

Review of the regulatory framework for metering services – Full reference Group Meeting 3

13 July 2021 – Meeting notes

The third full Reference Group was held virtually on Tuesday 13 July 2021. The attendees of the meeting are listed below.

Member	Organisation
Kellie Caught	ACOSS
Kate Goatley	ActewAGL
Lee Brown	AEMO
Con Hristodoulidis	AGL
David Calder	Alinta
Giles Whitehouse	Aurora
Chris Gilbert	ENA
Alex Watters	Ausgrid
Lisa Hussey	DNRME QLD
Dr Martin Gill	Dr Martin Gill
Marie Harrowell, Elisabeth Ross	ECA
Dino Ou	Endeavour
Travis Worsteling	Energy Australia
Amanda Montenegro	Energy Market Matters
Glenn Walden	Ergon
Matt Murphy	ETU Australia
Saad Akbar	Evoenergy
Rory Campbell	EWON
Greg Will	Horizon Power
Christopher Purdie, Michael Faulkner	HRL Morrison & Co
Robert Logiudice	Intellihub
Joe Thorne	Landis+Gyr
Ben Lovell	Living energy
Jochen Sietas	Macquarie Bank
Prabath Kamalasena	Metlogic
Larry Moore	NECA
Sean Greenup, Darren Bailey	Origin
Helen Vassos	PlusES
Sonja Lekovic	Powercor
Stefanie Monaco	Red Energy/Lumo Energy
Bryn Williams	SAPN
Nitesh Khanna, Harry Kapahi	Secure Meters
Carmel Forbes	Shell
Sharon Raymond	Dept. State Growth Tas
Paul Greenwood	Vector
Wayne Farrell	Yurika

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	Adviser, Transmission and distribution networks
Lisa Fukuda	Graduate Adviser, Transmission and distribution networks
Ryan Esplin	Economist

Meeting introduction

At the start of the meeting, sub-reference group members were reminded to observe the requirements of the AEMC's competition protocol.

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

- Progress to date for the review
- Updates and policy discussion on areas of focus from sub-reference groups
- Next steps.

AEMC presentation on market and societal benefits provided by smart meters

- The project team highlighted that to maximise the benefits smart meters can provide, penetration of smart meters would need to increase and that the roll-out should be done in an equitable way.
- The project team indicated that the inefficiencies in rolling out smart meters needed to be addressed, while accounting for considerations such as addressing issues with incentives, aligning costs with benefits and whether changes should be made to roles and responsibilities.
- The project team welcomed feedback on issues highlighted throughout the session.

AEMC presentation on consumer experience and questions

- The project team:
 - Provided the final problem statement and objective for the review, highlighting what changes were made to the version endorsed by the consumer sub-reference group.
 - Provided an update on consumer experience work being undertaken by Newgate Research, including its scope of work and its progress to date. It was noted Newgate's report will be published on the AEMC webpage once data has been analysed by the project team.
 - Questions and answers included that Victorian customers were included in Newgate's research, and that the Newgate Research report is expected to be published alongside the review's draft report.

AEMC presentation on services and data and questions

- The project team:
 - Informed the Reference Group that based on feedback from sub-reference group meetings, current minimum specifications are likely to be sufficient to provide the services wanted and needed.

- Data access and availability needs to be addressed as barriers currently exist, with an overview of the barriers and key considerations for potential solutions was provided.
- Shared that NERA Economic Consulting has been engaged to provide advice on efficient data access, and that the Commission is considering the need for a data access regime. NERA's advice will inform the review's recommendations on data access.
- Some participants recommended that NERA should consider the use of data by Victorian distribution businesses be drawn on for lessons learnt and opportunities. Participants also suggested that cost recovery considerations for new types of data (if any) should be included in the scope of the work of NERA.

AEMC presentation on installations and discussion

- The project team:
 - Provided an overview on physical site issues (safety, access remediation issues), communication (information about the site, poor information flows across parties) and coordination issues (multi-occupancy, negotiating timeframes, appointment of roles, agreed timeframes) which were common for all installation types.
 - Discussed with participants whether a new information provision would help customers understand the process as a potential solution.
- Participants discussed the AEMC's proposed information provisions including:
 - responsibility for the information provision and its timeframes in relation to meter installation.
 - how potential change in customer bills due to assignment to cost-reflective tariffs is communicated to customers.
- Participants also discussed whether there was a potential to develop a joint portal that has details for metering progress which all parties can access and how remediation issues should be dealt with.
- The project team presented potential changes to the meter malfunction replacement process:
 - whether a longer timeframe for meter replacement under family failure, removal of the AEMO exemption process and the introduction of the same exceptions as under consumer-led replacements (e.g. shared fusing, site unsafe) would improve the meter malfunction replacement process.
 - Sought feedback from participants on what timeframe would be reasonable, if there are any suggestions for improving the proposed approach and any concerns to be aware of.
- Feedback from participants was generally positive in relation to the proposed changes to eliminating the exemption process for meter malfunction replacement.
- The project team then presented potential changes to the retailer-led roll out process along including reducing the number of notices from two to one, changes to the timeframe for notices to enable retailers to replace meters more efficiently and removing the opt-out provision.
- Regarding retailer-led roll out, there were some feedback and discussion around potential removal of opt-out and its impact on consumer billing for those on standing offers due to changes to the underlying tariff structure from a smart meter.

AEMC presentation on roles, incentives and roll out

- The project team:
 - Outlined that there are currently lack of incentives among retailers and consumers with roll out, as well as inefficiencies and regulatory barriers.
 - Presented on a number of potential options involving incremental changes through to significant changes which will accelerate the roll out, including fixing inefficient installation processes, aged replacement of meters and a targeted approach.
 - Welcomed feedback for other potential options, factors to consider, pros and cons of each approach, required incentives and if there are any implications on roles and responsibilities.

Next steps

- The project team noted:
 - It will continue developing draft policy position and options to be considered in the draft report.
 - Results from Newgate Research into consumer experiences will be published with the draft report and those findings will be presented to the sub-reference group.
 - Preliminary findings from NERA's analysis in relation to improving access will also be included
 - a draft report will be published end of August/early September.
- The first sub-reference group for roles, incentives and roll out will be held shortly.
- The project team thanked participants for their time and noted that bilateral discussions with the AEMC continue to be welcomed.