Changes to Regional Feed-in Tariff

On Friday 1 September 2017, the Queensland Government announced that, effective immediately, the maximum inverter capacity eligible for the regional Feed-in Tariff (FiT) under the Queensland Solar Bonus Scheme would increase from 5 kW to 30 kW. This creates an additional incentive for small- to medium-sized businesses, and residential customers, to install a solar PV system, or increase the capacity of their existing PV system.

Regional FiT rate

The regional FiT rate is 10.1 cents/kWh for 2017/18, and is reset each year by the Queensland Government based on a rate recommended by the Queensland Competition Authority.

As a regional tariff, it is only available to Ergon Energy Retail customers and relevant Origin Energy retail customers serviced by the Essential Energy network in the Goondiwindi area. The regional FiT is funded by the relevant electricity retailers, however they do not set the rate.

Our process

For existing PV systems with inverters rated up to 5 kW and already eligible for the regional FiT, there is no change to conditions or requirements.

For existing PV systems to become eligible for the regional FiT, the system will need to:

- have a total inverter AC power rating greater than 5 kW but no greater than 30 kW, and
- be already set to fully or partially export to the grid.

We are working with Ergon Energy Retail to automatically move several thousand premises with qualifying PV systems onto the regional FiT. There is no need for those customers to lodge a connection application with us.

As these changes couldn’t be started until 31 August 2017, some eligible PV owners may not see any FiT credits on their electricity bill received in the weeks immediately after 31 August. These cases will be identified and rectified.

It’s important to note that the regional FiT eligibility is based on, among other things, the total inverter capacity, not the exporting capacity setting. Therefore, a 40 kW inverter capacity set to only export a maximum of 30 kW will not qualify for the regional FiT.
**Minimal and partial export systems**

If customers have existing inverters:
- rated greater than 5 kW but no greater than 30 kW, and
- set for minimal (zero) export, and

wish to access the regional FiT by removing or modifying the export limitation settings, a new connection application will need to be lodged. This application will need to note any changes that are going to be made to the inverter, and will undergo technical assessment if relevant.

If the minimal-export limitation was based on our assessment, it is unlikely that a higher export level will be allowed, unless the local network has been upgraded in the meantime. If the export limitation was voluntarily implemented, we may offer an increase to the export limit if the technical assessment shows that this won’t adversely affect the operation of the PV system or our network.

Changes to the export limitation can only be made once the offer is accepted. A Form A is only required if the inverter has been changed.

**Do not change partial-export settings**

If a partial-export system becomes eligible for the regional FiT, an installer must not increase the export limitation level above what has been detailed in our Connection Agreement. If there is a desire to increase the partial export level, a network connection application must be lodged with us. After a technical assessment if relevant, a new offer may be made by us and must be accepted by the applicant before settings can be changed.

If we discover, through a Quality of Supply investigation or other means, that export limitation settings have been changed without our written approval, we will work with the customer to identify the installer and may refer that installer to the Clean Energy Council (CEC) for consideration of demerit points under the CEC accreditation scheme.

**Summary of scenarios and actions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Setting</th>
<th>Desired Setting</th>
<th>Application Status</th>
<th>Applicant Action</th>
<th>Installer Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full export</td>
<td>No change to export settings</td>
<td>Becomes eligible. No network connection application required.</td>
<td>Wait for new offer. When received, accept.</td>
<td>Once offer accepted, change settings. No Form A required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partial export</td>
<td>Higher export level desired</td>
<td>Network connection application to be lodged with Ergon Energy Network.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimal (zero) export</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>