

Roll-A-Door vs Panelift: Roller vs Sectional — The Complete Comparison

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Description:

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Details:

AI Summary

Choosing between a B&D; Roll-A-Door (roller) and a Panelift (sectional) is the most common decision Australian homeowners face when buying a new garage door. Here's the short version: **Roll-A-Door** is the better choice when you have limited headroom, want to maximise ceiling space inside the garage, or need a cost-effective, reliable door. **Panelift** wins when design flexibility, insulation, and a premium street presence matter most.

Roller doors coil above the opening, leaving the ceiling completely free — ideal for storage, roof racks, or overhead shelving. Sectional doors track along the ceiling on horizontal rails, so they need more headroom but offer superior insulation, a wider range of architectural finishes, and the heavy-duty Auto-Lock™ deadbolt security system on the Icon range. Both door types are backed by B&D's 10-Year Total Confidence Warranty when purchased with an Automatic Technology opener. Budget-wise, the range runs from the entry-level Rollmasta through to the premium Panelift Icon, so there's a B&D; door for every price point. Read on for the detailed, spec-by-spec breakdown.

Quick Decision Table

Feature	Roll-A-Door (Roller)	Panelift (Sectional)	--- --- ---	How it opens	Coils vertically above opening
	Panels track horizontally along ceiling		Minimum headroom		As low as 200mm (manual)
	As low as 190mm (low headroom config)		Ceiling space		Fully free — no tracks on ceiling
	Requires horizontal track along ceiling		Sideroom required		120mm minimum (185mm recommended)
	115–185mm depending on configuration		Insulation options		Not insulated (single-skin steel)
	Insul-Shield™ graphite EPS insulation available		Design range		Classic square-line or Neo profiles
	Multiple panel profiles, Sheer Panel, timber-look, natural finishes				Colour range
	Colorbond® steel colours + Timber Coat				Full Colorbond® range + Knotwood, Sheer Panel, natural finishes
			Security		Internal sliding bar lock, Auto-Lock™ kit available
	Auto-Lock™ standard on Icon, anti-lift protection		Noise		Nylofelt® running strips for quiet operation
	Panel-on-track with nylon rollers; very quiet		Warranty		10-Year Total Confidence (with opener)
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Space Requirements

Space is often the deciding factor — especially in older Australian homes with tight garage openings. Here's what the installation specifications require.

Headroom (Above the Opening)

Headroom is measured from the top of the door opening to the ceiling or the lowest ceiling obstruction.

****Roll-A-Door:**** - Standard installation: approximately 300–350mm headroom required for the coil drum and brackets - Low headroom configuration: as little as ****200mm** for manual operation******, or ****250mm** with an automatic opener****** (200mm + 50mm for the opener) - The ceiling-to-wall junction above the doorway must be square-set with no cornice, and the lintel face must be flush with the jambs

****Panelift:**** - Standard front torsion installation: ****250–340mm**** depending on cable drum type and curve configuration - With 4-8 & 4-13 cable drums (front torsion small curve): ****250mm**** - With 4-8 & 4-13 cable drums (front torsion large curve): ****290mm**** - With 5-18 cable drums (front torsion small curve): ****290mm**** - With 5-18 cable drums (front torsion large curve): ****330mm**** - Low headroom configuration: as little as ****190mm** for manual operation****** (200mm for doors over 5500mm wide) - Add ****50mm**** if an automatic opener is to be installed - Rear torsion installations: ****295mm**** for doors greater than 15m²

Sideroom (Either Side of the Opening)

****Roll-A-Door:**** - Minimum: ****120mm**** each side (140mm for double wheels and axles) - Recommended: ****185mm**** each side for standard installations - Restricted sideroom: ****115mm**** minimum with alternate bracket configurations - Sideroom must extend above the head of the opening to allow bracket fixing

****Panelift:**** - Standard installation: ****185mm**** each side - Restricted sideroom: ****115mm**** minimum - Series 3 doors: ****135–275mm**** depending on opener type and door height

Ceiling Depth

****Roll-A-Door:**** No ceiling track required. The door coils directly above the opening. This is the roller door's biggest structural advantage — your entire ceiling remains free for storage, roof racks on your vehicle, or overhead shelving.

****Panelift:**** Requires horizontal track running back from the opening along the ceiling. Track length equals approximately the door height plus additional clearance. The ceiling must be free of obstructions along the track path.

Design & Aesthetics

Roll-A-Door Range

B&D's roller door range offers three tiers of design:

****Rollmasta (R1R)**** — The entry-level option. A Series 1 door built to the same engineering standards, available in a focused Colorbond® colour range. Strong, secure, and made-to-measure. Maximum height of 3.0m, maximum width of 3040mm (wind-rated configuration).

****Roll-A-Door**** — The Australian icon, first invented by B&D; in 1956. Features B&D's signature square-line profile created by brake-press technology that stamps a rigid structural pattern into each steel slat. Available in the full Colorbond® colour range plus exclusive Timber Coat finishes that replicate the look and feel of textured timber.

****Roll-A-Door Neo (R1N)**** — The premium roller door that bridges the gap between roller and sectional aesthetics. Offers the functionality of a roller door (coils above the opening, frees ceiling

space) with the stylish look of a sectional door. Engineered for strength and security with a modern street presence.

All Roll-A-Door models feature: - Colorbond® steel construction in a range of colours - Exclusive Timber Coat wood-look finishes (on Roll-A-Door and Neo) - B&D's brake-press square-line profile for structural rigidity

Panelift Range

****Panelift**** — B&D's most popular sectional door. Made from sturdy Colorbond® steel with smooth, quiet operation. The go-to choice for strength and reliability. Multiple panel profile options available.

****Panelift Icon (PFI)**** — Everything the standard Panelift offers, plus the Auto-Lock™ heavy-duty deadbolt that automatically locks your garage door every time it closes. Additional premium finishes and panel options available, including the Sheer Panel Collection® made from durable aluminium composite for a floating, seamless designer appearance.

****Specialist Sectional Doors:**** - ****BAL-Maze**** — An upgrade within the Panelift range for bushfire-prone areas. CSIRO-tested to BAL-40 rating, designed to prevent flying embers and burning debris from entering through the garage. - ****Storm-Shield**** — Australia's premium high-wind sectional door, independently tested to withstand Category 5-equivalent cyclone conditions.

****Finish options across the sectional range:**** - Full Colorbond® colour range - Knotwood timber-look finishes — the strength of Australian steel with the warmth of real timber - Sheer Panel Collection® — aluminium composite or glass-like acrylic panels (Panelift Icon) - Natural Finishes — organic textures and earthy tones

Insulation & Energy Efficiency

This is where sectional doors have a clear advantage.

****Roll-A-Door (Roller):**** Single-skin steel construction. Roller doors are not insulated. The coiling mechanism means each slat must remain flexible as it wraps around the drum, which makes adding insulation impractical. If your garage is attached to your home and you use it as a workshop, gym, or living space, this is a meaningful trade-off.

****Panelift (Sectional):**** Available with ****Insul-Shield™**** insulation — a graphite-embedded expanded polystyrene (EPS) material bonded to the panel interior. This provides: - Thermal insulation to help regulate garage temperature - Reduced heat transfer between the garage and the rest of the home - Noise dampening from outside - A cleaner, finished interior appearance

For homes in extreme climates — hot summers in Queensland or cold winters in Victoria and Tasmania — an insulated sectional door can make a noticeable difference to the comfort of adjacent rooms and energy bills.

****The honest take:**** If your garage is detached, used only for car parking, and you don't care about temperature control, insulation is a nice-to-have, not a must-have. If it's an attached garage that shares walls with living areas, sectional with Insul-Shield™ is the smarter long-term choice.

Security Features

Both door types are built to protect what matters most.

Roll-A-Door Security - ****Internal sliding bar lock**** — locks internally, making the door incredibly strong against forced entry - ****Auto-Lock™ Kit**** — available as an add-on for both Roll-A-Door (R1D)

and Roll-A-Door Neo (R1N). Automatically engages a lock every time the door closes - ****Automatic backdrive**** — when paired with an Automatic Technology opener, the motor automatically drives the door back down if it senses someone trying to force it open - ****Automatic reverse**** — reverses the door if it detects an obstruction in its path (safety feature)

Panelift Security - ****Anti-lift protection**** — sectional doors are inherently difficult to lift from outside due to the track and spring system - ****Auto-Lock™** standard on Panelift Icon** — a heavy-duty deadbolt automatically locks the door every time it closes. No add-on kit required — it's built in - ****Automatic backdrive and reverse**** — same Automatic Technology opener features as roller doors - ****Reinforced panel construction**** — multiple panels connected by hinges distribute force across the door face

****Security verdict:**** Both are excellent. The Panelift Icon has the edge with Auto-Lock™ as a standard inclusion rather than an add-on. For either door type, pairing with an Automatic Technology opener significantly enhances security through automatic backdrive protection.

Noise & Operation

Roll-A-Door B&D; invented ****Nylofelt®**** running strips — a proprietary material that lines the door guides and ensures the steel curtain opens and closes smoothly and quietly. Proper Nylofelt® maintenance is essential for quiet operation:

- ****Never use grease or oil**** on Nylofelt® or in the door guides — it clogs the material and spoils operation - Occasionally wipe guides with mineral turpentine or methylated spirits to remove dirt - Use ****silicone spray only**** after cleaning (WD40 and oil-based sprays should never be used) - Check operation every ****six months**** (more frequently in extreme environments or with heavy use) - If Nylofelt® becomes cut or damaged, seal fraying ends with a lighted match to stop deterioration

When well maintained, a Roll-A-Door operates with a smooth, distinctive rolling sound. The Neo model, with its updated profile design, offers refined operation.

Panelift Sectional doors operate on nylon rollers running inside steel tracks. The multi-panel hinge system distributes movement smoothly, and the torsion spring counterbalance ensures even, controlled travel. Sectional doors are inherently very quiet, especially when paired with a belt-drive opener.

****Opener noise comparison:**** - ****Roller door openers**** (Power Drive, Roll-A-Pro): Direct-drive motors designed for the continuous curtain mechanism. Reliable and purpose-built. - ****Sectional door openers**** (Smart, Smart Pro, Secure): Rail-mounted drive systems. Belt-drive options available for near-silent operation — ideal for garages below bedrooms.

Durability & Warranty

Cycle Ratings All B&D; Roll-A-Doors are tested for ****20,000–30,000 up-and-down cycles****. At five cycles per day (a typical household), that translates to ****over 15 years**** of reliable operation before any maintenance concerns.

Panelift sectional doors are similarly engineered for long-term durability, with torsion springs rated for comparable cycle counts.

B&D;'s 10-Year Total Confidence Warranty When you purchase a complete B&D; door and opener system (both must be B&D; products), you're eligible for the ****10-Year Total Confidence Warranty**** on selected components. To activate:

1. Purchase a B&D; door ****and**** a B&D; (Automatic Technology) opener together
2. Register online at www.bnd.com.au
3. Coverage applies to selected components for 10 years

This warranty is in addition to any statutory guarantees under Australian or New Zealand consumer law.

****Key point:**** The warranty requires both a B&D; door and a B&D; opener. Mixing a B&D; door with a third-party opener voids the extended warranty eligibility. This applies equally to roller and sectional doors.

Materials & Construction - ****Roll-A-Door:**** Colorbond® steel with brake-press structural profiling. Designed to remain flat and strong for the life of the door. Wind-rated options certified to Region C (66m/s wind speed, 3.2 kPa inward / 3.4 kPa outward ultimate design pressure). - ****Panelift:**** Colorbond® steel panels with optional Insul-Shield™ insulation. Storm-Shield variant independently tested to Category 5 cyclone equivalent. BAL-Maze variant CSIRO-tested to BAL-40 for bushfire zones.

Price Guide

B&D; offers a door at every price point. Here's how the range stacks up from most affordable to premium:

| Tier | Door | Type | Best For | |---|---|---|---| | ****Entry**** | Rollmasta | Roller | Budget-conscious buyers, sheds, rental properties | | ****Mid-Range**** | Roll-A-Door | Roller | Most Australian homes — proven, reliable, great value | | ****Premium Roller**** | Roll-A-Door Neo | Roller | Homeowners who want sectional aesthetics with roller practicality | | ****Mid-Range Sectional**** | Panelift | Sectional | Design flexibility, insulation, smooth quiet operation | | ****Premium Sectional**** | Panelift Icon | Sectional | Maximum security (Auto-Lock™), premium finishes, Sheer Panel options |

****Specialist options**** like Storm-Shield (cyclone-rated) and BAL-Maze (bushfire-rated) sit at the premium end and are chosen based on location requirements rather than preference.

For current pricing, visit the [B&D; Price Guide](https://www.bnd.com.au/price-guide/) or contact your local B&D; dealer. Prices vary by door size, colour, finish, and opener selection.

Which Opener for Which Door?

This is important — roller doors and sectional doors use ****different opener types****. They are not interchangeable.

Roller Door Openers (Automatic Technology) Designed for continuous-curtain roll-up doors: - ****Power Drive**** — Reliable, everyday roller door automation - ****Roll-A-Pro**** — Enhanced features for the Roll-A-Door range

Both connect directly to the roller door's barrel/axle mechanism. Purpose-built for the rolling action.

Sectional Door Openers (Automatic Technology) Designed for panel-lift sectional doors: - ****Smart**** — Standard sectional door automation - ****Smart Pro**** — Enhanced features and connectivity - ****Secure**** — Premium security-focused opener

These use a rail-mounted trolley system with a door arm that connects to the top panel. Belt-drive and chain-drive options available.

****Critical note:**** Always match the correct opener type to your door type. A roller door opener cannot drive a sectional door, and vice versa. Your B&D; dealer will ensure the right pairing, and the 10-Year Total Confidence Warranty requires a matched B&D; door + opener combination.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Can I replace a roller door with a sectional door (or vice versa)? Yes, but it's not a simple swap. The mounting, tracks, springs, and opener are all different. It typically requires a full installation by a qualified technician. Your existing opening dimensions will determine what's possible — particularly headroom and sideroom.

2. Which door is better for a garage with very low headroom? Both can work in low-headroom situations. Panelift sectional doors can fit in as little as 190mm headroom (manual), while Roll-A-Door low-headroom kits need 200mm. Add 50mm for either if you want an automatic opener. Consult your installer with exact measurements.

3. Do roller doors or sectional doors last longer? Both are built to similar durability standards. B&D; Roll-A-Doors are tested to 20,000–30,000 cycles. With proper maintenance (especially Nylofelt® care on roller doors and spring/track maintenance on sectionals), either type will serve you well for 15+ years.

4. Which is quieter? Sectional doors with a belt-drive opener are the quietest combination — ideal if your garage is directly below bedrooms. Roller doors with well-maintained Nylofelt® strips are also quiet, but the coiling mechanism produces a characteristic gentle rumble.

5. Can I insulate a roller door? Not effectively. The coiling mechanism requires each slat to flex as it wraps around the drum, making rigid insulation impractical. If insulation matters, choose a Panelift sectional with Insul-Shield™.

6. What's the difference between Panelift and Panelift Icon? Panelift Icon includes Auto-Lock™ as standard — a heavy-duty deadbolt that automatically locks every time the door closes. It also offers access to premium finish options like the Sheer Panel Collection®. Standard Panelift is the more affordable option with the same core construction.

7. Is the Roll-A-Door Neo a roller door or a sectional door? It's a roller door. The Neo coils above the opening just like a standard Roll-A-Door, keeping the ceiling free. The difference is its profile design, which gives it the visual appearance of a sectional door from the street.

8. Do I need a B&D; opener to get the warranty? Yes. The 10-Year Total Confidence Warranty requires a matched purchase of a B&D; door and a B&D; (Automatic Technology) opener, registered online at www.bnd.com.au. Using a third-party opener means you'll only receive the standard warranty.

9. Which door is more secure? Both are highly secure. Roller doors lock via an internal sliding bar mechanism. The Panelift Icon takes security further with Auto-Lock™ built in as standard. Both door types benefit from automatic backdrive protection when paired with an Automatic Technology opener.

10. What's the maximum size available? Roll-A-Door Series 1 (including Rollmasta) accommodates openings up to 3.0m high. Series 3 Roll-A-Doors go up to 3.6m high × 5.5m wide. Panelift sectional doors are available in a wide range of sizes — check with your dealer for specific maximum dimensions based on the configuration you need.

The Verdict: Which Door Should You Choose?

There's no universally "better" door — the right choice depends on your garage, your home, and what matters most to you.

Choose a Roll-A-Door if: - **Ceiling space matters** — You need the garage ceiling free for storage racks, a car with roof racks, or overhead clearance - **Budget is a priority** — The Rollmasta and standard Roll-A-Door offer excellent value - **You want a proven performer** — B&D; invented the roller door in 1956 and has spent decades perfecting it - **Your garage is detached** — Insulation is

less critical, and the roller's space efficiency shines - ****You want sectional looks with roller benefits**** — The Roll-A-Door Neo gives you the best of both worlds

Choose a Panelift if: - ****Design and street appeal are important**** — Sectional doors offer more profile options, premium finishes (Knotwood, Sheer Panel, natural finishes), and a contemporary look - ****You want insulation**** — Insul-Shield™ is only available on sectional doors. Essential for attached garages used as living or working spaces - ****Maximum security matters**** — The Panelift Icon's built-in Auto-Lock™ deadbolt is the strongest standard security feature in the range - ****Quiet operation is critical**** — Sectional doors with belt-drive openers are the quietest combination, ideal for garages below bedrooms - ****You're in a high-risk area**** — Storm-Shield (cyclone) and BAL-Maze (bushfire) variants are only available as sectional doors

The Middle Ground If you can't decide, the ****Roll-A-Door Neo**** occupies a unique position — roller door mechanics with sectional door aesthetics. It's the choice for homeowners who want the ceiling space of a roller but don't want to compromise on curb appeal.

Whichever you choose, a B&D door paired with an Automatic Technology opener gives you the full 10-Year Total Confidence Warranty, automatic backdrive security, and the backing of Australia's original garage door brand.

For personalised advice, use the [B&D; Price Guide](<https://www.bnd.com.au/price-guide/>) or visit your nearest [B&D; dealer](<https://www.bnd.com.au/dealers-near-me/>).