

NZ news Solar power

'Balcony solar' being showcased at expo



Katy Jones | Nelson Mail
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Gunnar Friese, director and founder of My Mini Solar Ltd, will be presenting at the Electrify Nelson Expo on Saturday.

Photo: Braden Fastier / Nelson Mail

Amid pre-election talk about [plug-in solar](#) power, a Motueka-based entrepreneur is poised to deliver the technology.

Also known as balcony solar, the portable solar panel system can be plugged into a standard power point, to run home or small business everyday electrical appliances like fridges, dishwashers and wifi-routers, during sunshine hours.

Motueka-based founder of My Mini Solar Ltd Gunnar Friese said the system reduced power bills, providing free power after about 4-5 years - the time it took to pay off the upfront cost of the kit.

The electricity the panels generated flowed directly into a home's circuits, where appliances drew from it before taking any power from the grid.

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Friese will be exhibiting the concept at today's [Electrify Nelson Expo](#), at the Annesbrook Events Centre in Stoke.

A million homes in Europe were already running plug-in solar, including in his native Germany where the technology was aimed at renters.

The Government here planned to progress a recommendation to legalise [plug-in systems](#) made in the [Regulation Ministry's solar review](#) to which Friese contributed.

ACT, the Greens, Labour and National have so far [supported making plug-in solar legal](#).

Consisting of up to four solar panels, which could be rooftop size, a microinverter, mounting rack and cables, My Mini Solar's kit was expected to cost around \$1500 for the smallest system.

The panels should be placed in an outside, ideally north facing area, like a balcony or fence, and plugged into a preferably outdoor socket to avoid the cable having to pass through windows or doors.

A smart phone app lets users track the performance of their solar system in real time.



The portable panels would offer an alternative to rooftop solar generation. (File photo)

Photo: Piers Fuller / Wairarapa Times-Age

If appliances required more power than the solar system could produce, the excess was taken from the grid.

The system prioritised a households' power needs, rather than selling excess electricity back to the grid as in rooftop solar systems.

Appliances like dishwashers could be timed to run during the day to maximise power savings, but there would soon be an option of plugging the system into a battery, which could be used at night, Friese said.

Over 1000 people had registered interest on the company's website, most of whom were home owners.