment that lowers your electricity costs, reduces your reliance on the grid, makes the most of your own solar energy, and provides you with power during an outage.

When you are ready to learn more and get started on a battery, these next steps will help you on your path:

- **Visit the Home Battery Scheme website** at homebatteryscheme.sa.gov.au to learn more about the Scheme, answers to frequently asked questions, and links to Qualified System Providers. You can also call the Home Battery Scheme enquiries line on 8463 3555.
- **Speak to your Embedded Network Operator** about the process to obtain approval for the installation of a solar and battery system.
- **Speak to your Strata / Building / Village Manager** to obtain approval for the solar and battery system to be installed (if required).
- **Speak to a range of Qualified System Providers** about your options, what you want to achieve, and how they can guide you along the best path for you. As with any significant purchase, we recommend talking to more than one System Provider and obtaining multiple quotes.
- **Make an informed decision** that is best suited to the needs of your strata.

South Australia's Home Battery Scheme.

**Affordable, reliable
power is here.**



For more information, visit homebatteryscheme.sa.gov.au
or call the Home Battery Scheme enquires line on **8463 3555**.

