

Enhancing operational resilience in relation to indistinct events

Context

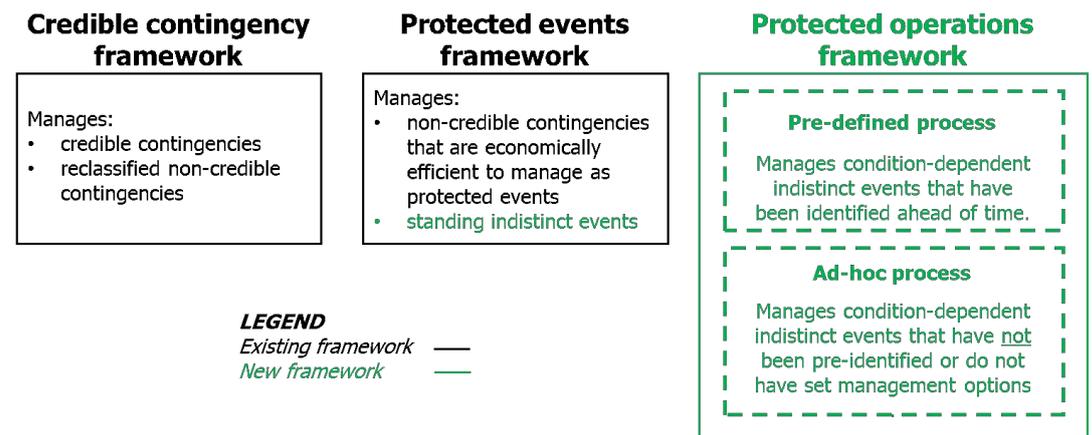
Indistinct events are events that can impact multiple generators or transmission lines in an unpredictable and uncertain manner. Indistinct events may include major storms, widespread fires and cyber attacks. As power system technology evolves and as storms and bushfires become more intense and frequent, 'indistinct' events are becoming an increasing threat to maintaining a secure supply of electricity to customers.

The AEMC has received a rule change request from the COAG Energy Council that proposes changes to the NER to provide new tools to better manage these kinds of indistinct events.

Rule change request detail

On 26 May 2020, the AEMC received a rule change request from the COAG Energy Council to amend the National Electricity Rules (NER) in order to implement an operational mechanism for AEMO to enhance the power system's resilience to indistinct events. The proposed rule would define an 'indistinct event' in the NER, as well as extend existing frameworks and introduce a new 'protected operations' framework, shown below, for managing indistinct events.

This follows a recommendation made by the AEMC in its *Mechanisms to enhance resilience in the power system—review of the South Australian black system event* (the BSE review). In the BSE review, the AEMC found that the existing system security framework may be ill-suited to managing indistinct events, and recommended introducing a framework for protected operations as a new operational tool for AEMO to enhance the resilience of the power system to indistinct events.



The proposed rule change would allow AEMO more flexibility by providing additional tools to prepare for and manage indistinct events. This includes amending the existing protected events framework to better account for 'standing indistinct events', like a cyber attack. It also proposes the introduction of the protected operations framework, for managing indistinct events that are related to external conditions, like a major storm system or severe and widespread bushfire events. Under this new framework, AEMO would have the ability to take various actions to protect the system, with a view to preventing major blackouts and supply interruptions for consumers of electricity.

Consultation process

The AEMC will assess the rule change following the standard rule change process. The key dates for the rule change are as follows:

- Submissions for the consultation paper due: Thursday 11 February 2021
- Draft rule determination published: Thursday 22 April 2021
- Submissions on the draft rule due: Thursday 3 June 2021
- Final rule determination published: Thursday 15 July 2021

The Commission invites stakeholders to provide submissions on the COAG Energy Council's rule change request via the AEMC website.

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