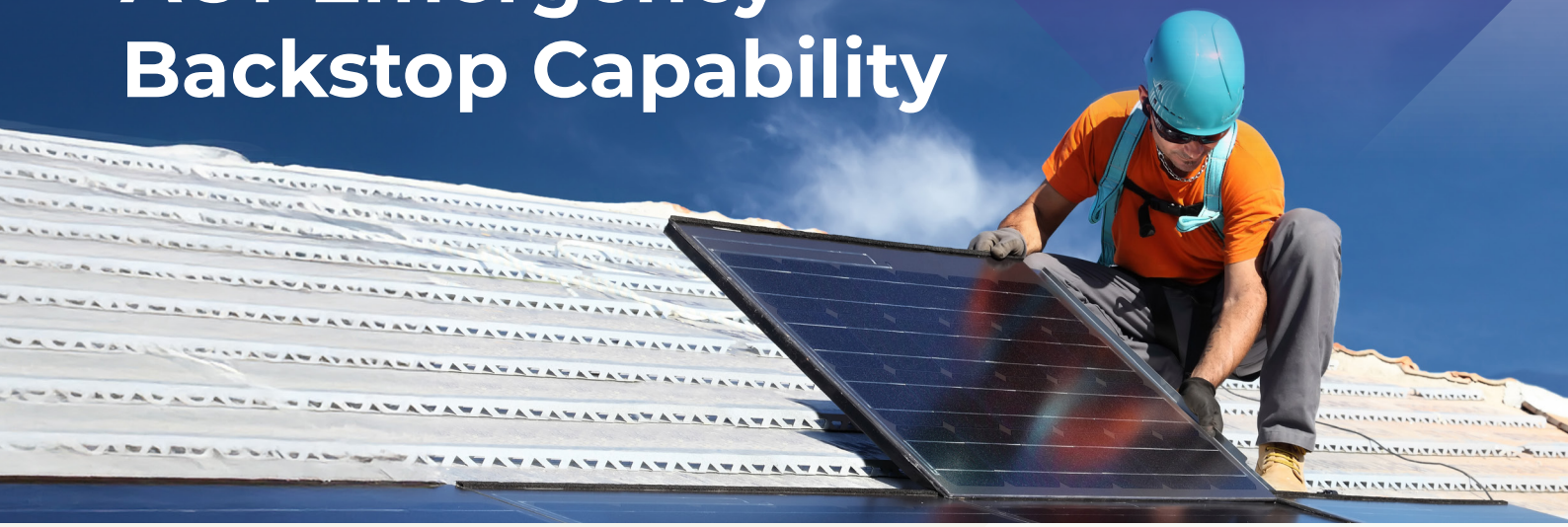
ACT Government

ACT Emergency Backstop Capability



Introducing an Emergency Solar Backstop capability in the ACT

The ACT Government is undertaking consultation to inform the design of a local regulatory framework for emergency solar backstop capability in the ACT.

Introduction

As our city transitions towards our low emissions future, the way we consume and use energy is changing. Rooftop solar is now a large part of how the ACT and the NSW region generates electricity, providing cheap and clean energy.

The rapid uptake of rooftop solar is driving a transformation of the electricity grid, which must be carefully managed to ensure continued reliable access to electricity.

The ACT Government is proposing to introduce emergency backstop capability to do its part to maintain the security and reliability of the electricity network. Already, other jurisdictions including South Australia, Victoria, Queensland and Western Australia have implemented this capability. It is proposed to be implemented in the ACT during Spring 2025. This will allow the ACT to continue to roll out rooftop solar and enjoy the benefits it brings.

Why do we need an Emergency Solar Backstop capability?

Occasionally, rooftop solar systems can generate more electricity than is needed, for example, when there is abundant sunshine but low levels of electricity demand, which occurs most often on mild spring days. An imbalance between electricity supply and demand can lead to stability challenges in the grid.

Emergency backstop capability will see new and upgraded rooftop solar systems able to be temporarily dialled down or switched-off remotely as a last resort in an emergency, in addition to the management of other larger solar generators. It would be used to help maintain grid stability, prevent widespread power outages, and support the continued uptake of rooftop solar. It would only be used after all other available options have been exhausted, such as grid-scale actions to support the grid.

There are several other measures which can also help to maintain a stable and reliable electricity system. These measures, when combined with emergency backstop capability, will help us manage solar generation and the needs of the electricity grid into the future.

The ACT Government is committed to maintaining the security and reliability of the grid as it transforms, and proposes to deliver a local framework to support the provision of emergency backstop capability here in the ACT. This framework would provide Evoenergy, the operator of the ACT's electricity network, the ability to control new and upgraded rooftop solar systems, and other larger distributed solar, in emergency conditions when directed by the Australian Energy Market Operator, as a last resort.

Households and businesses with existing rooftop solar can already be impacted by current operational controls in emergency situations. Introduction of the emergency backstop mechanism does not change the operation or use of existing rooftop solar.

What do we want your feedback on?

This consultation is seeking feedback from the community and stakeholders on the following key items:

- ✓ Feedback on the proposed approach and technical design of the emergency backstop capability in the ACT.
- ✓ Community perspectives on technology such as solar, batteries and evolving technologies such as Home Energy Management Systems and electric vehicles (EVs) equipped with bi-directional charging.
- ✓ What information and education opportunities there are for Government to assist Canberrans to help improve their energy use and lower electricity bills using these technologies.

Your feedback will help to inform the ACT's strategy for deploying high levels of rooftop solar so that we can continue to benefit from this clean, affordable and abundant power source.

How can I provide feedback?

This consultation is open until 5pm, April 28 2025 (AEST).

We'd like your feedback on this proposal. Please read the consultation paper and respond to the consultation questions.

Your feedback on the technical details, or broader consumer energy resources, will help us best finalise the regulatory framework and develop future policy.

You can provide feedback through the following ways:

- > Complete an online survey (15 – 20 minutes)
- > Upload a written submission
- > Submit a quick comment

Read the full consultation paper and have your say at YourSay Conversations.

YOUR SAY