Inspections update No.2

INTRODUCTION

This inspections update provides a summary of the Office of the Renewable Energy Regulator's (ORER) inspection scheme under Section 23 AAA of the *Renewable Energy (Electricity) Act 2000* (the Act) and Part 7 of the *Renewable Energy (Electricity) Regulations 2001* (the Regulations).

The first round inspections inspected ~1800 systems installed between 1 July 2010 and 31 December 2010. These inspections commenced in May 2011.

The second round of inspections is inspecting ~1400 systems installed between 1 January 2011 and 30 April 2011. These inspections commenced November 2011.

LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

Under Regulation 32, the Regulator must, for each year, publish on the Regulator's website the number of inspections conducted under Part 7 during the year. The Regulator may also publish any other general information about inspections that the Regulator considers appropriate.

TALLY OF INSPECTION REPORTS (AS OF 31 JANUARY 2012)

Round 1 Inspections of systems installed between 1 July 2010 and 31 December 2010.

Number of inspection reports received by ORER as at 31 January 2012: **1333**

Number of inspections in progress as at 31 January 2012: **484**

Round 2 Inspections of systems installed between 1 January 2011 and 30 April 2011.

Number of inspection reports received by ORER as at 31 January 2012: **515**

Number of inspections in progress as at 31 January 2012: **884**

Total No. of inspections to 31 January

Number of inspection reports received by ORER as at 31 January 2012: **1848**

Number of inspections in progress as at 31 January 2012: **1368**

INSPECTION RESULTS

As of 31 January 2012, the Regulator has been advised of the following:

- 96 per cent (1780) of the PV systems inspected were assessed as safe as defined in the ORER's inspection checklist.

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Systems assessed as Unsafe

- **4 per cent (or 68 systems) of the solar PV systems were assessed as unsafe.**
    - Unsafe systems are defined as:
        - A possible safety hazard which poses an imminent risk of damage to property or persons.
    - Of the unsafe PV systems:
        - Approximately two thirds had an incorrectly installed DC isolator enclosure with signs of water damage.
        - The remainder had issues with the panel mounting, or had exposed live parts.

Actions taken as a result of the systems being classified as imminent safety risk

- The system was shut down or otherwise rendered safe by the inspector.
- The owner and/or occupier of the premises were advised by the inspector of the nature and extent of the safety risk.
- The relevant state or territory regulation authorities were advised by the inspector of the nature and extent of the safety risk.
- The installer of the system, and the agent who created the certificates, were contacted by the inspector and asked to provide comment. These comments may include advice on how the identified safety risks/non-compliances will be rectified, or on the steps taken to ensure the accuracy of information relied on to create certificates.
- Any comments provided have been taken into account before finalising the inspection report and providing it to ORER.

Systems assessed as Substandard (Rectification work required)

- **22 per cent (or 407 systems) of solar PV systems were identified as substandard and require rectification work**
    - Substandard system is defined as:
        - A system does not meet key clauses in the standards and requirements for installation and may lead to premature equipment failure or other issues.
        - The system does not pose an imminent safety risk.
        - The installation work and or equipment should be improved.
    - Of the 22% of substandard PV systems:
        - Approximately 50% had polarised DC isolators that were incorrectly wired or not rated for direct current
        - Approximately 40% had DC isolators that were under-rated for the voltage output of the system.
        - A small proportion had workmanship issues relating to wiring or brackets.

Actions taken as a result of the systems being classified as sub standard and requiring rectification work

- The owner and/or occupier of the premises were advised by the inspector of the nature and extent of the risk posed by the substandard issues.
- The relevant state or territory regulatory authorities were advised by the inspector of the nature and extent of the risk posed by the substandard issues.
- The installer of the system, and the agent who created the certificates, were contacted by the inspector and asked to provide comment. These comments may include advice on how the identified issues will be rectified, or on the steps taken to ensure the accuracy of information relied on to create certificates.
- Any comments provided were taken into account before finalising the inspection report and providing it to ORER.

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Table 1. Completed inspection reports received as at 31 January 2012

State	Systems inspected from May 2011	No. of Systems Unsafe	No. of Systems Sub-standard
ACT	22	1	2
NSW	785	28	204
NT	12	0	4
QLD	391	8	70
SA	134	8	34
TAS	15	0	2
VIC	412	19	71
WA	77	4	20
Total No.	**1848**	**68**	**407**
Total %		**4%**	**22%**

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