

Going Green with your investment property

by Julie Rayner

With Climate Change dominating the news, who will be the next target of the 'Big Green Up'? I was giving this some thought recently and it occurred to me (looking at it from a tenants perspective) that because you are a tenant, you would always be stuck with paying top \$ for hot water and electricity. It isn't common practice for owners to retro-fit, ('if it ain't broke - don't fix it') and in most cases this would be true. However, at this point in time the Government at both a State and Federal level, are offering rebates and incentives to make the change to greener technology.



The Federal Government has [REBS - Solar Hot Water Incentive](#). The incentive is in the form of STC's (Small-scale Technology Certificates). These are certificates assigned to each approved solar hot water system or heat pump listed on the Register (you can check the Register [here](#)).

When you purchase a new system, the retailer will advise the number of certificates assigned to the system and the current value of the certificates (generally valued between \$15 - \$40). The incentive is usually given in the form of a discount off the invoice price of the unit and installation. To be eligible you must replace an existing electric hot water system with a new solar system or heat pump in the principal place of residence (which includes rental properties).

Similar conditions apply with the [Qld Government Solar Hot Water Rebate](#). In this case the rebate is \$600 or \$1000 for pensioners and low-income earners. The same theories apply to solar panels. Both [Federal](#) and [State](#) Government incentives are available now.

You're wondering "Why should I spend money on the property now when it really is of no benefit to me directly?" The answer is in two parts:

Part 1. Because the Government is offering rebates and incentives now. All of these schemes have a finite lifespan. When the funding is expended, that's the end of it. Many have missed out on rebates and incentives in the past by leaving it too late in the day to lodge their application.

Part 2. ***'From 1 January 2010, existing houses and townhouses (class 1 buildings) located in a reticulated natural gas area must install a greenhouse-efficient hot water system (gas, solar or heat pump) when the existing electric system needs replacing. Homeowners do not need to replace existing hot water systems that are in good working order'***. - excerpt from the Qld Government Building Code and Qld Plumbing and Wastewater Code. Governments are trying to phase out all electric hot water systems. I feel that legislation will continue to emerge encompassing wider parameters for retro or replacement fitting. The investment sector is the next most logical group to legislate. It is my opinion that, considering the rebates and incentives currently available, there is an advantage in upgrading your systems now rather than waiting for any new legislation to push you toward it. There is no better time to minimise your outlay and any expenditure is of course, tax deductible.