



About Us

Electrify Wairarapa is a programme that sits within the work of Sustainable Wairarapa, a charitable trust that has been working for 25 years in the region on a broad range of environmental initiatives.

Sustainable Wairarapa led the first community Electrify Conference and Expo in 2024. The team then went on to become one of the first Rewiring Community Partners in 2025.

We are community led and not for profit, with local volunteers who have personal experience of making the change to electric vehicles, installing solar panels and batteries, switching to hot water heat pumps and other electric appliances in their own homes, farms and communities.

We have reached an 'electrification tipping point' where households and businesses can save money and significantly reduce their emissions by switching to electric appliances and vehicles. Our goal is to accelerate an equitable transition to an electrified economy in the Wairarapa that benefits the wellbeing of our communities and contributes to tackling climate change.

We are keen to help people across both urban and rural Wairarapa to understand what this could mean for them, so they can make informed decisions about how to reduce their own energy costs and carbon emissions.

Combined Q1 and Q2 response

Question 1 - Do you agree with the description of decentralisation?

If not, why not?

Question 2 - Do you agree with the articulation of the potential outcomes and benefits from decentralisation for consumers?

If not, why not?

Yes, we agree with the way decentralisation is described, and we think those outcomes and benefits are both possible, and what we should be aiming for at pace.

One element which we believe needs to be factored into your main diagram 3.1 is the generation of economic value (local job creation and money staying in local economies through utilising energy from local production rather than imported fossil fuels).

Ensuring an equitable transition is particularly important to our local Electrify Wairarapa group. However, we do still think much more work and thinking is needed on ensuring the transition is equitable. If we truly want to have low-cost energy for people who need it most, that requires a more strategic approach, more joined up thinking and for us to think bigger than we currently are. At the recent Electrify Queenstown there was a call from Saul Griffiths, Rewiring Founder, for New Zealand to be the first country in the world to invest in an energy system as a public good.

We also think there is a significant risk that people who can afford it, will take themselves out of the energy system and leave a smaller pool of energy consumers who can't afford it to then carry the burden of higher daily charges.

We see community energy sharing, community ownership of energy assets and peer to peer sharing as vitally important. However, these models will need work and development at the regional and local level to work in a way that truly contributes to a more equitable system.

We also believe that taking consumers on this journey is not to be underestimated. To unlock the benefits described we need millions of New Zealanders to become more energy literate about their own energy use, motivated to change their own behaviour and to understand the options available to them. We also need these same people to understand the opportunities there are for these benefits to extend beyond their own home and out into their communities. This will require significant and sustained efforts to support people to make informed choices.

The point about councils and economic development agencies working together is vitally important and also not to be underestimated. We would also put iwi, hapu and community led initiatives like our own (Electrify Wairarapa) into the group of key stakeholders who need to co-create a shared regional vision for energy and the energy transition, quickly followed by roadmap of activities to accelerate that transition to unlock the benefits sooner.

Question 3 - Do you agree with the articulation of the possible challenges to unlocking the benefits of decentralisation?

If not, why not?

Yes, we agree you have captured the key challenges well.

We are very supportive of anything that can be done to reward those who invest in systems that balance out peaks.

We also strongly support any efforts to develop a truly intergenerational long term energy strategy with the economic, environmental, social and cultural wellbeing built in. Many have called for the division of generation and retail – so that long term infrastructure investments can be made by a business that only focuses on the infrastructure, not also on running (and subsidising) a retail business. It seems increasingly urgent to have some resolution to this and to short term thinking.

We have proven technologies, an increasing and apparent threat from climate change and plenty of investment and funding solutions from elsewhere that could be adapted e.g. how other infrastructure has been funded, or student loans, or variable rates schemes. We just need those with the power to do so to decide it is applicable to view this energy transition challenge in the same way.

Countries that have done more in terms of their energy transition have national governments that set clear strategic direction, that is then resourced and implemented at a regional and local level.

Question 4 - Do you agree with the articulated opportunity statement for a more decentralised electricity system?

If not, why not?

We strongly agree that this statement below is a useful articulation of the overarching opportunity.

'By 2040, Aotearoa New Zealand's electricity system has unlocked the affordability, decarbonisation, and security and resilience benefits of distributed energy solutions for regions and communities. This more decentralised system empowers people and communities, ensures fair and secure access to energy, and drives regional and community-led economic growth'.

Our group would be interested to be actively involved in working across local stakeholders to understand how you translate this into a regional strategy, roadmap and action plan.

We think it will be important to develop a consistent methodology for assessing and breaking down the potential benefits at a regional level, so that each region can understand what it means for that area. We are working with Rewiring Aotearoa on this.

Question 5 - What other feedback would you like to provide to input into the discussion on, for example:

- a) what a more decentralised electricity system might look like,**
- b) how this might benefit consumers, and**
- c) what might be needed to unlock these benefits.**

We believe the articulation of the challenges, opportunities and benefits in this document have been clear and well considered and comprehensive.

We hope this discussion document, and the support from those responding to it, helps to make the case for a commitment to develop a long term decentralised energy strategy with cross party support, capital and resource investment (government and private finance), supportive regulation to accelerate change and support for groups like ourselves that are seeking to accelerate local action trusted source of information for local people.

Question 6 - What are other emerging case studies we could learn from?

- <https://www.energiesprong.uk/newspage/powering-change-how-social-housing-landlords-are-pioneering-new-solar-financing-models> - our Electrify Wairarapa Programme Lead Justine Prain currently works remotely for Energiesprong UK if more information on this was useful.
- https://kaingaora.govt.nz/en_NZ/news/kainga-ora-and-ara-ake-partner-to-enable-solar-energy-sharing-trial/
- <https://cohaus.nz>

Contact us

If you would be interested to discuss this submission, please contact us.

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