

Kia ora,

I am writing this submission on behalf of Electrify Wānaka (1). We are one of the many new “Electrify” groups around the country working alongside Rewiring Aotearoa (2) in order to accelerate the electrification of the country.

Who we are

We are a community group started in Wānaka last year by locals who have enjoyed the benefits of electrification and solar generation for many years. We know from experience that solar and electrification has reduced our emissions and made our lives healthier while also greatly improving our cost of living and our energy security.

We created this group to share our knowledge with the wider community to help others enjoy the same benefits.

What is driving us?

1/Climate change is the greatest challenge of our times. A recently published report from the British association of actuaries shows how underestimated climate risks have been so far. (3)

Greenhouse gas emissions are the main cause of this crisis and about ¾ of Global emissions are caused by the burning of fossil fuels to cover our need for energy (4). Renewable electricity is not only the cleanest and the cheapest form of energy available but it is also able today to replace fossil fuels for most applications.

2/We are in a health crisis where globally cancers are on the rise amongst never smokers (5) and where nationally 1 out of 5 New Zealander suffers from a respiratory disease (6). One of the leading causes of these diseases is poor air quality due to fuel combustion. Electric machines keep our air clean.

3/The cost of living crisis is worsening and is not going to improve in the near future as it is increasingly fuelled by the climate crisis. Due to a less favorable climate, it is becoming harder to farm and therefore food prices will keep increasing. Also large

destructive events such as cyclone Gabrielle or the Los Angeles fires, which cost a quarter of a trillion US dollars (7), do increase the cost of goods and insurance for everyone across the world,...

Electrification and solar rooftop generation enables us to save on energy costs while some other necessary goods prices will keep increasing.

A rapid increase in renewable electricity generation alongside a rapid electrification of all the machines needed for our societies to function is at the centre of all the actions needed to solve these crises, so we thank you for your work towards empowering electricity consumers.

A rapid electrification of the country is not only the best way to reduce our emission, it is the only way for us to stop burning fossil fuels while providing for all our energy needs. And the fastest and most economical way to make this transition happen is to facilitate the adoption of rooftop solar and battery systems by households, farms and businesses across the country.

A recently published study shows that rooftop solar alone could provide $\frac{2}{3}$ of global electricity.(8) The same is true here in New Zealand and enough rooftop solar and batteries would also enable us to store more water in our lakes for more hydro generation when needed in winter.

So the benefits of this transformation go far beyond “just” emissions reduction. A rapid electrification of the country alongside more renewable generation would also clean up our air, saving lives and saving billions of dollars for our healthcare system. And it would make energy cheaper for everyone in the country, saving thousands every year for households and making our economy much more efficient, saving the country as a whole billions of dollars every year. (9)

This transition is an environmental win, a social win, a health win and an economical win. We are counting on you to make the right decisions to support and accelerate this transition.

Our submission

We are of course aligned with the points raised by Rewiring Aotearoa:

- We agree with the aim of providing consumers with more options,
- and that flexible distributed generation can help drive down costs for everyone into the future.
- We do not support the proposed solution of principles-based rebates as the method to require distributors to pay a rebate when consumers supply electricity at peak times. (2A)
- Instead, we support a requirement for distributors to be
- required to pay consumption-linked injection tariffs, and that these be perfectly symmetrical. This requirement should apply to all consumers, not just mass market consumers. (2A)
- We support the addition of a new requirement for electricity
- retailers to pay a more fair price to consumers who sell power, but recommend that this should extend into dry years and other extended periods of constrained supply, and that at all times it reflects the value of this electricity (not solely the additional
- value at peak times). (2C)

We want to also mention some more specific barriers to the installation of solar systems that we are facing here in central Otago:

- Our lines company Aurora has imposed a 5KW export limit for
- new solar systems which is making solar installation a lot less financially attractive and is slowing down the adoption of solar in the region. We believe that the central government should require that 10KW export per phase for households be allowed again
- as it was before. Modern inverters have the ability to automatically adapt their export if voltages rise too much, there is no technical reason to slow down the uptake in rooftop solar when it is most needed.

- Even with a stated goal from our council to fully electrify
- the region, our farmers are still facing outdated landscaping rules that stop them from installing medium size solar systems on their land. A clear framework from the central government to allow farmers to install solar alongside their farming operation and
- to participate more easily in the energy market would help unlock the situation.

Final words

There is a tremendous momentum in electrification in our region. As mentioned above, QLDC (Queenstown Lakes District Council) alongside CODC (Central Otago District Council) and the ORC (Otago Regional Council) did present the vision for a fully electrified region supported by an increase in rooftop solar generation and home batteries in their proposal for the Regional Deal to the central government. (10)

To enable this vision, a rapid increase in rooftop solar generation is especially important as currently our lines connection to the national grid is limited and will soon become insufficient. An increase in rooftop and on-farm solar generation is needed to give us enough time to improve our grid connection and to minimise the cost of the necessary improvements to the lines. Yet there are still barriers to the adoption of solar in the region that we hope the central government can help address.

And finally, living in an area that is due for a major earthquake in the coming decades, a rapid increase in the number of large rooftop solar and battery systems in the region is of the utmost importance for our resilience. As shown during cyclone Gabrielle, these systems become life saving in case of major disasters. (11)

Again, thank you for your work and thank you for adopting the rules that will benefit most the consumers and accelerate most the adoption of rooftop solar and of electrification in general as this will in turn benefit most our economy and our environment.

Ngā mihi

Pierre Marasti representing Electrify Wānaka

Sources

(1)

<https://www.facebook.com/electrifywanaka/>

(2)

<https://www.rewiring.nz/communities>

(3)

https://actuaries.org.uk/planetary-solvency?utm_source=Hero+Slot&utm_medium=Website&utm_campaign=Planetary+Solvency+Report+Launch&utm_content=Read+report

(4)

<https://ourworldindata.org/ghg-emissions-by-sector>

(5)

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/feb/03/lung-cancer-never-smokers-rise-worldwide-air-pollution>

(6)

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/528073/asthma-and-lung-disease-rates-skyrocketing-one-in-five-nz-ers-now-affected>

(7)

<https://www.latimes.com/business/story/2025-01-24/estimated-cost-of-fire-damage-balloons-to-more-than-250-billion>

(8)

<https://electrek.co/2025/03/14/covering-every-roof-with-solar-could-supply-2-3-of-global-electricity-study/>

(9)

<https://www.rewiring.nz/tomorrow>

(10)

<https://www.qldc.govt.nz/media/51zlniww/1a-proposal-final-for-review.pdf>

(11)

https://youtu.be/hgFAhhla_dU?si=8fh3ocE2vscjHQdy