

New Standard for Micro Embedded Generating Units brings two big benefits

Ergon Energy and Energex have consulted with the PV industry to update our joint Connection Standard for Micro Embedded Generating Units up to 30 kVA. The new Standard commenced on 4 May 2017 and is available at [Connection Standard](#).

The key benefits to the PV industry and your customers are:

1. An increase in the allowable inverter capacity at single-phase premises from 5 kVA to 10 kVA, with a maximum export capability of 5 kVA.
2. An increase in Ergon's assessment threshold from 3.5 kVA to 5 kVA for premises connected to the main grid to align with Energex's.

Note that there is no change to the thresholds for Ergon's Single Wire Earth Return or isolated networks.

Examples of configurations that are now possible at single-phase premises include:

- A PV array and inverter rated up to 10 kVA with export limited to 5 kVA or less.
- A 5 kVA minimal-export battery inverter added to an existing 5 kVA exporting inverter supporting a PV array.

However, eligibility for both the 44c/kWh and regional Feed-in Tariffs (FiTs) under the Queensland Solar Bonus Scheme is still determined by the total inverter capacity at the connection point, regardless of the partial export setting.

Under the new Standard, applications for exporting inverter capacity up to and including 5 kVA at premises connected to the main grid will not undergo assessment. However, applications for exporting inverter capacity above 3.5 kVA still don't qualify for a Basic Connection Service so the contract cannot be expedited.

These increases reinforce the responsibility of PV installers to ensure all relevant testing is done to evaluate the proposed system's effective operation.

Make the most of the new Standard

We encourage all installers to print and thoroughly read the new [Connection Standard](#) and keep a copy handy for reference. If you have any questions about the new Standard, please email us at ies.tech.enquiries@ergon.com.au. We will respond, and if relevant, publish answers to frequently asked questions in the next PV Industry Alert.

Reminder: AC isolators to be switched off

We continue to closely manage the issue of AC isolators of new embedded generating units such as PV systems being found switched on when our inspectors arrive. Significant safety risks and other issues are created when systems are switched on before they're inspected.

We recognise that sometimes customers switch systems on after the installer has left. If the customer is not the applicant, the PV salesperson and installer are responsible for communicating to customers the need for systems to stay switched off.

Over February and March 2017, we identified 29 installers with multiple instances of AC isolators being found switched on. We emailed those installers a reminder of the requirement for systems to remain switched off. We also recorded cases where, following a previous warning, installers still had high volumes of systems switched on. We remind everyone that installers who fail to comply with this requirement may be referred to the Clean Energy Council.

In recognition of the challenges, we are investigating ways to communicate our requirement directly to customers. In the meantime, installers need to remember to switch the AC isolator off every time and convey to the customer that they must leave the system off until we inspect it.

To encourage customer compliance, one installer asks his customers to sign a declaration that they will not switch the system on. Whatever installers can do to maintain compliance is appreciated.

Value in 3-phase inverters

We appreciate that 3-phase inverters are typically more expensive than single-phase inverters and can be a little more complex to install. However, spreading the inverter capacity across three phases can result in more stable operation, with less voltage and frequency swings and less tripping off. That means less call-backs for installers and happier customers.

To help explain these benefits to customers, we are developing simple web-based information on the benefits of 3-phase inverters. This could be a valuable resource for you when explaining to customers the benefits that a 3-phase inverter can provide. We will let you know when it's available.

Simple revisions to applications now even easier

Making a minor revision to an application already lodged for a micro embedded generating unit up to 30 kW, such as a change in inverter, is now easier than ever. You can still log into the Portal to make a 'Resubmission' application with the new details, or if you prefer you can phone (1300 553 924) or email solarteam@ergon.com.au the Solar Team who can make the change for you. Be sure to include the NMI and address and all details of the change in your email.

The Solar Team can confirm the change(s) by email on request. If an offer has already been made, a new contract will be mailed. Note, changes made by phone or email will not be reflected in the Portal.

Applications for all batteries must be lodged

We remind installers that an application must be lodged for any AS/NZS 4777-certified inverter that is proposed to be connected to our network. That means any battery inverter being added to an existing PV system, replacing an existing inverter, or being installed as part of a new installation, must be detailed in an application.

Application tip - Export limitation value

When lodging a micro embedded generating unit application via the portal, a small number of applicants are indicating 'Yes' to the question, 'Inverter to be Export Limited?', then entering an 'Export Limit (kVA)' value equal to, or even above, the inverter's AC Power rating. This suggests no export limitation. If you are applying for a minimal-export (non-export) inverter, please enter '0'. If you are applying for a partial-export inverter, please enter the kVA rating desired or indicated as allowable in Ergon's options letter which you may have received after an assessment. If applying for a full-export inverter, please select 'No' to the question 'Inverter to be Export Limited?'.