

Excerpt from:

## Solar power 'time bomb' as cut-price equipment fail

- by: Peter Hall From: [The Courier-Mail](#) September 28, 2011

**THOUSANDS of new solar power systems are failing because of poor quality components, in another blow to Queensland's green energy vision.**

Industry insiders have told The Courier-Mail many consumers were unaware the cheap systems they had bought were faulty or not performing efficiently. They said some faced a costly "time bomb" as warranties ran out and low-cost inverters failed, leaving them with replacement bills of about \$2000.

The latest problem relates to customers unknowingly being sold poor-quality inverters with components from countries such as China. Inverters are the most important component in solar power systems, converting energy generated from roof panels into power suitable for households and the grid.

They are also expensive, so the use of cheaper ones can save \$1000 even on a standard 1.5kW system. However, the imports have a high failure rate and also don't extract the optimum energy from panels.

Brisbane businessman Brian Springer, who operates Springers Solar, said there had been a rise in "suspect business models" in the industry.

Mr Springer said his main concern was that reputable companies were being tarnished by those chasing a fast buck. "Cheap systems have become a major problem and it's getting worse," he said.

"Customers are missing out on energy efficiency and reliability.

"They have to look closely at who they are buying from and ask themselves are the products ... of high enough quality."

*Nigel Carrall, of Annerley in Brisbane, bought a 1.5kW system for \$8000 through Origin in August last year and was alarmed when his power bills did not fall after six months.*

*He contacted his provider in May and was told to check his inverter, which he discovered was showing an error code.*

*A subcontractor replaced the inverter. "That was at 11am and they said it was the 10th one they had replaced that morning.*

*"I worked out I had lost about \$1000 over the 10 months my inverter was not working."*