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You may have noticed some solar panels appearing on the roof of your school or on houses in your neighbourhood. These are all part of a greater push for cleaner, more sustainable energy production. The advantage of using solar panels is that they produce clean electricity which can be used to heat water or provide household power.

Going through school I was always interested in science and maths, in particular trying to come up with interesting ways to solve problems. When I finished school, I started a degree in Engineering as it gave me an opportunity to combine my science, maths and problem solving interests. I am now a PhD student conducting research into solar power.

Solar panels require light from the sun to make electricity that can then be used to power homes. When the panel is shaded by something like a tree, telephone pole or a neighbour's house, the panel can't make as much electricity. My research considers what happens when part of a solar panel is shaded and looks at ways that we can still get the most power out of a panel when this happens.

Engineering is a great opportunity to investigate the world in which we live and to make a difference. Engineers work with structures, cars, boats, electricity, machines, robots, planes, computers, medical devices, water and many other things. If you look around the room you will probably see lots of things that engineers have been involved in developing. The thing that I love most about engineering is the opportunity to develop something useful that hasn't been done before.



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www.engineersaustralia.org.au; www.engineeryourcareer.org.au

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