Outlook

## Maximising benefits from local electricity generation

**From** Electrify Wairarapa [redacted]
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**To** Connection Feedback <connection.feedback@ea.govt.nz>

[redacted]

Kia
ora koutou

Thank
you for the opportunity to share our views. Firstly a short introduction.

**Electrify Wairarapa - About us**

- **Electrify Wairarapa is a programme that sits within the work of Sustainable Wairarapa**, which is 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 led Electrify Conference and Expo in 2024.** The team then went on to become one of the first Rewiring Community
  Partners in 2025.
- We
  are a **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 run regular information events with between 40 – 100 people joining us at these events**, we set up a local peer to peer support network and link people locally
  with relevant resources and information to support them to make informed choices about electrification of their homes, farms, businesses and vehicles.

**Consultation**
**submission**

We, like many others, are excited by the
potential of better empowering consumers who are fundamentally reshaping our energy future through investment in distributed generation like rooftop solar, and battery storage.

We agree with the Electricity Authority Te
Mana Hiko (Authority) aim to remove unnecessary barriers to more efficient investment in distributed generation and maximise the benefits it brings for all New Zealanders.

Currently, there are arbitrary restrictions on the amount of power those with rooftop solar and batteries connected to distribution networks can export to the grid. Higher export limits should speed up distributed generation (eg, roof top solar) and battery adoption rates because the payback period will be reduced and incentivise bigger systems to be installed. This will increase savings for homeowners and also help bring down the price of electricity for everyone on the network.

We support the Electricity Authority proposals to improve export limits for small-scale distributed generation (DG) by:

- setting a default 10kW export limit (with allowance to set lower limits where appropriate based on an industry-developed assessment methodology) for small scale distributed generation connections (up to 10kW capacity),
- setting default voltage response settings for inverters (using Australian setting) and allowing for distributors to set different settings where appropriate.

We support the Electricity Authority proposals to improve export limits for large-scale distributed generation (DG) by:

- mandating distributors to use an industry-developed bespoke export limits assessment method to set export limits for larger DG
- Mandating the use of the latest inverter performance standard for low voltage DG

Making sure the way bespoke export limits are set for many small businesses, community groups, farms and households who want to install more than 10kW of solar is really important to get right, so that unnecessary limits are not placed on the scale of their solar and battery installations. This critical group of customers installing mid size solar are typically not resourced to engage in the connection process with distributors in the same way that the large utility scale distributed solar and battery firms are. Therefore it's important that the proposed assessment method that distributors use is transparent, fair and its use is monitored by the Electricity Authority to ensure it is not used to unnecessarily limit distributed generation.

Allowing for distributors to set lower default limits than 10kW where appropriate using an industry-developed export limits assessment methodology, might be needed in specific situations but it should not be used as a way for EDBs to avoid improving network management approaches to support more customer solar investment and continuing to impose arbitrary unnecessary export limits. Electricity Authority scrutiny should be applied here, to monitor use.

Higher export limits will have widespread benefits for all New Zealanders and strengthen the resilience of the electricity supply. For example, distributed generation can increase the energy resilience of local communities by reducing reliance on electricity generated from centralised, grid-scale generation. Plus solar and battery systems can provide essential back up if there is a power outage, providing power for essential communications, EV charging and basic needs.

The country is screaming out for more generation and we know there is currently spare solar energy being curtailed by the networks that could be helping, especially in a dry year. We want to encourage the biggest possible solar systems because it reduces the costs for the homeowner and for everyone else on the network and higher export limits will help do that.

**At every single event we run we have members of the community mentioning the trouble they've run into with capped export limits. It is noticeable that this is an issue that is holding people back from going ahead with solar installs.**

We look forward to hearing a positive outcome from this consultation. Thank you again for the opportunity to contribute.

Nga Mihi

On behalf of the Electrify Wairarapa Organising Committee

Vern Brasell (Convenor), Justine Prain (Programme Lead), Erica Jar, Geoff Copps, Annie Lincoln, Simon Casey, Ian Gunn, Chris Peterson, Sally Bowman
Electrify Wairarapa

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