

The solar panel validation initiative

Information for retailers

The Clean Energy Regulator (the agency) administers the Renewable Energy Target which includes the Small-scale Renewable Energy Scheme (SRES). The SRES creates a financial incentive for individuals and small businesses to install eligible small-scale renewable systems, including solar systems.

The agency has partnered with the Australian solar industry and peak bodies to establish the Solar Panel Validation (SPV) Initiative. SPV provides a way to check and confirm that panels are approved by the Clean Energy Council, eligible for the Small-scale renewable Energy Scheme (SRES) incentive, meet Australian standards and are genuine brand panels (and therefore covered by warranty).

SPV is a proactive step in addressing the use of unapproved (sub-standard and counterfeit) solar panels in the Australian market, which damage consumer confidence in rooftop solar and take sales from legitimate businesses.

How it works

SPV is made up of two parts — an app for installers to use on a mobile device and a database of information for solar panels. The database includes solar panel serial numbers provided directly from manufacturers or their Australian authorised representatives.

The initiative is a partnership, with every member playing an important role:

- > **Industry** representatives have invested their own funds to build apps that collect serial number information. The apps synchronise with a verification database to verify solar panel serial numbers.
- > Participating **manufacturers** or their Australian authorised representative provide timely and accurate data about their solar panels, including serial numbers, to a validation database.
- > **Installers** use apps to scan solar panel serial numbers, which are then checked against a database to ensure they are verified.
- > **The agency** has invested in its systems to accept signed data packages from apps during the application process to streamline the creation of small-scale technology certificates (STCs).
- > Registered **agents** use signed data packages generated from apps to create STCs for validated panels.

SPV offers a number of benefits to consumers, industry and government:

- > consumers know they are getting genuine products and can receive evidence their installed solar panels, that have been verified via SPV, meet Australian standards and come with a warranty
- > installers using an app will receive confirmation they are installing the right panels within seconds
- > retailers have confidence in the products they purchase and sell
- > manufacturers or their Australian authorised representative can protect their brand reputation, better understand where their panels are located and gain efficiencies in managing warranty information and product recalls, and
- > it helps to protect Commonwealth entitlements, lowers the risk of fraud and streamlines data collection for industry.

Why participate?

Participating in SPV will minimise your risk of selling, buying and installing unapproved solar panels and help protect you from financial penalty and reputational damage.

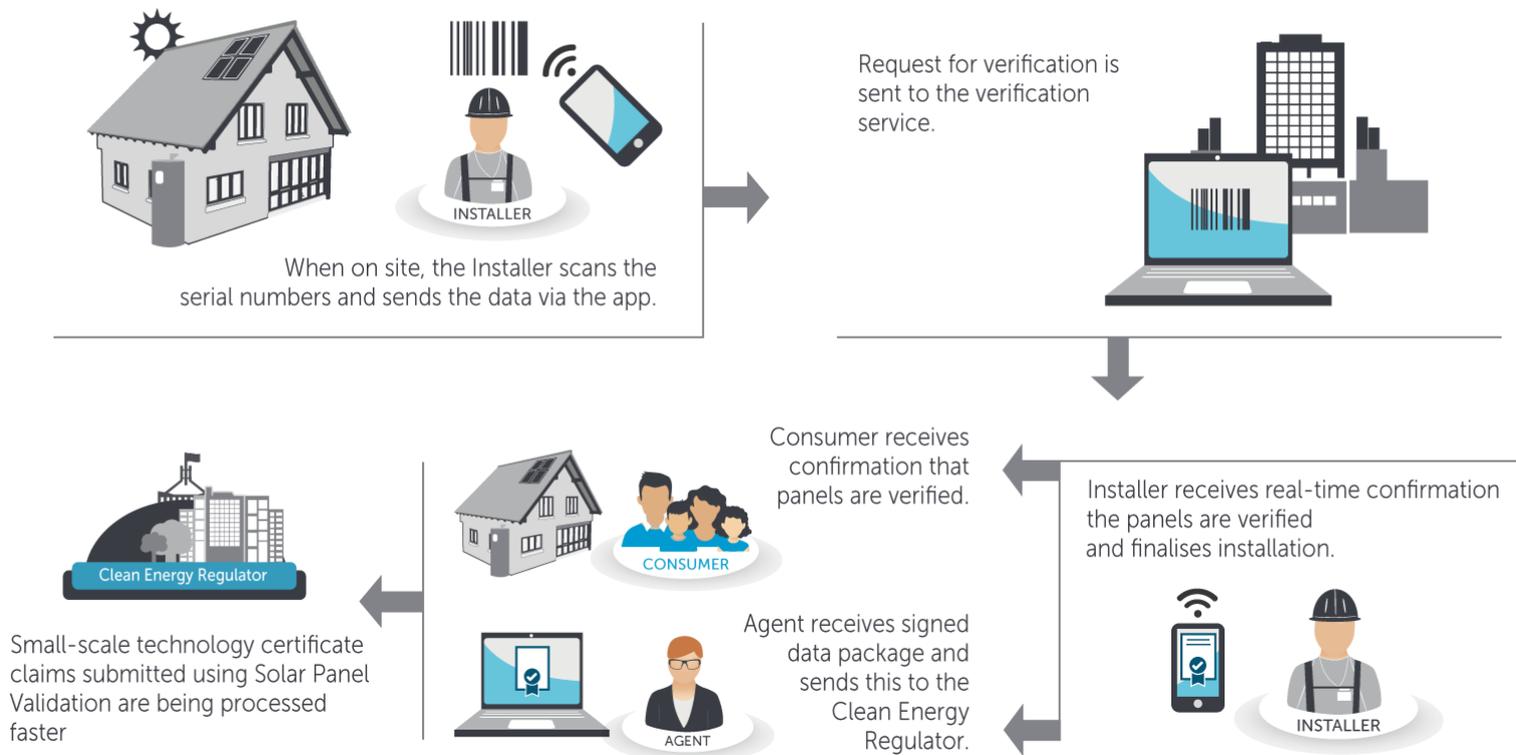
Importantly, your participation in SPV can be marketed as a point of difference to consumers, giving you a competitive advantage and a positive reputation within the solar industry.

Solar businesses submitting applications to create STCs with SPV verified solar panels can expect much faster processing times than panels that are not verified (subject to meeting all SRES requirements). The agency may request that STC applications include evidence of serial number verification. SPV is the easiest way to do this.

Non-compliant practices will be easier to identify and shut down as uptake of SPV increases.

The agency takes compliance seriously. Where we detect the use of unapproved panels under the SRES we will apply a broad range of compliance and enforcement options, including suspension of registration and REC Registry accounts, enforceable undertakings and criminal or civil proceedings.

SOLAR PANEL VALIDATION - HOW IT WORKS



How to participate

Ask or ensure the installers you work with use SPV to verify the solar panels you sell or seek to create STCs for. The signed data packages, generated by installers using apps, are used by agents in their STC applications.

To use an app, contact each app provider to determine the app that is right for your installers, or bring your own app to SPV by contacting the agency.

Contact details for all current app providers may be found on our website along with a list of all current participating solar panel brands.

Each app provider will have slightly different approaches. Talk to each app provider to determine:

- > what (if any) costs are associated with using the app, and
- > the nature of the agreement that you will have with the app provider.

What can I do to increase uptake?

Encourage your industry colleagues to join other leading solar businesses using SPV to:

- > benefit from significant savings, reduced effort and streamlined processes from the automation that SPV provides
- > make it easy for your business to check solar panel authenticity where it is difficult to do so, and
- > protect the integrity of your solar industry.

More information

For more information about SPV, visit www.cleanenergyregulator.gov.au or contact us at enquiries@cleanenergyregulator.gov.au or 1300 553 542.