

Author name: Anonymous

Date of submission: Monday, 24 May 2021

Submission: My primary motivation for installing solar panels on the roof of my home was the environmental benefit – allowing me to use ‘green’ energy for my own energy needs (reducing my family’s ‘carbon footprint’) and also ‘sharing’ the energy produced with my community (thereby reducing overall reliance on fossil fuels). I believe that a substantial majority of those with roof-top solar panels share that motivation. The fact that IPART is not able to consider environmental impacts in its decision is (in my view) problematic and potentially counter-productive. That is, such decisions have the potential to lead to higher rather than lower energy prices. I have been ambivalent about installing a solar battery as I have always seen a battery as a pathway to going ‘off-grid’ and felt that to do so was not ‘community-minded’. The draft report suggests that the installation of solar batteries is a way for households to earn more money by exporting their ‘stored’ power back to the grid at different times of day and thus maximizing the price they receive for that power. The alternative scenario of those with roof-top solar installing batteries and going ‘off-grid’ is not contemplated and the potential impact of that scenario on energy prices is not considered in the draft report.

I have no interest in becoming a solar energy generator that competes with commercial generators (wind-farms, coal-fired power stations etc) in ‘selling’ energy to retailers. The draft report does make for sobering reading as rooftop solar panels are essentially represented as a problem and a cause of higher electricity prices. That is precisely the opposite of what those of us with solar panels intended. The suggested further lowering of feed-in tariffs for roof-top solar will certainly be a motivator to many of us to explore the option of installing solar batteries and getting off the grid altogether.