



# Review of the regulatory framework for metering services – Reference Group meeting 1

## 30 March 2021 – Meeting notes

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### Meeting attendees

The first Reference Group meeting was held virtually on 30 March 2021. The attendees of the meeting are listed below.

Member	Organisation
Kellie Caught	ACOSS
Patricia Cameron, Kate Goatley	ActewAGL
Con Hristodoulidis	AGL
Christian Hack	AMS International Technologies
Alex Moran	Ausgrid
Justin Betlehem	Ausnet Services
Lee Brown	AEMO
Arran Coughlan	Bright Spark Power
Sonja Lekovic	Citipower, Powercor & United
Darren Gladman	Clean Energy Council
Robyn Robinson	Council on the Aging
Lisa Hussey	DNRME QLD
Rana Baleh, Shirley Berwick	DPIE NSW
Sharon Raymond	Dept. State Growth Tas
Dr Martin Gill	Dr Martin Gill
Richard Newell	EDMI
Dino Ou	Endeavour Energy
Rory Campbell	EWON
Amanda Montenegro	Energy Market Matters
Chris Gilbert	Energy Networks Australia
Travis Worsteling	Energy Australia
Barry Harvey, Robert Clear	Evoenergy
Greg Will	Horizon Power
Robert Logiudice	Intellihub
Chris Ihm	IPART NSW
Matthew Serpell	Jemena
Joe Thorne, Opi Taumalolo	Landis + Gyr
Ben Lovell	Living Energy Solutions
Vera Sinnamon, Emma Mills	Locality Planning Energy
Jochen Sietas	Macquarie Bank
Prabath	Metlogic
Larry Moore	NECA
Darren Bailey, Doug Miles, Sean Greenup	Origin Energy
Helen Vassos	PlusES
Bryn Williams	SA Power Networks
Dean Davis	SATEC
Harry Kapahi, Kambiz Vessali, Nitesh Khanna	Secure Meters

Carmel Forbes	Shell Australia
Aakash Sembey	Simply Energy
Tim Astley	TasNetworks
Matt Cairns	Uniting
Paul Greenwood	Vector
Scott Carden	VRT Systems
Wayne Farrell	Yurika / Energy Queensland

The AEMC's project team attended and is listed below.

Name	Position
Ed Chan	Director, Transmission and distribution networks
Alisa Toomey	Senior Adviser, Transmission and distribution networks
Ben Bronneberg	Lawyer
Orrie Johan	Adviser, Transmission and distribution networks
Mitch Grande	Graduate Adviser, Transmission and distribution networks
Lisa Fukuda	Graduate Adviser, Transmission and distribution networks

### **Purpose of the working group**

The Reference Group was formed to provide a collaborative and consultative platform identify issues and potential solutions as part of the AEMC's *Review of regulatory framework for metering*. The Reference Group also enables the AEMC to discuss and stress test policy recommendations and help inform stakeholder submission to the review's consultation process.

At the start of the meeting, Reference Group members were reminded to observe the requirements of the AEMC's competition protocol. It was noted that copies of the protocol (attached) were provided to each member of the Reference Group prior to the meeting.

The meeting comprised of a presentation from the AEMC to provide an overview of:

- the operation of the working group
  - stakeholder submissions to the consultation paper
  - proposed key focus areas for the review

Question and discussion sessions on the operation of the Reference Group and areas of focus were held.

### **AEMC presentation on operation of the Reference Group and sub-groups**

The project team:

- welcomed the members to the Reference Group and introduced the AEMC staff working on the project
- provided an overview of the make-up of the Reference Group and members
- explained that the purpose of the Reference Group was to continue a collaborative approach to policy, stress-test policy solutions and inform the submissions of members
- provided an overview of the expected timing of future meetings
- outlined the approach to collaborating in future Reference Group meetings, including that slides would be circulated prior to the meetings, participants would discuss and provide feedback on the issues in the meetings, the meetings would be recorded and minuted, and that participation in the working group was not a substitute for lodging a written submission.

- Explained the proposal for sub-groups to focus on specific issues including how areas of focus for the sub-groups will be determined and the purpose of the sub-groups.
- Outlined the four focus areas that this stage of the review will focus on based on the submissions: (1) consumer experience; (2) metering services; (3) roll out and (4) roles and responsibilities. Starting premise of the review, highlighting the capabilities of smart meters and its delivery of potential benefits to consumers and the future market was provided.

The project team then invited questions and discussion.

### **Follow up questions and discussion**

- Participants enquired as to what the sub-groups will entail and how participants will be determined; the expected timeline of the review process and the expected timeline for all the sub-groups to complete their assessment and inputs.
- The project team explained that broad representation will be sought, with Reference Group members able to nominate for the sub-Reference groups. The sub-groups will cover the main focus areas and will be formed by topics. Feedback from the Reference Group will help determine the sub-groups.
- Regarding expected timing of the review, the project team explained that is the review is planned to conclude by October 2021, with flexibility to ensure a thorough review. A draft report is likely around June 2021.

### **AEMC presentation a summary of stakeholder submissions**

The AEMC provided a summary of stakeholder submissions to the consultation paper. Four core focus areas, as well as smaller issues were identified with further detail on issues raised under each area provided. These areas were:

- **Consumer experience**
  - Submissions suggested that consumers had a lack of engagement with smart meters and many had poor experiences with obtaining a smart meter, due to the complexity of the current framework.
- **Services that smart meters should enable**
  - Stakeholders' were generally of the view that they expected more services under the current metering framework, with submissions indicating that service provision above the minimum service specification is not occurring at scale.
  - Submissions also suggested barriers to the provision of services, as well as the importance of data and data access.
- **Current state of the smart meter roll-out**
  - Stakeholders considered the roll-out was too slow, inefficient, complex and ad hoc under the current arrangements.
  - Submissions also discussed the importance of having a critical mass of smart meters to deliver greater consumer outcomes and provision of services. They also identified possible barriers to reaching a critical mass.
- **Roles and responsibilities under the current metering framework**
  - Submissions indicated that the current regulatory framework was complex and requires extensive coordination between many parties.
  - Submissions provided potential solutions, including changes to streamline the metering framework, facilitate coordination and cooperation and standardise processes to improve coordination and cooperation and alleviate complexities.

## **AEMC presentation on areas of focus for the review**

The project team discussed the four areas of focus for the review.

- **Delivering for the consumer**
  - The project team acknowledged the importance of a framework which delivers positive outcomes for consumers
  - This area of focus will seek to:
    - better understand how consumers want to interact with the energy market
    - Gain insight on consumers' experience in the installation and use of smart meters
    - Consider ways to improve efficiency, transparency and accountability
  - It was also noted that the project team will be engaging an independent consultant to assist with this area of focus
- **Services that meters should enable**
  - This focus area will consider what arrangements are needed to enable the delivery of electricity services in a timely and efficient way, as well as the role that meters should play
  - Data, both in terms of consumer access to consumption or other data, as well as types of, and form of, information required by other market participants was identified as a key area of investigation for this focus area.
- **Driving the roll out of smart meters**
  - The regulatory framework should support a timely, efficient and effective roll out. This review will consider whether amendments to the current framework is required to better support a timely, efficient and effective roll out of smart meters. The project team noted exploring options for reaching a critical mass of smart meters more efficiently would be investigated as part of this area of focus.
- **Untangling roles and responsibilities**
  - The project team raised that to determine recommendations on roles and responsibilities, clarity is required on the outcomes from the three other focus areas.
  - The complexity of the current structure, and ways in which to improve cooperation, coordination and communication were identified by the project team as areas for consideration under this focus area.

## **Questions and comments on areas of focus**

- Some participants agreed on the discussion about consumer benefits and enquired as to whether the metering review will also consider consumer costs
- Issues surrounding the installation of meters was raised as a key issue by some participants. The project team noted that the installation process would be examined under the review.
- A participant recommended a focus on the technical aspects of the metering technology and customer having a choice in the metering technology. The project team explained that technical aspects and choice would be looked at as part of the services and roles and responsibilities focus groups.
- A participant recommended that it is important for the AEMC to develop consensus with key stakeholders on the problem statement, the objective and key principles of the reform. The project team agreed with the suggestion and noted this approach has led to successful reform outcomes in other projects.

- A participant noted that the new tariff arrangement (cost reflective pricing) poses a barrier for smart meter uptake by consumers as it could potentially have a negative impact on energy bills
- Some participants noted that there are different jurisdictional incentives/disincentives to retailers rolling out meters and some areas or customers should not be inadvertently impacted, and that the changes being initiated by state jurisdictions in relation to solar installations are a consideration.

### **Next steps**

- The project team thanked participants for their time and highlighted that another Reference Group will be convened again in approximately 4-6 weeks.
- Sub-groups areas of focus to be determined with a list of the areas and the process for nominations to be sent to all members, where nominations will be reviewed with an emphasis of broad representation in all sub-groups.
- Bilateral discussions with the AEMC continue to be welcomed.