



**Australian Government**

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**Department of the Environment,  
Water, Heritage and the Arts**

***Solar Hot Water Rebate Program***

**Applicant Information Booklet**

The Australian Government is helping Australian households install climate friendly hot water technologies.

Rebates of \$1000 are available in eligible circumstances to install solar and heat pump hot water systems that replace electric hot water systems in existing privately owned homes.

Installing a climate friendly hot water system can save a family \$300–\$700 off an electricity bill each year.

The rebate is offered for systems installed on, or after 18 July 2007 until 31 March 2012, subject to the availability of funds.

Rebates are conditional on meeting all aspects outlined in the guidelines for the Solar Hot Water Rebate Program.

The Australian Government reserves the right to change the rebate amount or any other aspect of the rebate guidelines.

The \$1000 rebate is in addition to Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs) which are assigned to most solar hot water systems sold in Australia. Most systems create 20 RECs or more. These certificates have a value and are tradable. Commonly, the RECs provide a discount of over \$800 on the up front cost of the average solar hot water system.

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# Part 1: Solar Hot Water Rebate Overview

## Why is the Australian Government giving a rebate?

The Australian Government is investing \$252 million over five years in a Solar Hot Water Rebate Program to help cut household carbon emissions for the benefit of the environment. Water heating is the largest single source of greenhouse gas emissions from the average Australian home, accounting for around 28 per cent of home energy use (excluding the family car). The Australian Government introduced the Solar Hot Water Rebate Program as an incentive for those households with the worst polluting hot water systems to replace them with a climate friendly hot water system. This rebate is specifically targeted at the removal of existing electric storage hot water systems.

The rebate is in addition to Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs) which are an incentive provided by the Australian Government to encourage all households to be climate friendly by installing a solar or heat pump hot water system. A number of RECs, generally 20 or more, are assigned to most solar hot water systems sold in Australia. These certificates are tradable and commonly provide a discount of over \$800 on the up-front cost of the average solar hot water system.

## What do you need to do?

1. Read the program guidelines in this information booklet and carefully assess your eligibility for the rebate.
2. Purchase and install an eligible climate friendly hot water system (solar hot water or heat pump) that replaces an existing electric hot water storage system.
3. Complete an application form. You will be filling out most areas of the form and on the day of installation, your installer must complete Sections 3 and 4 of the application form.
4. Submit the completed application form by post including:
  - attaching a copy of the receipt for the purchase of the new system;
  - getting the form countersigned by the installer;
  - nominating a bsb number and bank account number for the electronic payment of the rebate.

**Incomplete application forms will be returned to the applicant without processing.** The application form must be submitted within six months of the installation of the new system.

## What are Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs)?

Under the Mandatory Renewable Energy Target (MRET), – a scheme set up under Commonwealth law to promote the development of renewable energy – installation of solar and heat pump hot water heaters may be eligible to create Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs). While households can create and trade these certificates on their own, Registered Agents may create and trade RECs on behalf of households. Registered Agents will generally pay the household for the right to create RECs, meaning the cost of the hot water system to the household is reduced. This will provide additional cost reductions to eligible hot water systems.

To be eligible for the Solar Hot Water Rebate, a hot water system must be eligible for at least 20 RECs at the time of purchase at the installation address. A list of eligible systems is available in the Register of Solar Water Heaters on the Office of the Renewable Energy Regulator website [www.orer.gov.au/swh/register.html](http://www.orer.gov.au/swh/register.html).

Hot water system retailers can also advise you on the number of RECs assigned to a system.

More information about RECs is available on the Office of the Renewable Energy website:

- Renewable Energy Certificates - [www.orer.gov.au/recs](http://www.orer.gov.au/recs)
- Solar Hot Water Heaters - [www.orer.gov.au/swh](http://www.orer.gov.au/swh)

## Part 2: Solar Hot Water Rebate Program Guidelines

The Australian Government provides a rebate of \$1000 to eligible applicants who have installed an eligible solar or heat pump hot water system that replaced an electric storage hot water system at an existing privately owned home.

The rebate is offered from 18 July 2007 until 31 March 2012, subject to the availability of funds. No applications will be accepted after 31 March 2012.

The Australian Government reserves the right to change the rebate amount or any other aspect of the Guidelines.

### Eligibility requirements

The information contained in the Solar Hot Water Rebate Program Guidelines (on pages 4 - 6 of this booklet) in its entirety form the eligibility criteria for the program. In order to qualify for a rebate, applicants must fully comply with all the eligibility requirements in these Guidelines.

**Final decisions regarding rebate eligibility will be made by the Australian Government.**

#### Applicant Requirements

To be eligible to obtain a rebate:

- the applicant must be an individual aged 18 years or over; and
- the applicant must submit an application, attaching a copy of proof of system purchase, within six months (184 days) of system installation; and
- the applicant must be the owner or tenant of the dwelling where the system was installed at the time the system was installed (Please note: a tenant should not install a system without approval from the owner of the dwelling); and
- the applicant must be the purchaser of the system or have written permission from the purchaser to apply for the rebate; and
- the applicant's taxable family income must have been less than \$100,000 in the most recently completed tax year prior to system installation; and
- the applicant must correctly complete and submit an application form and agree to the terms and conditions listed on the Application Form.

Only one rebate will be granted per eligible system. In the case of multiple applications for a single system, the rebate will be paid to the first eligible applicant.

#### System Requirements

To be eligible to obtain a rebate, the hot water system must:

- be installed in Australia at a principal place of residence; and
- be installed by a suitably qualified person (for example an electrician and/or plumber); and
- be installed on or after 18 July 2007, as certified by the licensed installer; and
- be a new and complete hot water system that replaces an existing electric storage hot water system previously operational at the dwelling, as certified by the licensed installer; and
- be a hot water system that is eligible for at least 20 Renewable Energy Certificates under the Mandatory Renewable Energy Target at the time and place of installation, as certified by the licensed installer; and
- be installed to the relevant building standards and government requirements, as certified by the licensed installer; and
- be fully functional, as certified by the licensed installer.

Rebates will **not** be eligible where:

- the applicant is not the owner or tenant of the dwelling where the system was installed at the time the system was installed; or
- the dwelling where the system is installed is not a principal place of residence (for example where the dwelling is a holiday home or a semi-permanent building); or
- the dwelling where the system is installed is state or territory public housing or is owned by a state or territory government; or
- the applicant is not an individual (for example where the applicant is a business or other organisation); or
- the system replaces or is additional to an existing solar or heat pump hot water system; or
- the system replaces a hot water system which was not originally designed as an electric storage hot water system; or
- the system will be used for non-domestic purposes or primarily for heating a swimming pool, spa or similar.

Final decisions regarding rebate eligibility will be made by the Australian Government.

## **Rebate application process**

To claim a rebate the applicant must fully complete, sign and submit an application form (available at the back of this booklet or from [www.environment.gov.au/solarhotwater](http://www.environment.gov.au/solarhotwater)) with the requested supporting documentation.

### **Incomplete applications will be returned to applicants without processing.**

The applicant should allow 8 weeks for the application to be processed.

Applying for the rebate requires the applicant to submit a copy of proof of system purchase.

Applying for the rebate requires the applicant to agree that he/she will provide evidence to support claims made on the application form if requested.

Applying for the rebate requires the applicant to agree to allow an authorised inspector access to the system for audit purposes if requested.

Applying for the rebate requires a licensed installer to certify the following on the application form:

- system installation date; and
- that the system replaced an existing electric storage hot water system; and
- that the system is eligible for at least 20 Renewable Energy Certificates; and
- that the system was installed to the relevant building standards and government requirements.

## **Definitions**

The following definitions are applied for the purpose of the rebate program.

**Principal place of residence** – a privately owned dwelling that is the primary residence of the owner or a tenant.

**Applicant's taxable family income** – The taxable income of the applicant in a given tax year and the taxable income of the applicant's spouse (if any) for the same tax year. For the purposes of the Solar Hot Water Rebate Program, spouse and taxable income have the same meaning as in the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997. Suitable evidence of taxable income may include a Notice of Assessment produced by the Australian Taxation Office.

**System** – a new domestic solar or heat pump hot water system that is a complete model as listed in the Register of Solar Water Heaters administered by the Office of the Renewable Energy Regulator (available from [www.orer.gov.au/swh/register.html](http://www.orer.gov.au/swh/register.html)). Eligible systems must have a unique tank serial number defined by the manufacturer.

## **Important notices**

Applicants should not assume that they will receive a rebate on submitting an application. The Australian Government will decide whether an applicant satisfies the eligibility requirements as set out in these Guidelines and reserves the right to request further information to make this decision.

The Australian Government may require the applicant to present reasonable evidence to support their application for the rebate. Requests from the Australian Government for evidence may be made after the payment of the rebate but must be made within twenty four (24) months of the application.

The Australian Government accepts no liability for any loss, damage or cost incurred as a result of, or arising from, the installation of a system which has been the subject of a rebate application, or the application process.

Personal information collected under this Program will only be used for the purpose of assessing applications and related purposes. This process may include the exchange of information with other government departments or agencies for compliance purposes, and/or reporting publicly on the performance of the rebate program. Reports will be based on aggregate data and personal information will not be identifiable in such reports. Information will be used for the payment of the rebate to successful applicants.

The Australian Government takes no responsibility for any private arrangement between tenants and landlords with regard to the rebate. The tenant or landlord has no entitlement against the Australian Government in these circumstances.

## **Further information**

Further information can be obtained from [www.environment.gov.au/solarhotwater](http://www.environment.gov.au/solarhotwater) or by calling 1800 808 571.

## Part 3: How to Apply

### How do I apply?

To claim a rebate, you need to submit a fully completed application form. You will be filling out most areas of the form, but on the day of installation your installer will need to complete Section 3 and sign Section 4. This should take no longer than a few minutes and your installer is aware of the process and will have the required information.

Application forms are available at the back of this booklet or can be downloaded from [www.environment.gov.au/solarhotwater](http://www.environment.gov.au/solarhotwater)

Applicants must apply by mail to:

Solar Hot Water Rebate Program  
Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts  
GPO Box 787  
Canberra ACT 2601

- An applicant has up to six months (184 days) after an eligible system is installed to submit an application form.
- The applicant should allow eight weeks for the application to be processed.
- Incomplete application forms will be returned to the applicant without processing

For more information please contact our national information line on 1800 808 571.

### Supporting documentation

Applicants must submit a copy of their purchase receipt with their application, no other supporting documentation is required. However, requests from the Australian Government for evidence may be made after the payment of the rebate, but would be made within 24 months of the application.

## **Part 4: Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What is the Solar Hot Water Rebate Program?**

The Australian Government Solar Hot Water Rebate Program encourages switching to alternative hot water technologies by addressing the up-front cost barriers to climate friendly systems, which also deliver low operating costs for the household.

Rebates of \$1000 are available to install solar and heat pump hot water systems in existing homes.

Electric storage hot water systems are the most greenhouse intensive of household hot water systems, generating the largest amount of greenhouse gas emissions. The program aims to replace these systems with climate friendly solar or heat pump systems.

The rebate is to help households replace existing electric storage hot water systems. Rebates are not applicable for replacing older solar or gas hot water systems.

### **When can I apply for a rebate?**

The rebate is offered from 18 July 2007 until 31 March 2012, subject to the availability of funds. No applications will be accepted after 31 March 2012. Applicants must apply for the rebate within six months of their new solar or heat pump hot water system being installed.

### **What is the deadline for applications?**

Applicants must apply for the rebate within six months (184 days) of installing an eligible system.

### **Who can apply for the rebate?**

Applicants for the rebate must be the owner or tenant of the dwelling where the system was installed. The application process is simple and straightforward and is completed after the new hot water system has been installed. Suppliers and installers of solar hot water systems cannot apply for the Australian Government Solar Hot Water Rebate on behalf of their customers.

### **Can I apply for the rebate if I am renting?**

Yes. The system for which a rebate is being claimed must be installed at a principal place of residence. An applicant can be the owner or the tenant of the dwelling.

A tenant should not install a system without approval from the owner of the dwelling. The sharing of any costs is a matter for the landlord and the tenant to negotiate.

Regardless of whether you are an owner or a tenant, all other eligibility requirements must be met.

### **Are rebates available for new homes or those which are rebuilt?**

In order to maximise the environmental outcomes of the program, solar hot water systems installed on new houses are not eligible for the rebate. In comparison to existing housing stock, new homes are generally more energy efficient. Some state governments also regulate the energy efficiency of hot water systems installed in new homes. Furthermore, it is more expensive to install energy efficient hot water systems onto existing homes than onto new homes.

Houses that are rebuilt are classed as new houses and therefore are not eligible for the rebate.

The Australian Government provides an incentive to all households to install climate friendly hot water systems in the form of Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs). RECs are assigned by the Office of the Renewable Energy Regulator as part of the Mandatory Renewable Energy Target scheme and reflect the deemed value of equivalent renewable energy generation over a ten year period. These certificates are tradable and commonly provide a discount of over \$800 from the up front cost of the average solar hot water system.

### **Can I still apply for other State or Territory rebates?**

Yes. An application for the Australian Government Solar Hot Water Rebate will not be affected by any rebates that other governments may offer. For details on other rebates, you will need to follow up with your relevant state or territory authority.

### **Can I get the rebate for a system I install on my investment property?**

Yes. The system for which a rebate is being claimed must be installed at a principal place of residence. There is no requirement that this is the applicant's principal place of residence. An owner may apply for a rebate on more than one property.

The sharing of any costs is a matter for the landlord and the tenant to negotiate.

Regardless of whether you are an owner or a tenant, all other eligibility requirements must be met.

### **Are rebates available for holiday homes?**

Rebates are not available for holiday homes. To ensure the largest environmental benefit will be achieved, the rebate program has been designed to replace electric storage hot water systems in principal places of residence.

### **Is the rebate means tested?**

There is a cap of \$100,000 on the applicant's family taxable income to help ensure that rebates go to Australian families who are most likely to need assistance.

Taxable family income is determined by combining the taxable income of the applicant and any spouse in the most recently completed tax year prior to installation of the new solar or heat pump hot water system. Taxable family income does not include income derived by any other person residing at the dwelling of the applicant. For example, children or boarders.

For example:

If you install a new hot water system on 28 June 2008, your family taxable income will be based on the tax year which ended on 30 June 2007.

If you install a new hot water system on 3 July 2008, your family taxable income will be based on the tax year which ended on 30 June 2008.

Although no documentation supporting your family income is required to make an application for the rebate, you may be required to provide suitable evidence of family taxable income at a future date. Suitable evidence of taxable family income may include the respective Notice of Assessment/s produced by the Australian Taxation Office.

### **How will the payment be made?**

Payment is made by electronic funds transfer into the bank account of successful applicants. Applicants must be the owner or tenant of the dwelling where the solar or heat pump hot water system was installed. The applicant provides a bsb and bank account number and the funds are directly deposited. Bank details will only be used to make the payment. Storage and disposal of bank account and other personal details will be managed in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988.

### **What is my bsb and bank account number?**

A bsb number is a unique 6-digit code that identifies the bank/financial institution and branch where your bank account is held. It can generally be found on your bank statement.

Your bank account number can also be found on your bank statement. Bank account numbers are always 10 digits or less, they are not the 16 digit number that appear on your credit/debit card.

It is important that you enter the correct bsb and account numbers, otherwise payment cannot be processed.

If you are still unsure, your bank or financial institution will be able provide you with your bank account and bsb number.

### **When will my payment be credited to my account?**

For successful applicants payment will be credited directly to their Australian bank account within 8 weeks of receiving a completed and eligible application form.

### **What is an incomplete application?**

An incomplete application is an application where information has been left out. You are only required to provide one contact method (ie phone number, mobile number or e-mail) and you only need to provide a postal address if it differs from the installation address. All other fields on the application form must be completed, including signatures from the applicant and the installer, and attaching a copy of your purchase receipt. Missing information will be highlighted on applications and they will be sent back to the applicant to be filled in without processing by the Australian Government.

### **What do you mean by reasonable evidence?**

The Australian Government may request you to provide reasonable evidence of claims you have made on your application form. For example, the Australian government may choose to ask for one or more of the following documents: you (and your spouse's) Australian Taxation Office Notice of Assessment for the relevant tax year, rates notices, electricity, gas or telephone bills and installation reports. It may also include allowing an authorised inspector access to the system for audit purposes.

No documents, other than your purchase receipt, are to be supplied with your application. Copies will be requested at a later date if required.

### **Am I still eligible for the Australian Government's Photovoltaic Rebate Program (PVRP)?**

Yes. The PVRP offers rebates of up to \$8,000 for the installation of photovoltaic systems in certain circumstances. If you meet the eligibility requirements of that program, which differ from those for the solar hot water rebate, you may qualify for both rebates. Information on the PVRP Program can be found at <http://www.greenhouse.gov.au/renewable/pv/index.html>.

### **What is a solar retrofit and why isn't it eligible for the rebate?**

Solar water heater retrofit kits are used to add solar panels to existing electric off-peak boosted tanks. Conventional tanks are not designed to be connected to solar collectors so retrofit kits are not as effective as a water heater designed specifically for solar. However, significant savings can still be made.

The Solar Hot Water Rebate Program provides rebates for solar and heat pump hot water systems that replace an existing electric storage hot water system. In order to be eligible for the rebate the solar or heat pump system must be a new and complete hot water system that is eligible for at least 20 Renewable Energy Certificates.

RECs are assigned by the Office of the Renewable Energy Regulator as part of the Mandatory Renewable Energy Target (MRET) scheme and reflect the deemed value of equivalent renewable energy generation over a ten year period.

The MRET scheme does not allow individual parts of hot water systems to be tested separately because the efficiency of the total system can vary greatly with the effects of different ancillary parts and their installed arrangement (as a result solar water heaters currently eligible for RECs are complete systems). For this reason, a 'retrofit' system that is based around a previously installed component is not eligible for RECs and therefore not eligible for the Solar Hot Water Rebate Program.

### **Why does a licensed installer need to sign my application form?**

As part of the application process we require proof that you are replacing an existing electric storage hot water system and have installed a hot water system that is eligible for 20 RECS or more. The installer can certify this and can also provide the tank serial number which is not always easy for the applicant to obtain.

## **Part 5: Further Information**

Further information can be obtained from:

Phone: **1800 808 571**

Website: **[www.environment.gov.au/solarhotwater](http://www.environment.gov.au/solarhotwater)**

Solar Hot Water Rebate

Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts

GPO Box 787

CANBERRA ACT 2601





# Solar Hot Water Rebate Application Form

Application number (Office use only)

This application form should be read in conjunction with the Solar Hot Water Rebate Guidelines and submitted within six (6) months of installation.

The application form must be completed in full by the applicant (who should be the owner or tenant of the property where the new solar or heat pump hot water system has been installed) and by the licensed installer of your system. Copies of the receipt(s) for the purchase of the new solar hot water system must be included with this application. This application form is current as of 8 April 2008 and replaces the original application form 1007.

Sections 1, 2, 5 & 6 – Completed by applicant. Sections 3 & 4 - Completed by licensed installer.

## 1. APPLICANT INFORMATION

Name

Address where the system has been installed   
 Postcode

Postal address (if different from installation address)   
 Postcode

Phone number (  )

Mobile number

Email address

## 2. APPLICANT AND DWELLING (WHERE SYSTEM HAS BEEN INSTALLED) ELIGIBILITY

Please read the Guidelines and complete all parts below. Each question must be answered for this application to be processed.

Are you aged 18 years or over? Yes  No

Is your family's taxable income less than \$100,000? Yes  No

*Family includes you and your spouse in the most recently completed tax year prior to installation. For further information please see definition in guidelines.*

Is the dwelling where the system is installed located in Australia? Yes  No

Is the dwelling a principal place of residence? Yes  No

*A principal place of residence is a home where an owner or a tenant primarily resides. For further information please see definition in guidelines.*

Is the dwelling privately owned? Yes  No

*For example it is not state or territory public housing or owned by a state or territory government.*

Are you the owner or the tenant of the dwelling? Owner  Tenant

You must be the owner or tenant of the dwelling where the system was installed at the time the system was installed. A tenant should not install a system without approval from the owner of the dwelling.

Are you the purchaser of the system? Yes  No

If you are not the purchaser of the system, you must obtain written permission from the purchaser to apply for the rebate. This written permission should be kept on file for 24 months in case it is required for auditing purposes. Please see guidelines for further information on auditing requirements.

If you ticked No, have you obtained written permission from the purchaser to apply for the rebate?

Yes  No

### 3. SYSTEM ELIGIBILITY (TO BE COMPLETED BY LICENSED INSTALLER)

Date new system was installed  /  /

The installation date is the date the system was first fully operational and is written on the Renewable Energy Certificate (REC) Assignment Form. Applications must be submitted within six (6) months of installation.

Did the system replace an electric storage hot water system? Yes  No

New tank serial number

Is the new hot water system worth 20 RECS or more? Yes  No

### 4. LICENSED INSTALLER'S DECLARATION (TO BE COMPLETED BY LICENSED INSTALLER)

Installer's name

Company name

Installer's licence number  Installer's contact number

State of registration

- I certify as the installer that I have done the installation work required to connect the solar hot water system in accordance with any applicable regulations or guidelines.
- I certify that the information provided by me is truthful and correct.

Installer's signature

Date  /  /

### 5. REBATE PAYMENT DETAILS

The rebate payment for successful applicants will be made by direct deposit. Applicants should allow 8 weeks for the application to be processed. **The payment will only be made into the bank account of the owner or tenant of the dwelling where the system was installed.** The rebate is not available as a point of sale discount nor can a retailer, installer or commercial business apply for the rebate on behalf of their customers.

BSB number (6 digits)

Account number

Please note: A BSB number is a unique 6-digit code that identifies the bank/financial institution and branch where your bank account is held. It can generally be found on your bank statement. If you are unsure of your BSB number, please contact your bank or financial institution. Your bank account number can also be found on your bank statement. It is not the 16 digit number that appears on your credit/debit card. It is important that you enter the correct BSB and account numbers, otherwise payment cannot be processed.

The rebate can only be paid to an Australian bank account. The Australian Government will only use your bank details for the purpose of paying the rebate.

## 6. DECLARATIONS, YOUR RESPONSIBILITY AND YOUR RIGHT TO PRIVACY (please read carefully)

As a Commonwealth agency, the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts is bound by the *Privacy Act 1988*. Personal information collected under this program will only be used for the purpose of assessing applications and related purposes. This process may include the exchange of information with other government departments or agencies for compliance purposes, and/or reporting publicly on the performance of the rebate program. Reports will be based on aggregate data and personal information will not be identifiable in such reports. Information may also be disclosed to Registered Agents for the purposes of verifying details of applications. Information will be used for the payment of the rebate to successful applicants.

The Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts reserves the right to refuse any application if the information provided is incomplete or does not meet the required criteria.

- I certify as the applicant that I am the owner or tenant of the residential property where the new Solar Hot Water System is installed, and it is a principal place of residence.
- I certify as the applicant that I have read and understood the Solar Hot Water Rebate Guidelines.
- I certify that, to the best of my knowledge, all of the above details are correct at the time of completing this form. Providing false or misleading information is a serious offence and carries penalties under the *Criminal Code Act 1995*.
- I agree as the applicant that I have and will provide the Australian Government with sufficient and reasonable evidence of my eligibility for the rebate if requested any time up to 24 months after installation. This may include allowing an authorised inspector access to my property to inspect the installation of my new solar hot water system as requested by the Australian Government.
- I acknowledge as the applicant that the Australian Government accepts no liability for any loss, damage or cost incurred as a result of, or arising from, the installation of a system which has been the subject of a rebate application, or the application for the rebate.

Your signature

Date

How did you find out about the rebate?

Installer/retailer

Website

Newspaper/magazine  > Name

Other  > Provide details

### FORWARD COMPLETED APPLICATION FORM AND COPIES OF PURCHASE RECEIPTS TO:

Solar Hot Water Rebate  
Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts  
GPO Box 787  
Canberra ACT 2601

### Checklist (to assist with speedy processing of your application)

Incomplete applications will be returned to applicants without processing.

Please ensure you have completed all parts of the application form.

- Have you filled in every field?
- Has your installer filled out and signed their area of the form?
- Have you provided a BSB (6 digit number) and bank account number?
- Have you signed the form?
- Have you attached copies of your purchase receipts?

**If you have any questions, please call 1800 808 571.**