

Solar industry new zealand

In October 2022, Electricity Authority data showed 43,641 solar systems installed across New Zealand, adding up to 240 MW. This makes up an estimated contribution of under 1% of total electricity consumption.

Globally, solar PV uptake has increased significantly over the past decade. While uptake in New Zealand has been slower to date, there is potential for greater utilisation as technology costs decrease, particularly at the grid-scale and on commercial building rooftops.

2021 data is sourced from MBIE. Future indications come from Climate Change Commission modelling. The high uncertainty of future indications is due to the rapidly changing cost of solar technology.

Solar electricity via photovoltaics (PV) is the generation of electricity from sunlight. Photovoltaic cells are specially prepared wafers of silicon that absorb light energy (photons) and release electrons, that form an electric current.

Solar panels have the versatility to be installed almost anywhere energy is needed, and can be used on a small scale (e.g. to power individual households) or a large scale (e.g. solar farms).

In recent years, falling module costs have made large scale solar farms commercially viable, and several very large solar farms are currently proposed for construction in the next few years. This decrease in cost - which is expected to keep falling - means that solar may potentially play a stronger role in our electricity grid as electrification intensifies. Forecasts suggest Solar PV could make up 6% of New Zealand electricity supply by 2035.

In 2021 EECA undertook research on commercial scale solar in New Zealand, with a focus on the financial performance for solar systems in medium-large businesses.

EECA has built a tool to help consumers assess the economics of solar installations. While aimed at residential customers, businesses could also use the tool to assess generation potential at their site.



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