

Minister for Regulation

Information Release

Regulatory Review: Residential and Small and Medium-Scale Solar

September 2026

This information release is available on the Ministry for Regulation website at:

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Documents in this information release

#	Reference	Type	Title	Date
1	CAB-26-MIN-0267	Cabinet paper	Regulatory Review: Residential and Small and Medium-Scale Solar	10/08/2026
2	CAB-26-MIN-0267	Cabinet minute	Regulatory Review: Residential and Small and Medium-Scale Solar	10/08/2026

Accessibility

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In Confidence

Office of the Minister for Regulation

Cabinet Business Committee

Regulatory Review: Residential and Small and Medium-Scale Solar

Proposal

- 1 This paper seeks endorsement of the recommendations of the Residential and Small and Medium-Scale Solar Regulatory Review (the Review). The Review Report is attached in summary and full form at Appendix One and Two.

Relation to government priorities

- 2 The Ministry for Regulation undertook the Review as part of the Government's commitment to carry out regulatory sector reviews. The Review's recommendations support the Government's commitments to reduce unnecessary regulatory burden, improve regulatory quality, and support the objectives of the Regulatory Standards Act 2025.
- 3 The proposal supports cost-of-living objectives by reducing costs and delays in the installation of solar, improving access to lower-cost energy options, and supporting greater consumer choice. The proposal also supports regulatory responsiveness to innovation by addressing gaps where current frameworks do not provide workable pathways for emerging technologies, including plug-in solar.

Executive Summary

- 4 New Zealand has growing demand for residential and small and medium-scale solar, but the process to install and use solar systems remains more complex, slower, and less predictable than it needs to be. International comparisons highlight the scale of this issue. In Australia, standard residential solar systems can often be approved and installed within days, whereas in New Zealand the process frequently takes several months.
- 5 The Review found that this is driven by how multiple regulatory frameworks and actors interact across the end-to-end process. Processes are often not sufficiently coordinated, and requirements are not always calibrated to risk. Whilst the Review acknowledges that price settings and subsidies are important factors influencing solar uptake, these issues sit outside the scope of the Review.
- 6 Households and businesses face barriers across the process, including uncertainty and inconsistency in how building consent exemption pathways are interpreted and applied, costly planning rules, delays in network approvals, limited metering competition, variable retailer practices, inefficient inspections, and a ban on plug-in solar in New Zealand¹.

¹ Plug-in solar refers to small, low-capacity solar systems (typically ≤600–800W) that can be plugged directly into a standard household socket, rather than requiring permanent installation.

- 7 I seek your agreement to a targeted package of reforms to address these system-wide issues. The reforms will improve the clarity and consistency of building and planning requirements, improve the speed, transparency and consistency of electricity distributor and metering processes, and introduce a more proportionate risk-based approach to electrical inspections while maintaining robust safety and quality safeguards. The package also enables plug-in solar in New Zealand through targeted regulatory change.

Background

- 8 I initiated the Review on 6 April 2026 in response to concerns raised through stakeholder engagement and submissions received through the Ministry for Regulation's Red Tape Tipline, that the solar installation process is unnecessarily complex, slow, and inconsistent. The Ministry for Regulation undertook a review of the end-to-end installation process to identify the main sources of cost, delay, and uncertainty, and to recommend changes that improve system performance while maintaining safety and quality.
- 9 The Review drew on multiple sources of evidence, including an online survey of approximately 200 respondents, targeted interviews with participants² across the sector, engagement with relevant agencies and regulators, review of legislation, regulations and codes, and selected international comparisons.

Progressing the changes identified through the Review

- 10 The Review made a total of 15 recommendations, and I agree they should all be progressed. I am seeking Cabinet's agreement to implement these recommendations, with the aim of making solar installation in New Zealand the simplest in the developed world.
- 11 The sections below summarise the key issues within each framework and the changes recommended to improve system performance while maintaining safety and quality.

Building Act 2004

- 12 The Review found that the current Building Act 2004 framework generally enables most solar installations to proceed without building consent. Most rooftop solar can proceed without building consent, and larger rooftop systems 40m² and over can also be exempt where a Chartered Professional Engineer (CPE) carries out or reviews the design. Ground-mounted solar also benefits from existing exemptions in urban areas, including arrays up to 20m² and arrays between 20m² and 40m² where a CPE carries out or reviews the design. In rural zones there is no size limit on ground-mounted solar arrays provided exemption conditions are met. Stakeholder feedback nevertheless indicates that these pathways are not always well understood or applied consistently, resulting in unnecessary building consent applications, additional costs, delays and inconsistent outcomes across councils.
- 13 The Review therefore recommends amending Schedule 1 of the Building Act 2004 to clarify how existing solar building consent exemptions operate in practice, including

² Participants included consumers, installers and electricians, electricity distribution businesses, retailers, metering providers, and industry bodies.

exemption pathways for rooftop solar installations over 40m² and ground-mounted solar installations between 20m² and 40m² in urban areas, where appropriate engineering review is provided. The Review also recommends building on existing guidance, decision tools and compliance resources to strengthen nationally consistent interpretation of the exemption framework and support clearer compliance pathways for common solar installation types.

Resource Management

- 14 In some cases, solar installations require resource consent, particularly for ground-mounted systems or installations in areas with specific planning constraints. Where consent is required, the process can add significant cost and delay. The Review found that an application can cost between \$3,000 to \$10,000 and timeframes can be difficult to predict. The underlying issue is the lack of a consistent national approach. Councils currently determine when consent is required, resulting in variation across regions creating a level of uncertainty and complexity that can discourage investment.
- 15 The Review recommends establishing nationally consistent planning rules that define when resource consent is not required for solar installations. At present, councils determine when consent is required unless national direction limits local discretion. As a result, similar solar installations may require consent in one district but not another. Under the Government's proposed resource management reforms, this could be achieved through a Transitional National Rule³ (TNR), or equivalent instrument, which would apply during the transition to the new system and override inconsistent local plan rules. The Review has recommended that installations that meet the criteria below be exempt from the need to seek resource consent:
 - 15.1 the proposed installation is under 300kW; and
 - 15.2 if roof-mounted, the proposed installation fits entirely on the roof of the building (for example: house, carport, garage, factory, milking shed).

Electricity Distribution Businesses

- 16 Connection to the electricity network is a critical step in the installation process, and a major source of delay, uncertainty, and inconsistency. The Review found that existing regulatory settings do not create strong incentives to prioritise timely, consistent, or consumer-focused connection processes. Application processing times vary substantially between electricity distribution businesses (EDBs). Some can process applications within minutes, while others can take weeks or months. Access to network and metering data is also fragmented and costly, limiting EDBs' ability to assess applications efficiently.
- 17 The Review also found that transparency is often weak. Limited visibility of network capacity and decision-making can result in redesigns, delays and higher costs. Different networks use different forms, requirements, and timeframes, which creates complexity for installers working across multiple regions and makes it difficult for consumers to predict how long approval will take. The Review also found that

³ A Transitional National Rule (TNR) is a temporary national planning instrument. TNRs are intended to provide nationally consistent direction during the transition from the current resource management framework to the new planning system.

existing default export limits⁴ can unnecessarily delay larger residential systems connected to multi-phase properties.

- 18 The Review recommends that the Electricity Authority consider whether improvements could be made to the timeliness, transparency, consistency and efficiency of distributed generation connection processes, including opportunities to improve data access, application processes, hosting capacity visibility, decision-making transparency and connection timeframes.
- 19 The Review also found that export limits can be conservative, too low, and applied inconsistently, in some cases restricting the amount of electricity households can export below what network capacity would allow, which reduces the financial benefits of solar. The Review therefore recommends increasing the default export limit for the streamlined process from 10kW per connection to 10kW per phase, as some larger properties have multiple phases. The Review also recommends that an additional streamlined process is developed for installations between 10kW and 100kW, and that EDBs be required to process applications that meet the criteria within 5 working days. In addition, the Review recommends that EDBs be required to publish information on hosting capacity.

Metering

- 20 While New Zealand has high smart meter coverage, the Review found that metering arrangements are a significant source of delay, cost and customer frustration in the solar installation process. Consumers can face long waits of weeks or months for upgrades or reconfiguration, and limited ability to challenge unnecessary meter replacements. In some cases, changing retailer during the process can require consumers to restart with a different metering provider. These issues make the process slower, more expensive, and more difficult to navigate.
- 21 The way that metering services are currently structured means that most consumers have no choice in relation to either their metering provider, or the ability to contact an alternative provider to carry out the meter upgrade or reconfiguration if their metering provider has long delays. This situation limits consumer choice and weakens incentives on metering providers to deliver timely and cost-effective services. Consumers also have limited visibility of meter requirements, costs, service quality, and available options.
- 22 The Review also found that limitations around access to metering data create wider system impacts. Access to metering data is fragmented across multiple providers, requiring EDBs to negotiate access and piece together datasets, which creates high transaction costs, delays, and incentives to restrict access. This market failure means that data is underused. Limited access to data contributes to slower EDB processing of applications, reduces network visibility, and can increase costs and delays throughout the installation process. Improving consumer access to detailed electricity usage and export data could encourage innovation and help consumers make more informed energy decisions.

⁴ Export limits are the maximum amount of electricity a solar system can export to the network without more detailed assessment by the local distributor.

- 23 To address these issues the Review recommends that the Electricity Authority consider changes to enable consumers to choose their own metering providers, improve access to and use of metering data, increase transparency and consumer choice, and strengthen consumer protections where meter upgrades are unnecessary or meters are incorrectly configured.

Retailers

- 24 Electricity retailers play an important role in the solar installation process, particularly in arranging meter upgrades, coordinating system activation, and enabling customers to export electricity. The Review found that retailer processes and communication can be a source of delay and customer frustration, with upgrades and configuration changes sometimes taking several weeks or longer.
- 25 The Review recommends that the Electricity Authority consider using its market facilitation role to identify and promote best practice retailer processes, improve coordination between retailers, metering providers and installers, and strengthen expectations around customer communication and activation processes.

Electrical Inspections

- 26 Electrical safety is central to any change to the inspection model, as solar installations involve safety hazards that may not be immediately visible to consumers. The current inspection system aims to ensure safety but creates unnecessary delays and is not well aligned to risk. All solar installations require an independent in-person inspection before use, meaning low-risk residential systems face the same requirements as complex installations. This one-size-fits-all approach contributes to bottlenecks and increased costs for consumers.
- 27 The Review also found weaknesses in the effectiveness and independence of the current inspection regime. Inspection data is not actively monitored, limiting oversight of installation quality and safety outcomes. Although inspection information is recorded in WorkSafe New Zealand's systems, feedback suggested failed inspections may not always be reported accurately. This limits visibility of installation quality, recurring issues, and broader safety trends.
- 28 The Review recommends strengthening reporting and monitoring arrangements to improve regulatory oversight and support evaluation of any future inspection reforms. It also recommends a time-limited trial of a risk-based inspection model, under which accredited installers could use remote inspections supported by digital evidence and independent review, while non-accredited installers and higher-risk installations would remain subject to existing requirements. Targeted spot checks would provide assurance, and the trial would generate evidence on safety, effectiveness and efficiency before any wider implementation. This trial would be delivered through existing work by the Energy Efficiency & Conservation Authority (EECA), in consultation with WorkSafe New Zealand, the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) and the Ministry for Regulation, and would reduce unnecessary delay while maintaining safety and robust oversight.

Plug-in Solar

- 29 Plug-in solar is a small solar system that can be connected to a home, typically using a standard wall socket. Plug-in solar is not currently permitted in New Zealand, as the Electricity Regulations (Prohibited Electrical Fittings – Inverters) Notice 2012 imposes a direct restriction on plug-in solar inverters.
- 30 The current prohibition on plug-in solar has implications for access and innovation. Plug-in solar could provide a lower-cost entry point to solar, particularly for renters, apartment residents, and lower-income households who cannot install traditional rooftop systems. International experience (including Germany and the United Kingdom) shows that these systems can be safely enabled as a low-capacity, certified product with simplified connection requirements. Since the start of the Review, the Minister for Energy has commissioned MBIE to enable plug-in solar, which provides a platform for progressing the relevant recommendation identified in this Review.
- 31 The Review recommends enabling plug-in solar through targeted amendments to the Electricity (Safety) Regulations 2010 and amendments to the Electricity Regulations (Prohibited Electrical Fittings – Inverters) Notice 2012. This would establish core safety requirements, including certification requirements, inverter protections, capacity limits and connection conditions.

Cost-of-living Implications

- 32 The recommendations are expected to reduce installation costs and improve access to lower-cost energy options, including through enabling plug-in solar.

Financial Implications

- 33 Recommendation 14 will either require reprioritisation of existing funding for relevant agencies away from other programmes or new sources of funding. Depending on the design of recommendation 14, additional procurement of software systems and processes may be required that are not currently funded within agency baselines.

Legislative Implications

- 34 The proposals can largely be implemented through existing legislative and regulatory frameworks. Some recommendations would require targeted amendments to secondary legislation, including Schedule 1 of the Building Act 2004 (via Order in Council), the Electricity (Safety) Regulations 2010, and the Electricity Regulations (Prohibited Electrical Fittings – Inverters) Notice 2012. Further Cabinet decisions will be sought where required before any legislative or regulatory amendments are progressed.

Regulatory Analysis Summary

- 35 The Ministry for Regulation has determined that this proposal is exempt from the requirement to provide a Regulatory Analysis Summary (RAS) on the grounds that it would substantively duplicate the Review Report and Appendices. This exemption is granted on the condition that the document contains the key feature of a RAS. The joint Regulatory Impact Assessment panel at MBIE and the Ministry for Regulation

has reviewed the Review Report and Appendices and confirmed that it contains these features. Changes to regulations that may be progressed in response to this paper are likely to require further regulatory impact analysis.

Climate Implications of Policy Assessment

- 36 The proposal introduces a targeted package of reforms to reduce barriers to the uptake of residential and small and medium-scale solar. To the extent that these reforms lead to lower solar installation costs and increased installation rates, they could contribute to lower greenhouse gas emissions from energy use.
- 37 The Climate Implications of Policy Assessment (CIPA) team has been consulted and confirms that the CIPA requirements do not apply to this policy proposal, as the thresholds for significance are not met.

Population Implications

- 38 The regulatory reforms outlined in this paper will be of interest to many groups. Their views were considered during the Review.

Human Rights

- 39 The proposals in this paper are consistent with the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 and the Human Rights Act 1993. The proposed changes to electrical inspections and audits may have implications under section 21 of the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 depending on the design of the accreditation scheme. If related inspection or enforcement powers are developed it will be done in consultation with the Ministry of Justice to ensure any such powers are reasonable and subject to appropriate safeguards.

Use of external resources

- 40 No external resources were engaged or remunerated during the Review.

Consultation

- 41 The Ministry for Regulation consulted with MBIE, the Electricity Authority, WorkSafe New Zealand, the Ministry of Cities, Environment, Regions and Transport (MCERT), the Commerce Commission, the Treasury, the Ministry of Justice, the Parliamentary Counsel Office, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and EECA.
- 42 These agencies supported the objectives of the Review of reducing unnecessary barriers to residential and small and medium-scale solar and improving the efficiency, transparency, and consistency of the regulatory system.
- 43 The Electricity Authority noted that some of the detailed recommendations are already in the Electricity Industry Participation Code so do not need further action, and many of the recommendations (Recommendations 8.2, 8.4, 11.1, 11.2 and 14) are either due to come into effect shortly, or relate to issues currently being explored by the Electricity Authority, or are unnecessary. The Electricity Authority disagrees with Recommendation 11.2 as there is not sufficient evidence of a regulatory problem

requiring this level of intervention, and the Electricity Authority has already identified more direct interventions that would resolve the issue of meter upgrade delays.

- 44 WorkSafe New Zealand considered that the proposals are premature and are not yet supported by sufficient safety analysis, implementation detail, system design, or cost assessment. They note the Review has identified several legitimate issues relating to the operation of the current inspection regime, but their view is that other system improvements (such as guidance, training, endorsement settings, inspection criteria, transparency, and regulatory oversight) would be more appropriate for addressing the issues identified (Recommendation 14).

Communications

- 45 I will issue a press release to announce Cabinet's decisions on the Review, with the Review Report and associated documents available on the Ministry for Regulation's website.

Proactive Release

- 46 I intend to proactively release this paper within 30 business days of decisions being confirmed by Cabinet, subject to redactions as appropriate under the Official Information Act 1982.

Recommendations

I recommend that the Committee:

- 1 **note** the contents of the attached paper *Residential and Small and Medium-Scale Solar Regulatory Review Report* that sets out the findings and recommendations from the Review.

Building Act 2004

- 2 **agree** to amend Schedule 1 of the Building Act 2004 to clarify the building consent exemption settings for solar installations;
- 3 **invite** the Minister for Building and Construction to ask the Chief Executive of MBIE to update supporting materials and guidance to clarify when Schedule 1 solar exemptions apply, and support more nationally consistent interpretation of the rules by Building Consent Authorities and system participants;
- 4 **agree** that the Minister for Building and Construction is authorised to further clarify and develop policy matters relating to this proposal in a manner consistent with the policy recommendations contained in the paper;

Resource Management

- 5 **agree** for the Minister Responsible for Resource Management Act Reform to progress nationally consistent planning settings for small and medium-scale solar installations, including:

- 5.1 developing a Transitional National Rule (subject to Cabinet agreement to the framework for Transitional National Rules), or equivalent instrument, to define when resource consent is not required for solar installations, including for systems under 300kW and, for roof-mounted systems, where the system fits entirely on the roof;

Electricity Distribution Businesses

- 6 **note** that the Electricity Authority is an independent Crown entity and Ministers cannot direct it in the exercise of its functions;
- 7 **note** that the Minister for Regulation and the Minister for Energy will provide a copy of the Review report to the Electricity Authority for consideration;
- 8 **note** that the Review recommends that the Electricity Authority consider measures to improve the timeliness, transparency, consistency and consumer experience of distributed generation connection processes, including through potential amendments to the Electricity Industry Participation Code 2010 including:
- 8.1 requiring electricity distribution businesses to publish clear and standardised information on application processes, timeframes, fees, and decision criteria;
- 8.2 improving visibility of available network hosting capacity and ensuring that connection fees are transparent, fair, and reasonable;
- 8.3 improving the efficiency and consistency of application processes across distributors;
- 8.4 requiring distributors to approve applications under 10kW, made under the streamlined process by the end of the next working day, and create a streamlined process to approve applications between 10kW and 100kW that meet criteria within 5 working days; and
- 8.5 increasing the default export limit for the streamlined application process described in the Electricity Industry Participation Code 2010, Part 6, Schedule 6.1, Part 1A from 10kW per connection to 10kW per phase;
- 9 **note** that any future amendments to the Electricity Industry Participation Code 2010 would be subject to the Electricity Authority's statutory consultation and decision-making requirements under section 39(1) of the Electricity Industry Act 2010. In addition, the Electricity Authority is required to consult the Commerce Commission under section 54V of the Commerce Act 1986 prior to amending the Electricity Industry Participation Code 2010, where any proposed amendment may affect the Commerce Commission's functions or powers in relation to electricity lines;
- 10 **note** that recommendation 8.4 is dependent on the implementation of recommendation 11.1 below;

Metering

- 11 **note** that the Review recommends the Electricity Authority consider ways to improve data access, competition, and consumer outcomes in metering arrangements,

including through amendments to the Electricity Industry Participation Code 2010 where required, by:

- 11.1 making metering data more accessible to both consumers and electricity market participants;
 - 11.2 improving competition in metering, and give consumers the ability to choose their metering provider and who carries out their meter upgrade or reconfiguration; and
 - 11.3 strengthening rules and accountability for unnecessary meter upgrades and clarifying liability for costs when a meter is not upgraded or reconfigured as requested, or there is an error in the upgrade or reconfiguration process;
- 12 **note** that following the implementation of Recommendation 11.2 EECA will publish consumer-friendly information on meter options, including meter capabilities, upgrade options, and costs;

Retailers

- 13 **note** that the Review recommends the Electricity Authority considers whether it is appropriate to use its market facilitation role to improve retailer processes, coordination and communication, including identifying best practice and areas for process improvement across retailers involved in solar installation and system activation;

Electrical Inspections

- 14 **invite** the Minister for Regulation, Minister for Energy, Minister for Building and Construction and the Minister for Workplace Relations and Safety to explore, by January 2027, moving from a universal inspection model to a more risk-based approach, by:
- 14.1 establishing a time-limited trial of an accreditation-based inspection model that:
 - 14.1.1 enables remote inspection through digital evidence reviewed by an independent inspector; and
 - 14.1.2 uses targeted post-installation spot checks to provide ongoing assurance; and
 - 14.1.3 compares outcomes against the existing inspection regime to assess safety, effectiveness and efficiency;
- 15 **invite** the Minister for Energy to consider amendments to the Electricity (Safety) Regulations 2010 to strengthen and clarify requirements for reporting electrical inspection outcomes, including failed solar inspections, to support improved regulatory oversight and system monitoring;
- 16 **authorise** the Minister for Regulation, Minister for Energy, Minister for Building and Construction and the Minister for Workplace Relations and Safety to make final

decisions on the details of the accreditation scheme and the trial and make changes not inconsistent with the policy intent described in this paper on any issues that may arise during implementation;

- 17 **invite** the Minister for Regulation, Minister for Energy, Minister for Building and Construction and the Minister for Workplace Relations and Safety to report back to Cabinet on the outcome of the trial, including recommendations on wider implementation of a risk-based inspection regime;

Plug-in Solar

- 18 **note** that the Minister for Energy has directed his officials to enable plug-in solar in New Zealand either through the development of standards or amendments to the Electricity (Safety) Regulations 2010;
- 19 **invite** the Minister for Energy to progress and make any regulatory amendments necessary to enable plug-in solar in New Zealand, including:
- 19.1 amendments to the Electricity (Safety) Regulations 2010; and
- 19.2 amendments to the Electricity Regulations (Prohibited Electrical Fittings – Inverters) Notice 2012;

Next steps

- 20 **note** that I will issue a press release to announce Cabinet's decisions on the Review, with the Review Report and relevant review documentation available on the Ministry for Regulation's website;
- 21 **invite** the Minister for Energy to issue a Letter of Expectations to the Electricity Authority regarding the prioritisation of work arising from the Review's recommendations;
- 22 **invite** the Minister for Regulation to report back to Cabinet in 2028 to provide a progress update on how the recommendations have been implemented.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon David Seymour

Minister for Regulation

**Appendix One: Residential and Small and Medium-Scale Solar Regulatory Review
Summary Report**

Excluded from this proactive release. The information is published on the
Ministry for Regulation website: [https://www.regulation.govt.nz/regulatory-
reviews/residential-and-small-to-medium-scale-solar-review/](https://www.regulation.govt.nz/regulatory-reviews/residential-and-small-to-medium-scale-solar-review/)

Appendix Two: Residential and Small and Medium-Scale Solar Regulatory Review Report

Excluded from this proactive release. The information is published on the Ministry for Regulation website: <https://www.regulation.govt.nz/regulatory-reviews/residential-and-small-to-medium-scale-solar-review/>



Cabinet

Minute of Decision

This document contains information for the New Zealand Cabinet. It must be treated in confidence and handled in accordance with any security classification, or other endorsement. The information can only be released, including under the Official Information Act 1982, by persons with the appropriate authority.

Regulatory Review: Residential and Small and Medium-Scale Solar

Portfolio **Regulation**

On 10 August 2026, Cabinet:

Review report

- 1 **noted** the contents of the report Improving the Solar Installation Process: Final Report of the Review of Regulations Surrounding Small-to-Medium-Scale Solar Installation Process (the Review Report), attached to the paper under CAB-26-SUB-0267, which sets out the findings and recommendations from the Review;

Building Act 2004

- 2 **agreed** to amend Schedule 1 of the Building Act 2004 to clarify the building consent exemption settings for solar installations;
- 3 **invited** the Minister for Building and Construction to instruct the Chief Executive of the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment to update supporting materials and guidance to:
 - 3.1 clarify when the Schedule 1 solar exemptions apply;
 - 3.2 support more nationally consistent interpretation of the rules by Building Consent Authorities and system participants;
- 4 **authorised** the Minister for Building and Construction to further clarify and develop policy matters relating to paragraphs 2 and 3 above in a manner consistent with the policy proposals in the paper under CAB-26-SUB-0267;

Resource management

- 5 **invited** the Minister Responsible for Resource Management Act Reform to progress nationally consistent planning settings for small and medium-scale solar installations including:
 - 5.1 developing a Transitional National Rule (subject to Cabinet agreement to the framework for Transitional National Rules), or equivalent instrument, to define when resource consent is not required for solar installations, including for systems under 300kW and, for roof-mounted systems, where the system fits entirely on the roof;

Electricity distribution businesses

- 6 **noted** that the Electricity Authority is an independent Crown entity, and that Ministers cannot direct it in the exercise of its functions;
- 7 **noted** that the Minister for Regulation and the Minister for Energy will provide a copy of the Review Report to the Electricity Authority for consideration;
- 8 **noted** that the Review Report recommends that the Electricity Authority consider measures to improve the timeliness, transparency, consistency and consumer experience of distributed generation connection processes, including through potential amendments to the Electricity Industry Participation Code 2010 including:
- 8.1 requiring electricity distribution businesses to publish clear and standardised information on application processes, timeframes, fees, and decision criteria;
 - 8.2 improving visibility of available network hosting capacity and ensuring that connection fees are transparent, fair, and reasonable;
 - 8.3 improving the efficiency and consistency of application processes across distributors;
 - 8.4 requiring distributors to approve applications under 10kW, made under the streamlined process by the end of the next working day, and to create a streamlined process to approve applications between 10kW and 100kW that meet the criteria within 5 working days;
 - 8.5 increasing the default export limit for the streamlined application process described in the Electricity Industry Participation Code 2010, Part 6, Schedule 6.1, Part 1A from 10kW per connection to 10kW per phase;
- 9 **noted** that:
- 9.1 any future amendments to the Electricity Industry Participation Code 2010 would be subject to the Electricity Authority's statutory consultation and decision-making requirements under section 39(1) of the Electricity Industry Act 2010;
 - 9.2 in addition, the Electricity Authority is required to consult the Commerce Commission under section 54V of the Commerce Act 1986 prior to amending the Electricity Industry Participation Code 2010, where any proposed amendment may affect the Commerce Commission's functions or powers in relation to electricity lines;
- 10 **noted** that paragraph 8.4 above is dependent on the implementation of paragraph 11.1 below;

Metering

- 11 **noted** that the Review Report recommends that the Electricity Authority consider ways to improve data access, competition, and consumer outcomes in metering arrangements, including through amendments to the Electricity Industry Participation Code 2010 where required, by:
- 11.1 making metering data more accessible to both consumers and electricity market participants;

- 11.2 improving competition in metering, and giving consumers the ability to choose their metering provider and who carries out their meter upgrade or reconfiguration;
 - 11.3 strengthening rules and accountability for unnecessary meter upgrades, and clarifying liability for costs when a meter is not upgraded or reconfigured as requested, or there is an error in the upgrade or reconfiguration process;
- 12 **noted** that following the implementation of the Review Report's Recommendation 11.2, the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority will publish consumer-friendly information on meter options, including meter capabilities, upgrade options, and costs;

Retailers

- 13 **noted** that the Review Report recommends that the Electricity Authority consider whether it is appropriate to use its market facilitation role to improve retailer processes, coordination and communication, including identifying best practice and areas for process improvement across retailers involved in solar installation and system activation;

Electrical inspections

- 14 **invited** the Minister for Regulation, Minister for Energy, Minister for Building and Construction and the Minister for Workplace Relations and Safety to explore, by January 2027, moving from a universal inspection model to a more risk-based approach, by establishing a time-limited trial of an accreditation-based inspection model that:
- 14.1 enables remote inspection through digital evidence reviewed by an independent inspector;
 - 14.2 uses targeted post-installation spot checks to provide ongoing assurance;
 - 14.3 compares outcomes against the existing inspection regime to assess safety, effectiveness and efficiency;
- 15 **invited** the Minister for Energy to consider amendments to the Electricity (Safety) Regulations 2010 to strengthen and clarify requirements for reporting electrical inspection outcomes, including failed solar inspections, to support improved regulatory oversight and system monitoring;
- 16 **authorised** the Minister for Regulation, Minister for Energy, Minister for Building and Construction and the Minister for Workplace Relations and Safety to make final decisions on the details of the accreditation scheme and the trial, and to make changes not inconsistent with the policy intent described in the paper under CAB-26-SUB-0267, on any issues that may arise during implementation;
- 17 **invited** the Minister for Regulation, Minister for Energy, Minister for Building and Construction and the Minister for Workplace Relations and Safety to report back to Cabinet on the outcome of the trial, including recommendations on wider implementation of a risk-based inspection regime;

Plug-in solar

- 18 **noted** that the Minister for Energy has directed officials to enable plug-in solar in New Zealand, either through the development of standards, or amendments to the Electricity (Safety) Regulations 2010;

- 19 **invited** the Minister for Energy to progress and make any regulatory amendments necessary to enable plug-in solar in New Zealand, including:
- 19.1 amendments to the Electricity (Safety) Regulations 2010;
 - 19.2 amendments to the Electricity Regulations (Prohibited Electrical Fittings – Inverters) Notice 2012;

Next steps

- 20 **noted** that the Minister for Regulation will issue a press release to announce Cabinet's decisions on the Review, with the Review Report and relevant review documentation available on the Ministry for Regulation's website;
- 21 **invited** the Minister for Energy to issue a Letter of Expectations to the Electricity Authority regarding the prioritisation of work arising from the Review Report's recommendations;
- 22 **invited** the Minister for Regulation to report back to Cabinet in 2028 to provide a progress update on how the Review Report's recommendations have been implemented.

Rachel Hayward
Secretary of the Cabinet