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ELECTRICITY INDUSTRY UPDATE - OCTOBER 2025

FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

[Editorial from Nicki Sutherland](#)



Tēnā koutou

Three weeks on and I hope you're all fully recovered from EEA2025!

We were blown away by the exceptional quality of the papers, presentations, discussions, exhibitions, awards and of course, participants. It's a privilege to host this conference and even more of a privilege to have three days in one place with our talented members and industry. Thanks to everyone who came, exhibited and contributed. Next year we're in Tāmaki Makarau Auckland from 22-24 September at the stunning new International Conference Centre. Block out your calendar now.

than structural change, rejecting many of the “bigger” recommendations including amalgamating the 29 EDBs into five super distributors.

There’s a lot of information to digest but after an initial review there are some positive signals but also some gaps, including little around demand side opportunities by supporting the scale up of distributed energy resources, demand flexibility or energy efficiency. You can read our response below.

International exposure to ideas, projects and lessons learned is gold. I’m delighted that, for the first time, EEA is taking a delegation of senior industry leaders to **Distributech 2026** in San Diego from February 2-6. This self-funded, member exclusive tour is a great opportunity to meet US counterparts, see local projects and bring knowledge back to share with all our members.

Closer to home, and building on the President and CE’s speeches at EEA2025, we’re calling for focus group volunteers to help us consider if the EEA name best represents our members now and in the future. More details on this below.

Ngā mihi nui,
Nicki



Government announces energy package

The Government released its response to the Frontier Economics Report on New Zealand’s electricity market on Wednesday 1 October, with an energy package announced by Finance Minister Nicola Willis and Energy Minister Simon Watts.

Key elements of the package

- Providing capital for Crown-owned generators to invest in “strategic and commercially rational” firming projects
- Calling for proposals on an LNG importation system, potentially in place by winter 2027
- Strengthening the EA’s resourcing, enforcement powers, and ability to act quickly

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- Tasking EDBs to collaborate, standardise processes, and make smarter regional investment decisions (as the preferred way to make them more efficient)

Our initial view

Positive signals

- Strengthening the EA is a constructive step towards more responsive regulation and improved trust in market outcomes.
- Faster consenting and mechanisms to reduce policy risk will support new renewable projects.
- Clearer direction for EDB collaboration is strongly aligned with the work underway across our membership
- Provides more certainty to enable investment than wholesale change would have done.

Concerns and gaps

- An overarching energy roadmap is still absent, meaning industry continues to face uncertainty about how renewables, firming, flexibility, and resilience will be balanced and coordinated.
- The energy package is still overly focused on the supply side, whereas much can be done to reduce peak and overall need through demand flexibility, energy efficiency, and scaling up the deployment of smart technology including EV charging, hot water, solar, and batteries.
- LNG is expensive, complex, and at odds with long-term decarbonisation goals. This short-term insurance should not crowd out investment in long term alternatives – including those on the demand side.
- The energy package completely omits workforce resourcing issues. Through our Re-energise work, we hope to put this on the political agenda in 2026.

Opportunities for members

- Crown direction to Genesis, Mercury, and Meridian to develop firming proposals creates a near-term pipeline of projects where engineering input will be critical.
- Stronger Electricity Authority oversight and higher penalties will require an increased compliance focus across industry.
- Flexibility solutions will be increasingly important for networks and retailers to manage peaks, integrate DER, and avoid costly investment in new firming. We will continue to lead industry collaboration to ensure our sector understands the opportunity and puts the key building blocks in place to see this working at scale.
- EDBs will face increased expectations to demonstrate standardised processes and regional collaboration.

our name is future fit

Those of you who attended this year's conference or are regular EnergyNews readers will know that as part of our brand refresh we are considering whether our name still best represents us as we lead our industry into the future. We are setting up a small focus group to explore this and are looking for volunteers willing to provide one of the perspectives below, representing the diversity of our membership:

- Life member
- Active EEA member
- Electrical engineer
- Field worker / contractor
- Non – technical personnel
- Emerging technology
- Graduate
- Student

Please email admin@eea.co.nz if you are interested and available for one online meeting at the end of October and one in mid November. Focus group sessions will be independently facilitated and we will be providing background information about the issues involved.

This is the start of wider engagement which all members will have the opportunity to participate in between now and May 2026.

Distributech USA Study Tour

We are coordinating a delegation of senior NZ leaders to attend **Distributech 2026** in San Diego February 2-6. It's very exciting to be able to provide this member only service as part of our commitment to advancing technical best practice and innovation.

The study tour is self-funded with EEA coordinating learning opportunities, meetings with US stakeholders and a tour of cutting-edge local projects. We'll also look at ways to disseminate the learnings when we return. Although the study tour is aimed at asset owners, we will also be organising opportunities for all kiwis attending Distributech to connect. If this is you then please get in touch at admin@eea.co.nz

Testing of Service Connections guide update

We have updated the Testing of Service Connections Guide to clarify the requirements for an Electrical Safety Certificate (ESC) if replacement of an electricity network fitting affects the supply to an installation. Changes to the Guide:

EECA support for gas users

The tightening gas supply in Aotearoa New Zealand is no secret, and many businesses are facing challenges as they grapple with shorter contract terms, higher prices and fewer retailers to choose from.

Our good friends at the Electricity Efficiency Conservation Authority (EECA) have developed tools and resources to support them navigate these challenges and help businesses measure, manage and reduce their energy use, including specific regional workshops. In addition, EECA provides funding and support to help businesses understand their options for reducing gas usage and improving energy performance.

Visit [the EECA website](#) for more information and useful advice.



APEX Summit 2025

This year's Annual Powering Exchange (APEX) Summit is locked in for 11 November at Connectics in Ōtautahi Christchurch. APEX is for graduate engineers with up to 5 years' experience of any discipline across power engineering. We make this event free to support our emerging talent and enable them to connect and build national support networks with each other. Let's make sure our emerging talent knows about this fabulous opportunity. Registrations are open including a call for presentation abstracts.

[Find out more and register here.](#)

International Wildfire Risk Mitigation Consortium (IWRMC) Conference 22-25 March 2026

[The International Wildfire Risk Mitigation Consortium](#) is a pivotal platform for sharing innovative practices and insights from utilities across Australia and North America.

utilities would do well to be on the front foot by leveraging off the experiences of US and Australian utilities. The 2026 Consortium will be held in Brisbane, including international speakers and an exclusive site visit to the Mapleton National Park in partnership with the [Queensland Fire and Biodiversity Consortium](#). Visit the [website](#) for more information and registration details.

EEA submissions – keeping Members’ voice strong

We have been actively engaging on behalf of members to ensure technical and operational perspectives are incorporated into current regulatory and policy reforms and are doing so with increasing success – ensuring better policy and regulatory outcomes for members and electricity consumers.

Over the past few months, we’ve delivered fifteen submissions and have two more currently underway. These cover critical issues from voltage settings and demand flexibility through to digitalisation, consenting, product standards, connection reforms, to vocational education reforms. Our submissions are important because they:

- **Shape regulatory settings** that directly impact network operations, investment, planning, health and safety – and training the future workforce to deliver this.
- **Highlight technical realities** and ensure proposals are workable for workers, operators, educators and consumers.
- **Protect industry and consumer outcomes** by promoting consistency, safety, efficiency and accessibility to training across the sector.
- **Align with EEA’s work programmes** on H&S leadership, leading workforce capability, streamlining connections, demand flexibility and technical guidelines.

Getting your input to ensure we represent your needs and perspectives is crucial. Read below for details of current consultations and how to have your say:

- **EA: Network Connections Project (Stage One) Technical Consultation**
Why it matters: First stage of Code drafting to implement Streamlining Connections reforms.
EEA draft position: Support national consistency and alignment with forthcoming EEA guidelines to avoid duplication.
- **EA: Exploring Network Visibility**
Why it matters: LV visibility is critical to DER integration, efficient investment, and flexibility.
EEA draft position: Strongly support pragmatic improvements to visibility, data collection, and governance.

Any contributions welcome. Please send your feedback on these current engineering and technical submissions to **Stuart Johnston** Lead Advisor – Engineering & Technical, EEA

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- EA Network Connections Project (Stage One): by COB 6 October 2025
- EA Exploring Network Visibility: by COB 13 November 2025

[Read all our submissions here.](#)

[View EA priority initiatives calendar here](#)

National Committee for Live Work (NCLW)

The NCLW want to hear from you! We will be sending out a survey soon to ask questions about Live Work being carried out by your organisation. The NCLW will also be holding industry wide workshops to discuss any suggestions for proposed changes to ECP 46. Energy Safety has said any changes would need to be significant and improve safety in HV Live Work.

Contact Hayley@eea.co.nz if you want to have your say. You can find out more about the [NCLW](#) on the EEA website.

Sharing safety alerts and knowledge

Did you know we publish industry safety alerts on our website? Login to the website and click on Knowledge Network to view these alerts. By sharing alerts, we are building a safer workplace together. Every alert counts.

We also have a Knowledge Network Health and Safety Forum – [login to the website](#) to find out what it's all about.

Looking ahead

Visit the [EEA Upcoming Events webpage](#) for event information and registration

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| 11 November | APEX Summit in Ōtautahi Christchurch |
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