

COMPARISON GUIDE

Electric vs Manual Roller Shutters

The default sales pitch is "motorise everything". That's good for the installer's margin and not always good for you. Here's the honest head-to-head on electric vs manual roller shutters in Australia.

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<https://shutthefrontup.com.au/electric-vs-manual-roller-shutters>

QUICK ANSWER

Manual roller shutters are typically **30-40% cheaper** than electric on the same window, mechanically simpler, and require almost no maintenance. Electric shutters are easier to use daily, automate, and essential for large or hard-to-reach windows.

Pick manual for low-use windows on a budget. Pick electric for high-use main living areas, large windows, or households where someone struggles with daily operation.

Bottom line: Don't default to electric on every window. Mix the two and save real money.

Who this is for: Homeowners deciding between manual and electric for one or more windows.

Typical price ranges

Indicative supplied-and-installed pricing across Australia in 2026. Final pricing depends on installer assessment.

ITEM	TYPICAL RANGE	NOTES
Same window. Manual	\$600-\$1,000	1500 × 1500 mm standard
Same window. Electric (hard-wired)	\$1,000-\$1,550	same window, motorised
Typical price gap per window	\$350-\$700	add 15-25% for whole-house pack

ITEM	TYPICAL RANGE	NOTES
Retrofit motor to manual	\$400-\$700	per window, later

What changes the price

Where electric wins

High-use main living windows, large sliding doors, hard-to-reach windows above stairs or behind furniture, and households with mobility-impaired users.

Where manual wins

Bedrooms, studies, rear-of-house windows that get operated occasionally. Cheaper, simpler, and lasts longer because there's nothing electric to fail.

Mix-and-match

Most installers happily mix electric on main living glass with manual on bedrooms. A typical 10-window quote saves \$1,500-\$3,000 doing this versus motorising everything.

Electric vs manual roller shutters. Head to head

FEATURE	MANUAL	ELECTRIC
Typical cost (standard window)	\$600-\$1,000	\$1,000-\$1,550
Daily use effort	Pull strap or winder	Wall switch / remote / app
Best for	Bedrooms, low-use windows	Living areas, hard-to-reach, large windows
Maintenance	Almost none	Occasional motor service
Reliability	Excellent (mechanical	High) motor brand matters

FEATURE	MANUAL	ELECTRIC
Automation	No	Yes. Schedules, app, sensors
Electrical work needed	No	Hard-wired yes; battery/solar no
Suitable for sliding doors	Up to ~2.4 m wide	Up to ~5 m wide
Future motorisation	Yes, retrofittable	N/A

Reliability over 15 years

Manual shutters with a quality strap or winder routinely last 20+ years with no service. Electric shutters last similarly long but the motor (if a cheaper brand) can fail at 8-10 years. Stick with major motor brands (Somfy, Becker, Alpha, Nice) to keep service costs down.

Power outage operation

Electric shutters can typically be opened manually via an override crank or cord in a blackout. Confirm this is specified before signing. Battery and solar shutters keep working in outages until the battery runs flat.

Checklist before you accept a quote



Audit usage per window

Daily, weekly, or rarely? That decides manual vs electric per window.



Confirm motor brand for electric

Major brands have parts available years later; generic motors often don't.



Ask about override

How does the electric shutter open in a power cut?



Plan future motorisation

If you want to motorise later, ask for motor-ready barrels and cabling now.

Frequently asked questions

Are electric or manual roller shutters better?

Neither is universally better. Electric is best for high-use main living windows, large windows and hard-to-reach openings. Manual is best for low-use bedrooms and budget-driven jobs. Mixing both across a house is the most cost-effective approach.

How much more do electric shutters cost than manual?

Typically \$350-\$700 more per window than the same shutter in manual form, with hard-wiring adding electrical labour on top.

Can I motorise manual shutters later?

Yes. Most modern manual shutters can be retrofitted with a tubular motor for \$400-\$700 per window.

Related reading

Electric roller shutter cost

<https://shutthefrontup.com.au/electric-roller-shutter-cost>

Manual roller shutter cost

<https://shutthefrontup.com.au/manual-roller-shutter-cost>

Roller shutter cost overview

<https://shutthefrontup.com.au/roller-shutter-cost>

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