



# LYTTELTON ENERGY TRANSITION SOCIETY

Lyttelton Energy Transition Society  
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[WWW.LETS.ORG.NZ](http://WWW.LETS.ORG.NZ)

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Submission - Lyttelton Energy Transition Society

Submitter - Co-Chair Wendy Everingham

Topic – Working together to ensure our electricity system meets the future needs of all New Zealanders

Lyttelton Energy Transition Society otherwise known as LETS is a recently created incorporated society based in Lyttelton. Community members from around our harbour have joined together to explore renewable energy options for our area. Our vision is to create: A zero-emissions, sustainable and resilient community with equitable access to energy.

Our goals are to:

- Promote, support and manage generation and use of electricity from local renewable sources.
- Improve the resilience of the community with distributed generation and storage.
- Ensure that the local community has ownership of and equitable access to electric energy
- Support advanced demand management of electricity use.
- Explore technical, commercial and cooperative opportunities for reducing Lyttelton's carbon footprint through local generation and use of energy.
- We aim to engage broadly with other similar organizations regionally and nationally to share lessons.

It's great that you, the Electricity Authority have created this discussion paper looking at how our future decentralised electricity networks will work for all New Zealanders. Thank you.

My first comment however relates to the lack of ambition time wise for your vision. 2040 is too far away. We think you are assuming a linear uptake to facilitate change. At Downstream 2025 James Kilty the CEO of Transpower even stated that this change is going to come upon us all very quickly. Already with rapidly reducing prices for solar and huge price increases from current electricity providers we think more and more New Zealanders will be opting for home generation because it's so much cheaper. Rewiring Aotearoa have the figures to back this up that over the lifetime of the assets it's much cheaper to for households and businesses to electrify with renewables. Similarly, those with EV's are going to

understand that their cars are also going to be part of the solution to cheaper power. As these assets are deployed in increasing numbers, the decentralisation of energy production by consumers will speed up the change process.

#### **QUESTION 1**

Yes, we agree with your description of decentralisation.

#### **QUESTION 2**

Yes, we believe the potential outcomes of decentralisation will be affordability, decarbonisation and energy security.

#### **QUESTION 3**

Yes, we agree that there are many challenges to making decentralisation of energy a reality. As well as the ones you have mentioned there is the issue of TRUST. Will consumers trust that the industry will do as they say? Will consumers be upskilled enough to be able to participate? Will governments legislate fast enough to enable these exciting changes to happen? Will the industry share revenue with many other players? Is there the technical capability in the industry to install all the new solar systems and batteries on households and businesses? Are there enough raw materials to supply all the equipment? Could current geopolitical issues cause supply chain issues for both households and the electricity sector upgrading? If all economies are following the decentralised pathway will demand out way supply?

#### **QUESTION 4**

Yes, we agree with your articulated opportunity statement.

#### **QUESTION 5**

We need localised energy plans created by local communities.

#### **QUESTION 6**

In Lyttelton we began Lyttelton Energy Transition Society in November 2023. This is a community led programme where we have started a Community Energy Initiative. This includes a large scale renewable energy project as well as upskilling our community in solar, batteries, wind, and all things renewable for electricity production.

Our first large scale project is trying to get a community owned larger solar and battery system on the roof of a Council owned facility. We have several aims with this project. We want to ensure in times of emergency we can communicate with the outside world. This building acts as our community emergency hub. We want to generate more power than we can use. The aim will be to either share with the building occupants, wider council facilities and the pensioner flats next door and earn additional income to purchase more batteries and panels for further community energy projects. We envisage having 2 ICP points. One for the building occupants and the other for demand response so that we can sell power back to the grid when spot prices are high.

We have not reached the goal yet. It is only a matter of time.

Things we have discovered along the way:

- Most people seem to be very enthusiastic about the idea of a community energy facility.
- Our community has the skills and ability to deliver this groundbreaking project.

- Support from industry and academia has been really positive.
- We have found that there is a huge amount of goodwill helping us to achieve our aims.
- Everyone can see that a project like this is a win win for the community.
- Our EDB is very supportive. They have shown this by the Community Energy Activator Programme that we were a part of. They have actively upskilled our team.
- Our Council had never thought about community energy. They had only thought about their own energy.
- Our project falls through the cracks of council funding rounds. The latest example – we thought we would qualify for the Capital Endowment Fund only to learn that council funding cannot be applied to their own buildings.
- Even Emergency Management Units at Council had not envisaged community owned renewable energy resources on council buildings
- The idea of leasing a roof of a council owned building had never been thought of.

Our community education programme has been running in tandem.

We have hosted several speakers, gone on field trips and hosted Solar Cafes. All events have been well supported. Our community is interested to learn about and participate in energy systems for the future. Already the uptake of solar on homes has increased because people can see their neighbours do it and then ask questions about it and get suitably encouraged.

### **Final Comment**

Finally, just a reflection on the democratisation of energy. The ideas generated in this paper form part of a greater change that needs to happen in society as a whole. Re-localisation needs to happen at scale. Our communities need to be re-engaged and believe they have an active role to play in shaping the future of our country. We need to excite citizens about the future. We need to be thinking about everyone in our community and how we can enable positive change for them all and not just the ones who have money, power and influence. A lovely example is the “People’s Standing Committee for Pay Equity”, that was announced today. People stepping up to make positive change.