

## Pooping pigeons prove problematic for properties with solar panels

By Edwina Seselja and Kat Feeney

Pigeons are known for their ability to find their way home, but the numbers taking up residence underneath solar panels are causing a headache for property owners.

Key points:

- Pigeons are flocking to the suburbs and nesting underneath solar panels
- Droppings from the introduced species can impact the efficacy of the panels
- Their nests and faeces can also clog drains and attract mice and cockroaches

Ivan Cindric, who runs a company that cleans and pigeon-proofs solar panels across Brisbane, says the opportunistic birds are flocking to the suburbs to breed.

"Seven years ago we pigeon-proofed three properties over the course of a year and now we service two to six homes every single day," Mr Cindric told ABC Radio Brisbane.

"That gap between the solar panels and the roof is a perfect habitat for them.

"They go in there, they build their nest and they're safe from any predators.

"Once they start building their nests, they won't stop because, as you can imagine, they're breeding."

Blocking out the sun

Mr Cindric said pigeons were not the most house-proud tenants and the mess they left could attract mice and cockroaches.

"The amount of mess they make on the solar panels and on your roof is absolutely ... disgusting," he said.

"Everyone has solar panels because they want save money, but you can imagine with all those pigeons pooping all over the panels, they become quite inefficient.

"The poop doesn't stop, because they are a phenomenal pooping machines."

The birds' faeces can clog gutters and create an environment for plants to grow.

"We've been to many houses where literally the gutters were overflowing with pigeon poop," Mr Cindric said.

"Pigeons themselves are also disease carriers — they carry a lot of lice."

An imported problem

Mr Cindric cautioned those looking for a DIY solution against climbing up on the roof with some chicken wire and a screwdriver.

"If you screw something into your panels you've actually voided the warranty," he said.

He also recommended using specially designed clips and mesh with large enough openings to prevent the panels from overheating.

"The hotter the panel gets, the less efficient they are," he said.

RSPCA spokesperson Michael Beatty said while there were a number of native pigeons, including the crested pigeon, the common grey pigeon was considered a pest.

"They are an introduced European species and legally they have to be put to sleep," Mr Beatty said.

"We can't put them back into the wild because they are taking resources from native birds."

The choice of home seems to be exclusive to the introduced bird — Mr Cindric said he had never seen native pigeons build nests under the solar panels.