

# The Role of Accreditation in the Solar and Storage Industry

The attainment of CEC accreditation for installation of Solar PV systems has been the standard for the industry as a result of its ties to the Federal Government's Small-scale Renewable Energy Scheme (SRES). However, the introduction of battery energy storage systems has sparked discussion with regard to the relevance of CEC accreditation in this new market within the distributed energy industry.

Since 2009, solar PV installers and designers have obtained CEC accreditations for grid-connected PV systems to take advantage of the substantial financial benefit of the SRES. Distributed Network Service Providers (DNSPs) soon followed suit to include CEC accreditation in their application to connect requirements. Both the Federal Government and DNSPs recognised CEC accreditation as proof of the knowledge and skills required to deliver a quality PV system.

Over the years, the CEC accreditation program has evolved beyond being simply a qualification program, for the CEC now provides over the phone and email support to technical questions, industry updates via emails and face to face delivery, updates and clarification to Australian Standards, and online tools such as performance estimators and installation checklist apps. The CEC installation and design guidelines have also evolved into an important guidance document to ensure delivery of quality PV systems. As a result, recognition of CEC accreditation has increased such that holding CEC accreditations is regularly a prerequisite to winning PV projects, obtaining project insurance, and maintaining product warranty.

Furthermore, due to CEC accreditation being mandatory for creation of STCs under the SRES, demerit points issued by the CEC for non-compliance to Australian Standards and CEC guidelines not only provide important feedback to installers, but also actively incentivises installers to stay up to date with current best installation practices.



**Figure 1 - Installers and designers of grid-connected battery systems undergo nationally recognised training as part of the CEC Accreditation program**

The Continuous Professional Development (CPD) scheme, which requires accredited installers and designers to obtain 100 CPD points each year as part of the accreditation renewal process, also ensures accredited installers and designers stay up to date with best industry practices.

In the past two years, market interest for battery energy storage systems has increased significantly as a result of both the state of our electricity market and product maturity. However, current battery energy storage technologies require additional knowledge to achieve safe and effective integration into existing electrical infrastructure. In response, the CEC developed the grid-connected battery endorsement as an addition to grid-connected PV system install and design accreditation.

The CEC's battery energy storage system endorsement is yet to be tied to legislative or DNSP connection requirements. However, it is certain that the industry will benefit from technical and industry support provided by the CEC to accredited installers and designers.

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