SUMMER HEAT GUIDE

Keeping homes cool



Summer heat in Australia is getting more intense and longer lasting. Too many homes struggle to cope with these conditions. It's expensive too. Cooling makes up around 40% of household energy use. Stopping heat getting in to begin with is the cheapest fix.

That's why the steps in this guide are worth taking. A home that keeps the heat out will keep you safer, summer after summer.

In the 2026 ACOSS Heat in Homes survey:

75%

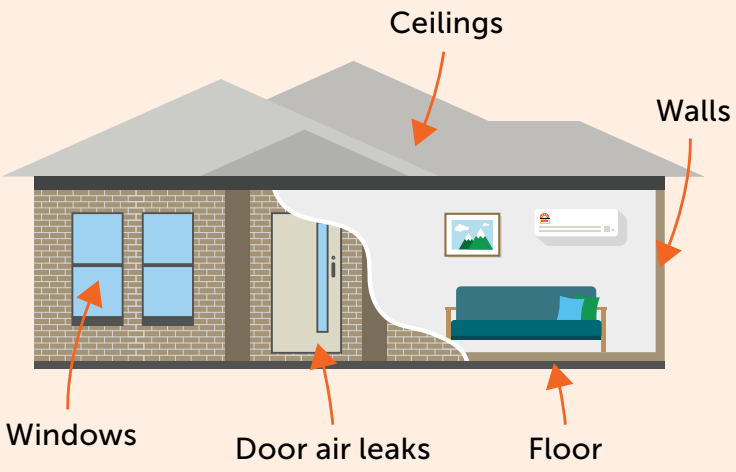
Three quarters of people struggle to cool their homes, up from just over one half a year earlier (ACOSS, *Heat in Homes*, 2026).

86%

Renters are hit hardest
Almost every renter surveyed said their home gets too hot, and 86% struggle to keep it cool, compared with a third of homeowners.

93%

More than nine in ten (93%) of people reported trouble sleeping, and 17% needed medical care because of heat.



How heat gets in

Heat enters through the roof, walls, windows and gaps, and builds up from what we do inside. Every pathway has a fix. Block the sun at the windows first, then deal with the roof, then seal the gaps. This illustration shows how heat gets into a home without insulation.

The good news? The cheapest way to stay cool is to stop heat getting in to begin with.

There are many ways to keep your home cool in summer that can also lower your energy use and climate pollution.

Figure 1: Typical heat gain of an uninsulated home in summer. Most heat gets in through ceilings, windows and walls.
Source: Government of South Australia, 2025.

Your action checklist

Free to low cost, easiest	Low cost, some effort	Bigger upgrades (long-term)
▶ Close windows, curtains and blinds on hot mornings. ▶ Open up and cross-ventilate once it is cooler outside than inside. ▶ Use a fan at temperatures below 40°C. They work better if you also dampen your skin or clothing. ▶ If you have it: Set the air conditioner to 25–27°C and cool only the rooms you use.	▶ Fit external blinds, shade cloth or awnings on north and west-facing windows. ▶ Seal gaps around doors and windows with weather strips. ▶ Clean air-conditioner filters and service your system. ▶ Add a ceiling or pedestal fan to bedrooms and living areas. ▶ Collect rainwater and use for irrigation.	▶ Install or top-up ceiling insulation. ▶ Choose a light-coloured roof when re-roofing or repairing, or retrofit your existing dark roof with a reflective seal coat. ▶ Upgrade to a reverse-cycle air conditioner. ▶ Add rooftop solar and pre-cool the house in the middle of the day with your own cheap power. ▶ Plant medium height trees on the north or east side of your property where possible, to shade walls and windows.

Tips for renters

Make a request to your landlord in writing for shade, such as blinds, curtains, awnings, trees or shrubs, insulation, draught-proofing or an efficient cooling system.

Point out these upgrades protect the property, attract tenants and may qualify for government rebates.

Check your state/territory's tenancy rules before installing anything fixed.



Cutting your electricity costs

About five million Australian households are paying more than they should for electricity. These households could save $291 on average, by switching to a better offer. Australians who stay on the same electricity plan for more than three years on average pay $221 more each year than those on new plans.

Electricity plans can include different charges depending on the time of day and/or amount of energy you use. It's worth knowing if you are on a flat rate or time-of-use plan and adjusting your usage accordingly. Compare deals at energymadeeasy.gov.au.

Finding support

Help is available, but it varies by state, so check what applies to you before you buy.

- **Find rebates:** Federal, state and territory programs offer rebates, discounts and low-interest loans for insulation, heat pumps, solar and batteries. See energy.gov.au.
- **Green home loans:** Some banks also offer green home loans for efficiency upgrades. See the Clean Energy Finance Corporation's guide.
- **Ceiling insulation discounts:** Victorian Energy Upgrades discounts for ceiling insulation are available. See www.energy.vic.gov.au/victorian-energy-upgrades/products/insulation-discounts.
- **Struggling with bills?** Ask your energy retailer about hardship programs, and your state government about energy concessions.

Trusted guides

Heating and cooling	Sustainable renovations	Cooling your home	Guidance for renters
Choosing and running appliances energy.gov.au	**Renovation priorities and easy wins** Green Building Council of Australia's sustainable home renovations guide. new.gbca.org.au/green-star/sustainable-homes/our-guide-to-sustainable-renovations	**Tips and simple steps** Beyond Zero Emissions, bze.org.au ACT Government, www.climatechoices.act.gov.au/energy/energy-efficiency/cooling-for-your-home SA Government, www.sa.gov.au/topics/energy-and-environment/using-saving-energy/cooling	**Advice for renters to secure stable, affordable and healthy homes** betterrenting.org.au