

Powernet meeting notes – verbal submission 16 October 2026

Attendees:

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Plug-in generation

- Generally, agrees with the framing of potential benefits for consumers.
- Plug-in generation work must consider all possible types of generation (not just solar) and connectivity/interoperability.
- Foresee several challenges in enforcing regulations, including any mechanical installation standards (eg, NZ storms) and limiting households to a single unit.
- The paper understates the potential impacts of cumulative/coincident export from plug-in generation – including the impact on traditional distributed generation. Generation will offset load to the full panel rating (whether or not it exports) so will contribute significantly to congestion.
- There is an overarching question of how distributors' congestion management policies can be equitably applied in future where plug-in generation is prevalent, and not visible to, or able to be managed by, distributors. EDBs will approve generation applications up to hosting capacity limits and then will not be able to connect further generation, however, plug in generation would most likely continue growth in export beyond network capacity and force inefficient network upgrades.
- Registration for visibility of plug-in generation will be beneficial to distributors in terms of ensuring that networks can operate reliably within their limits. Not pursuing visibility could lead to requiring decisions about whether more monitoring (eg, at transformer) is necessary for network management.
- Registration information obtained at the point of sale is likely to be the most reliable/efficient source due to leverage (no registration, no sale?), and linking to a consumer's retailer account may improve tracking movement of plug in generation (but not fool proof). Favour the registry as one source of truth, to the extent that it is possible to align registry information with a consumer facing source.
- In our experience, relying on reverse power flags as an indicator of potential DG has not been a reliable means of identifying unapproved exports so may not reliably locate plug-in generation. Reverse power flags often resulted from spurious events rather than genuine reverse electricity flows (may depending on particular meters, programming etc).
- Settings for safety, protection and efficient use of network are important: volt-var, volt-watt, voltage protection, anti-islanding, frequency settings. Ability to modify and update inverter settings likely to be a challenge (e.g. 'Australia A' likely to be modified to an updated NZ standard).

Small-scale DG Code proposals

- Agree that Part 1 and Part 1A should be available to applicants, both with 10kW default limit as per intent of previous code amendments.
- As a general comment, it would be useful for the Authority to provide distributors with greater clarity on the likely future direction of congestion management to support planning decisions. Code changes have favoured a first in first served approach to export capacity access which seems inequitable as congestion arises on networks. This paper proposes blocking attempts of some EDBs to future proof against inequitable network access but does not propose an alternative path forward or intent for future access.
- We considered including smart inverter protocol requirements in our standards but prefer and support an industry-wide, consistent response to implementing flexible and dynamic limits, supported by the regulator.
- It is unclear how the 10% buffer would be applied. It would be useful for the Authority to provide more information. The description seems to suggest reserved capacity which may then be granted after subsequent assessments. This seems unnecessary (considering our congestion assessment approach) and potentially unfair to applicants (connection approval dependant on lucky timing rather than order of application) and counter to the first-in-first-served direction of recent code amendments.