

Kia ora,

I am semi-retired pracademic in my early 70s living in Taranaki, who cares deeply about the environment and social equity. I have been an active citizen all my life and have the privilege of being able to afford to invest in an EV and solar panels on my home. I have not as yet invested in battery storage, partly because my power bill is already so low that it is hard to justify the investment when buy-back rates are also so low. Further, I am reluctant to own more batteries than I need to, given the environmental impact of their production. I am looking forward to the time when my EV battery might be able to serve that storage purpose as well. I also have an interest in power-sharing arrangements for my excess solar with those in power poverty. I have been part of a trial with Empower Energy who tried for a period to solve the multi-trader relationship barriers but has unfortunately not succeeded in taking their model to scale. I am now part of a local Community Energy Taranaki group, catalysed by a Climate Justice Taranaki (CJT) hui and now supported by Rewiring Aotearoa (RA), looking to inspire local households to electrify their whare and overcome barriers to investing in solar panels, battery and other electrification solutions.

I support both these organisations' (CJT and RA) 's detailed submissions on this consultation. I am excited by the potential of better empowering consumers (or as CJT says, prosumers because we are producers and consumers), who are fundamentally reshaping our energy future. While these proposals are a step in the right direction, key changes are needed to ensure individuals make decisions that lead to Aotearoa New Zealand building out the cheapest yet most resilient energy system possible. It is essential that we get the financial incentives set in a positive direction so that the people who are most in need of achieving savings on their power bills can be part of reshaping our energy markets, while at the same time accelerating uptake of solar/batteries as a key opportunity for meeting our climate change and energy needs. I will only comment on specific aspects that I can see directly relate to my experience.

I agree with the stated aim of providing consumers with more options, and that flexible distribution generation can help drive down costs for everyone into the future. I agree with the proposal to require large retailers to offer Time of Use plans as this empowers consumers/prosumers to take better control of their impact on the electricity system and their own bills (2B). However, the range of such plans needs to adapt to a new group of users like myself, who have both EVs and Solar. My patterns of energy use have changed significantly since I installed solar, prioritising EV charging, and other appliance use during the day. Time of Use plans tend to favour overnight usage, which is the opposite of what I need since owning both, but it has not been easy to find an ideal

plan for a solar prosumer like myself. I would welcome Powerswitch and power companies themselves proactively providing me with sound comparative information about the best plan they can offer in my particular circumstances. Generally the EV owner with or without solar have quite different optimum Time of Use plans.

I do not agree that the Task Force's proposed solutions for 2A and 2C will address the problems and achieve what is required. I agree with the addition of a new rule to "make sure power companies pay people who sell power to the network" (2C) but that to do this the rule needs to be explicitly extended beyond just "peak times" and into:

1. Dry years and other extended periods of extra constrained supply
2. For all times, reflecting the value of this power contribution to general supply and the role the energy is playing to reduce the need for new generation assets, rather than just on the market value at peak times.

As I see it, every Kwh of power I share with the national grid should mean less demand on hydropower and therefore enable our lakes to become a form of 'battery' storage for peak periods. Yet there is a very wide gap between the rate I pay for power usage and the rate I receive for my contribution to the national grid. I understand that transmission and other costs have to be covered, but the distributors and retailers benefiting from this supply do need to pay fairly for the benefits prosumers provide. As a prosumer, a symmetrical rate would be far easier to understand, and a more fair way to price electricity, where my electricity is treated as just as valuable as an energy company's energy export or reduction.

With a fairer system in place, I may reconsider my decision not to invest in a battery or upgrade my EV battery to one that can act as a storage facility when I have significant excess power. I invested in more panels than I needed for my personal use as a single person living alone, to make the best use of my roof space and to maximise my potential contribution to the common good. If these pricing issues were resolved as a result of your work, then I would sincerely hope that others find this makes their solar investment increasingly more financially viable.

I appreciate your work and hope that it will result in accelerating uptake of solar and battery investment by households. Compared to Australia, we have few market incentives to increase solar uptake. Yet as RA's research has shown, such uptake can help address the cost of living, our urgent need to reduce fossil fuel usage and enable a low-cost decentralised community energy system that is far more resilient in times of climate change adaptation crises. That sounds like win, win, win for all to me!

Noho ora mai

Margy-Jean Malcolm