

Project Update # 1 – August 2025

Important update on NSW Emergency Backstop

In February, the NSW Government advised solar energy businesses that it was developing a Consumer Energy Resources (CER) Installer Portal, which will support the Emergency Backstop Mechanism in NSW by making it easier for installers to comply with new obligations.

Solar businesses and industry associations have called on the NSW Government and NSW DNSPs (Ausgrid, Endeavour Energy and Essential Energy) to listen to the industry as we develop the NSW CER Installer Portal.

We are pleased to update you on the portal, our engagement with industry, and the program of support and training we are developing to prepare you for these changes. And, if you are unfamiliar with any of the topics below, please see some quick explainers on the next page.

Emergency backstop timeframe – 2026

Solar businesses asked for a longer timeframe to introduce an Emergency Backstop Mechanism in NSW. The NSW Government's Consultation Report issued in May confirms that the Emergency Backstop Mechanism will now be implemented in the second half of 2026. This provides NSW businesses an additional 9 months to prepare.

What you can do now

NSW now has a longer runway to work with – please don't waste it! The NSW Government, Ausgrid, Endeavour Energy and Essential Energy are developing an awareness and training program for NSW solar energy businesses on the portal, the backstop and dynamic grid management (flexible export limits). We are also preparing materials you can share with customers.

We will make these materials widely available and make sure you know where to find them. You will soon be able to access the first round of support - PDF fact sheets, short YouTube videos, website content, and online awareness training that gives you CPD points.

Please use these resources to keep informed and stay ahead. They are being designed in collaboration with solar businesses to support your business and your customers.

Industry engagement

In May, we conducted focus group workshops with almost 40 solar installers and retailers, and we have also established a solar energy Industry Reference Group including 13 NSW businesses that meets every six weeks.

This is meaningful engagement that is resulting in tangible changes in our approach to the portal and support program. We may not be able to deliver everything you recommend to us, but we continue to work through and be guided by the insights solar energy businesses have provided.

A quick refresher on key concepts

Our training and awareness materials will provide you with a thorough understanding of new compliance obligations, the Emergency Backstop Mechanism, the CER Installer Portal and flexible export limits. If any of these are unfamiliar, for now please see some quick explainers:

Minimum System Load Event – If demand for electricity from the grid drops below safe thresholds, this potentially creates a severe imbalance that can destabilise the grid and cause widespread outages. The Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) calls this a Minimum System Load (MSL) event. It is expected to occur on mild sunny days, when industrial and residential demand for electricity is low (for example on a weekend) and solar exports are high.

Emergency Backstop Mechanism – This is AEMO's tool-of-last-resort to address an MSL event and bring the grid back into safe balance after all other actions have been taken to safely restore grid stability. AEMO can instruct NSW distribution networks to temporarily reduce rooftop solar exports to the grid or pause rooftop solar generation. An emergency backstop is forecast to occur rarely (once or twice a year) and protects against the risk of larger, uncontrolled outages that switch rooftop solar systems off for much longer.

NSW CER Installer Portal – It is a digital gateway that integrates with Ausgrid, Endeavour Energy and Essential Energy's connections portals to register newly installed devices, validate their compliance with standards and test that they are connected to the relevant distribution network utility server via the internet. The portal supports compliance, ensuring distribution networks can communicate with complying solar inverters, sending signals to reduce or increase solar exports to the grid. It supports the Emergency Backstop Mechanism in NSW.

The Portal will automate reporting of key information to government bodies on behalf of installers, including the Certificate of Compliance of Electrical Works (CCEW) and the AEMO's Distributed Energy Resources Register, making it easier for installers to comply with requirements.

CSIP-AUS – The Common Smart Inverter Profile – Australia (CSIP-AUS) is a new Australian standard for solar inverters. In NSW it will become mandatory in the second half of 2026 for all new and upgraded solar systems up to 200kW. CSIP-AUS compliant inverters can communicate over the internet with distribution network utility servers and receive signals that temporarily reduce exports or pause generation when AEMO instructs an emergency backstop.

Flexible export limits - Flexible export limits are delivered through the same technology (CSIP-AUS) that enables an emergency backstop. They allow for real-time management of exports from consumer energy resources. In networks with low, fixed export limits, flexible export limits will allow customers to export more of their excess solar energy when the network can accommodate it. Only where it is necessary to maintain local grid stability, distribution networks will also be able to send signals to participating customers to limit solar exports. Flexible export limits will not be mandatory - customers will be able to opt out of this type of solar connection.