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Accredited solar installer programme

Summary of submissions

ENERGY EFFICIENCY & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY
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Contents

Purpose

This document summarises and provides a record of feedback received in response to EECA's draft approach to endorsing industry-led accreditation programmes for installers of solar PV and battery systems.

It sets out:

- the number and type of submissions reviewed
- the overall themes and key messages from submissions
- the main areas of agreement, qualification and concern
- potential refinements and next steps for consideration.

Confidentiality note: one submitter requested that EECA consider withholding commercially sensitive material under the Official Information Act. This summary records themes and avoids reproducing detailed commercial examples.

Background and consultation process

EECA invited feedback on a draft approach to endorse industry-led accreditation programmes that assess and accredit installers of solar PV and battery systems. The consultation opened on 13 April 2026 and feedback was requested by 15 May 2026.

The stated intent was to strengthen confidence in solar quality, support consistent best practice, and help more New Zealanders adopt renewable energy safely and effectively. EECA proposed to endorse accreditation programme providers rather than individual installers.

The proposed draft approach focused on three key criteria areas:

Business and operational competence	Expectations for fit and proper persons, codes of conduct, electrical sign-off, insurance, health and safety, and ongoing professional development.
Design and quoting quality	Competence in relevant standards, clear system specifications, site-specific design, transparent itemised quotes, and reasonable performance and return-on-investment claims.
Installation quality and after-sales support	Installation to the Building Code and manufacturer specifications, roof integrity, commissioning, handover, clean-up, and after-sales troubleshooting.

The draft also proposed ongoing assurance through periodic, independent third-party auditing, including checks on how installers are assessed and approved, targeted quality reviews, random assessment of completed installations and processes to address corrective actions.

Overview of submissions

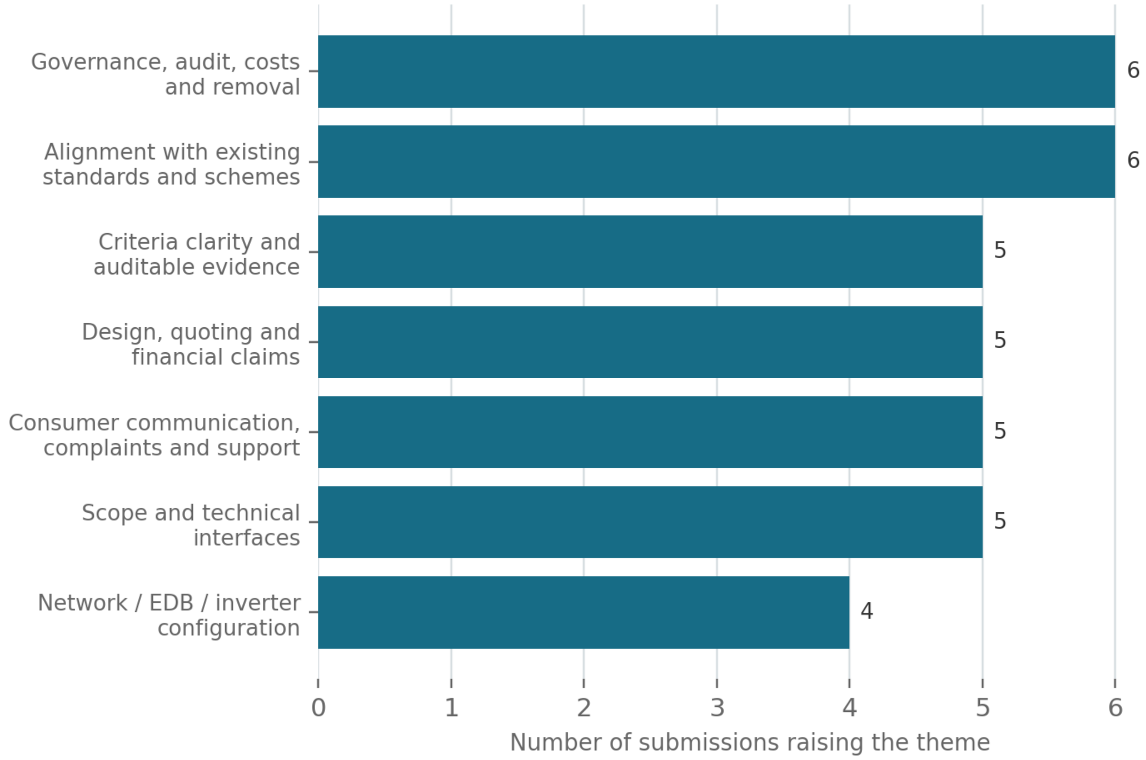
A total of four submissions as well as informal feedback were reviewed. Submitters included industry associations, industry and market participants, a regulator and a non-profit advocacy organisation.

Submitter	Summary of feedback
Cogo	Supported the intent and structure; recommended stronger audit evidence, named standards, customer artefacts and customer satisfaction measures.
Sustainable Energy Association of New Zealand (SEANZ)	Supported the intent; considered the draft too narrow and sought broader criteria linked to consumer research and Solassure criteria.
FarmGen	Supported higher standards; emphasised financial modelling, proposal transparency, cost-benefit discipline and rural/ground-mount context.
Rewiring Aotearoa	Supported the aims; recommended access for charities, communication requirements, complaints processes, removal triggers and fee controls.
Electricity Engineers' Association (EEA) – informal feedback	Supportive of the direction; recommended alignment with existing guidance, scope clarity, network interface and governance detail.
Electricity Authority – informal feedback	Constructive; sought clearer provider requirements, value proposition, qualification levels, consumer engagement and inverter configuration content.

Overall themes and key messages

Submitters were broadly supportive of the objective of raising solar industry quality and consumer confidence. No submitter opposed the concept outright in the feedback reviewed. However, support was consistently conditional on the criteria being clearer, more auditable, and better aligned with consumer outcomes and existing industry frameworks.

Figure 1: Main themes raised by submitters



Support for the programme-level model

Several submitters explicitly supported EECA endorsing accreditation programmes rather than accrediting individual installers. The model was seen as pragmatic and scalable, provided endorsement is robust and not treated as a light-touch badge.

- The three-part structure was generally considered the right shape.
- Third-party auditing was described as a strength of the proposal.
- Submitters saw potential for the programme to improve confidence, industry performance and consumer outcomes.

Criteria need to be auditable and evidence-based

A dominant theme was that many criteria need to be translated into measurable evidence requirements. Submitters raised concern that terms such as “adequate”, “reasonable”, “fit for purpose”, “clearly communicated” and similar phrasing could be difficult for programme providers or auditors to apply consistently.

Evidence	Submitters wanted criteria that can be tested against documents, certificates, photographs, CRM or complaint records, customer sign-offs and completed-job files.
Standards	Several submitters recommended naming the specific AS/NZS standards and New Zealand guidance that installers should demonstrate competence against.

Duplication	Some submitters considered that competence and installation-quality criteria repeat across sections and should be consolidated to reduce audit cost without weakening assurance.

Design, quoting and financial claims require stronger treatment

Submitters generally supported transparent pricing and reasonable performance claims, but considered the current treatment of financial representation too limited. Feedback emphasised that solar proposals can be built on complex and variable assumptions, and that small changes can materially alter headline payback periods.

- Suggested disclosure areas included export pricing, import-price inflation, fixed network charges, self-consumption, battery degradation, software or subscription fees, tax treatment, asset replacement and lifecycle costs.
- Several submitters wanted standardised or better-referenced presentation of performance and return-on-investment estimates.
- Some submitters considered misleading or over-optimistic financial modelling a material risk to long-term trust in the sector.

Consumer communication, complaints and after-sales support

Multiple submissions argued that accreditation should address the whole customer experience, not just technical competence. Submitters highlighted quote responsiveness, communication about delays, complaint resolution, customer handover, post-install support and customer satisfaction as important indicators of whether accreditation is delivering its purpose.

Communication	Minimum communication expectations were suggested for quote responses, changes to installation timeframes, and responses to issues or complaints.
Complaints	Submitters proposed a defined complaints process with the ability to escalate unresolved matters to the accreditation programme provider.
Customer outcomes	Some submitters proposed customer-facing artefacts, post-handover surveys and 90-day satisfaction checks to measure whether accredited installers deliver good outcomes.

Scope, technical interfaces and existing schemes

Several submitters considered the draft PV-centric, despite references to solar PV and batteries. Submitters sought clearer coverage of batteries, hybrid systems, backup/EPS arrangements, ground-mount and farm-scale installations, and situations where charities or trusts may be installers.

- Submitters wanted clearer alignment with PAS 6014:2025, AS/NZS standards, EEA guidance, SEANZ/Solassure, Australian accreditation experience and other existing sector work.
- Network and regulatory interfaces were raised as areas to strengthen, including export limits, protection settings, voltage response, EDB connection compliance and correct inverter configuration.
- Some submitters cautioned that the programme should not fragment the market or create confusion between EECA endorsement and existing private-sector or industry schemes.

Governance, auditing, costs and market design

Submitters supported independent auditing in principle, but wanted more detail on provider eligibility, audit cadence, sample size, governance, escalation, removal triggers, audit funding, fees and the value proposition for installers.

- Questions were raised about how an independent training or accreditation agency would be audited if accredited installers work for other entities.
- Submitters sought clarity on graduated responses, remediation, suspension and removal.
- Some submitters raised cost-benefit concerns, potential accreditation fees, and the risk that a small number of endorsed programmes could acquire market power.
- Submitters recommended a clear transition and update process, including consultation on material changes to the criteria.

Feedback on key criteria areas

Criteria area	What submitters supported	What submitters wanted refined
Business and operational competence	General support for fit and proper expectations, insurance, H&S, code of conduct and CPD.	Clarify “fit and proper”; include charities/trusts; consider financial viability; specify minimum code-of-conduct content; clarify provider/training-agency requirements and qualification levels.
Design and quoting quality	Support for itemised quotes, site-specific design, performance estimates and reasonable ROI claims.	Add explicit financial modelling assumptions; define evidence for standards competence; clarify EDB/export-limit requirements; provide customer warranty information in quotes; avoid over-prescriptive or misleading energy-yield metrics.
Installation quality	Support for installation to Code and manufacturer requirements, commissioning, roof integrity and audit.	Clarify evidence requirements; address batteries, hybrid and ground-mount installations; avoid roof-only framing where broader applications are intended; clarify inverter configuration and network compliance.
After-sales support	Support for troubleshooting and handover expectations.	Require written handover artefacts, defined complaint escalation, communication timeframes and potentially customer satisfaction reporting.
Ongoing endorsement and auditing	Strong support for independent auditing as the programme’s assurance backbone.	Define cadence, sample size, audit funding, provider accountability, corrective-action escalation, removal triggers and criteria update processes.

Points of difference

Submitters were aligned on the need for clearer assurance, but differed on how broad the EECA-endorsed baseline should be and how quickly the programme should be implemented.

Minimum baseline Vs. broader quality mark	Some submitters favoured a clear, auditable minimum set of criteria. Others cautioned that a narrow baseline could be confused with more comprehensive accreditation and may not address the full consumer journey.
Regulatory burden Vs. market confidence	Some submitters emphasised stronger standards and enforcement. Others warned that costs, complexity and timing must be proportionate and should not create unnecessary barriers to scaling the sector.

Industry-led standards Vs. EECA endorsement	Several submitters supported EECA's programme-level endorsement role, while also seeking careful alignment with existing schemes to avoid duplication or market distortion.

Refinements and next steps

Based on the feedback received, refinements have been made to the draft criteria with the final criteria set to be released in due course.

Care was taken to tighten the language in places and bring in more specificity where required. However, it was decided that the exact language used for auditable evidence was for the individual programme providers to apply in their own documentation rather than being prescribed by EECA.

Based on the feedback received, changes have been applied to:

- Auditing expectations from both the programme provider and EECA
- Code of conduct requirements
- Added appendix of standards that installers are expected to adhere to, and show competence in
- Added requirement for fair and reasonable marketing activity by installers
- Added requirement for a customer handover pack
- Broadened criteria to allow for charitable trusts and charities to apply
- Widened language to include ground-mount solar and batteries
- More detail included about Health and Safety requirements
- Expectations for customer response times
- Requirement for system design and project to be overseen by qualified technical lead
- Removed duplications
- Clarified that the costs of EECA auditing programme providers will be borne by EECA
- Added requirement for a provider complaints process, and a process for dealing with installer non-compliance