



## Access to NMI standing data

AEMC calls for submissions on rule change request

**The AEMC today started public consultation on a rule change request from EnergyAustralia which seeks to clarify arrangements and obligations under the National Electricity Rules (NER) regarding access to National Metering Identifier (NMI) standing data by retailers and their authorised agents.**

### What is NMI standing data

NMI standing data is the information related to a connection point<sup>1</sup> at which supply of electricity for consumption occurs. NMI standing data information includes, but is not limited to: applicable network tariff, consumption threshold bands, loss factors, physical location and other data related to the physical properties of the metering installation at the connection point. NMI standing data does not contain consumption data from consumers' metering installations.

### Where is NMI standing data stored

Retailers and distributors hold some information about the connection points of their customers. The Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) however is responsible for collating the information from registered participants for all connection points in the National Electricity Market (NEM). This information is stored in AEMO's Market Settlement and Transfer Solution (MSATS) system.

### Access to NMI standing data

NMI standing data is treated as confidential information in accordance with the relevant NER provisions. Rights to access standing data information is also set out under the NER.<sup>2</sup> Market participant who have rights to access the information include, but not limited to: registered participants in the NEM who have a financial interest in the metering installation (ie., retailer or distributor), retailers who are a financially responsible market participant for a consumer, consumers, and other authorised parties such as meter data agents/providers.

### Who else can have access?

Currently retailers who are not a consumer's retailer (ie., prospective retailers) may access information that relates to a consumer's connection point. This is so that they can provide consumers who are considering switching retailers with accurate quotes on applicable tariffs or proposals. This access is currently facilitated by the NMI Standing Data Schedule and the function in MSATS which allows retailers to find a NMI for a consumer's connection point (ie., NMI discovery).

### Rule change request – perceived problem

On 15 November 2012, the AEMC received a rule change request from EnergyAustralia (the proponent) relating to access to NMI standing data under the National Electricity Rules by retailers and their authorised agents.

The rule change request arises in response to a compliance bulletin issued by the Australian Energy Regulator (AER) in June 2012. The AER compliance bulletin related to how the AER will treat confidentiality requirements for energy, metering and NMI standing data.

<sup>1</sup> Connection point is defined as the agreed point of supply agreed, for example, by the retailer and network service provider.

<sup>2</sup> Rule 7.7(a) of the NER.

EnergyAustralia considers that, as a result of the AER compliance bulletin, there is ambiguity and potential inconsistency in the rules regarding:

- Retailers (who are not a consumer's financially responsible market participant, or have a financial interest in the consumers metering installation) access to NMI standing data. The proponent has stated that the AER's interpretation of the rules may imply that there is no basis within the NER for these retailers to access NMI standing data. The proponent considers that the potential inconsistency within the rules needs to be addressed to avoid confusion and any possible compliance risks.
- Retailer ability to use authorised agents to perform certain consumer acquisition and other retailer functions, given these retailer authorised agents may not be able to access NMI standing data. The proponent highlighted that retailers and other participants use third parties to perform certain functions/services on their behalf. The proponent considered that the AER compliance bulletin related to limiting access to their authorised agents may lead to increased costs for retailers and consumers, where retailers may have to restructure or develop in-house functionality for certain services in order to comply with the NER.

### **Rule change request - proposed solution**

The rule change request seeks to address the issues by amending the NER. The proposed rule includes a new provision which explicitly provides for retailers (and their agents) to access and receive NMI standing data. Access to NMI standing data would be for the purpose of conducting relevant retailing activities, including consumer acquisitions and other related services.

The rule change request also proposes an additional clause relating to the compliance of retailers who are utilising authorised agents to perform certain services.

The AMEC will assess the rule change request and proposed rule in accordance with the statutory rule making procedure under the National Electricity Law.

### **Related work**

There are a number of broader reforms which are considering similar issues that may intersect with this rule change request. In particular, the issues related to the clarity of the rules regarding access to energy and metering data by consumers and other parties, and the role of third party service providers in the market, including the appropriate energy market frameworks that should apply. We will take account, where possible, these reforms to ensure there is a consistent and transparent approach.

### **Consultation process**

To facilitate public consultation on the rule change request, the AEMC has published a consultation paper. This paper:

- sets out a summary of, and a background to, the rule change request;
- identifies a number of questions and issues to facilitate the consultation on this rule change request; and
- outlines the process for making submissions.

### **Submissions are due by 26 April 2013.**

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