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Real-time data for consumers rule change – ERC0399

Submission via AEMC website

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Draft rule determination – Real-time data for consumers

AGL Energy (**AGL**) welcomes the opportunity to provide responses to the consultation questions posed by the Australian Energy Market Commission (**AEMC**) in response to the abovementioned draft determination.

AGL is a strong advocate for the need to empower and educate consumers on how to access, understand and utilise their energy data to optimise their consumption profile, shift behaviours and take advantage of variable pricing structures and demand-response programs. Informed and engaged consumers are critical to the success of the energy transition. AGL is delivering a broad range of innovative propositions to support our customers at every stage of their transition journey, and provides all its customers access to, and high-quality visualisation of, their settlement meter data via our AGL app.

AGL's view remains that mandating access to real-time data (RTD) from smart meters is not necessary to develop products and services which can help consumers effectively respond to price signals or to benefit from emerging technologies. Retailer demand-response programs (e.g., AGL's Peak Energy Rewards) and digital advisory tools (e.g., AGL's Electrify Now) leverage energy usage data, but do not rely on access to RTD. As demand for different data-driven products becomes apparent, suitable solutions will continue to develop organically and cost-effectively over time. Customers with CER, and non-retailer service providers, can already access granular data directly from CER devices and other installations.

AGL recognises the AEMC has made meaningful changes through its consultation process to reduce costs for all energy users and supports features of the AEMC's draft determination. AGL supports the draft determination's definition of RTD, extensions to the latency of delivery from one second to five seconds, including timeline exemptions for RTD access under specific circumstances, and removing requirements for the AER to publish commercial metering charges.

Even with these improvements, there is a strong risk of over-investment in a metering solution with limited customer uptake.

- The Victorian roll-out of smart meters offers an example where RTD is theoretically available to consumers via a Zigbee interface, but access to this technology has been very limited. This contrasts with a high uptake of in-home display technologies subsidised by the state government's Victorian Energy Upgrades program which connect to the smart meter via a different interface. Enabling a technology feature may not necessarily translate into consumer uptake of the solution.
- The AEMC's cost-benefit analysis also continues to underestimate the changes required to implement and operationalise this Rule change. The estimated implementation cost of $5 per National Meter Identifier (NMI) quantifies only a fraction of the efforts necessary to meet the proposed obligations. Other non-quantified costs include changes to IT systems, consumer communications, access enablement and revocation, customer service, and complaint handling. The modelled costs for a RTD-capable meter (an

additional $10 per installation) also underestimates the complexity of meeting the minimum services specification, particularly if wired communications were required.

Some of the costs of delivering this Rule change could be reduced by ensuring the final determination does not over-specify how retailers and metering coordinators must meet their RTD obligations. AGL encourages the AEMC to make the following changes to its final determination:

- Dictate RTD capabilities in the minimum services specification, without prescribing the need for wireless and wired capabilities, to reduce implementation complexity.
- Leverage the Consumer Data Right (CDR) process to authorise access to consumer appointed representatives, as industry has already invested in comprehensive systems to facilitate secure data sharing arrangements.
- Ensure communication requirements across participants (e.g., between retailers, or between retailers and metering coordinators) are not prescriptive, enabling participants to leverage existing processes and systems to meet the Rule's requirements.
- Provide sufficient time for detailed industry consultation in the development of open standards communications protocols, to ensure these support product and service innovation.
- Ensure the scope of AEMO's procedures do not overlap with matters in scope of the Information Exchange Committee's (IEC) business-to-business (B2B) procedures.
- Review the Rule commencement date to ensure retailers and metering coordinators have sufficient time to meet the final requirements in the Rules and AEMO's procedures, without impacting the accelerated smart-meter deployment.

Appendix A includes detailed responses to select questions in the consultation paper. Appendix B includes technical considerations related to the indicative changes to the National Electricity Rules (NER) and National Energy Retail Rules (NERR). If you have any queries about this submission, please contact Andrea Espinosa on aespinosa2@agl.com.au.

Yours sincerely,

Kyle Auret

Senior Manager Policy and Market Regulation

AGL Energy

About AGL

Proudly Australian for more than 187 years, AGL supplies energy and other essential services to residential, small and large businesses and wholesale customers. AGL is committed to providing our customers with simple, fair and accessible services as they decarbonise and electrify the way they live, move and work. AGL is investing in flexibility and has been making strong progress against our grid-scale battery and distributed energy resources (DER) targets. As of FY25 AGL had 1.49 GW of decentralised assets under orchestration, and a FY27 target of 2.5 GW of demand-side flexibility. AGL is also a market leader in the development of innovative products that enable consumers to make informed choices on how and when to optimise their energy usage to better manage their energy costs.

Appendix A – Response to consultation questions

Question	Response
Question 1: Would our draft rule encourage consumers and energy service providers to access real-time data from smart meters? What is the benefit of this?	AGL maintains that if demand for real-time data became evident, then suitable products would develop organically and cost-effectively over time. These offerings would come at a lower cost to consumers and would be tailored to address specific customer needs. In contrast, the draft determination recovers retail and metering costs across the broader consumer base and is seeking to address multiple objectives – information provision and innovation in CER products and services – with a single solution. The AEMC's cost-benefit analysis (CBA) includes a sixth scenario which would require retailers to provide all consumers with a summary of their daily interval energy consumption at least once per day, but this scenario was not modelled explicitly. Nonetheless, AGL agrees with the CBA's assertions which state "[Scenario 6] would probably provide benefits similar in nature to the benefits modelled in Scenarios 1 through 5 that result from customers using RTD to reduce their consumption in ways that reduce economic costs in the electricity supply chain" and that "this approach could almost certainly be rolled out more quickly (and at a lower cost) than any of the RTD scenarios." The AEMC's draft determination acknowledges that "most benefits would accrue to CER customers, while all customers would incur costs." AGL supports the objectives of the National CER Roadmap, but maintains its position that the metering framework was designed to support settlements and making changes to the minimum services specification is unlikely to deliver the CER integration benefits envisaged by the AEMC. The Victorian roll-out of smart meters offers an example where RTD is theoretically available to consumers via a Zigbee interface, but access to this technology has been very limited – roughly 0.1% of customers in CitiPower, Powercor and United Energy's networks[1]. This is partly due to difficulty in obtaining and installing Zigbee compatible devices. In-home displays have had higher adoption in Victoria, driven by discounts provided by the Victorian Government and facilitated by accredited providers[2]. The Victorian Government modelled this activity as approaching market saturation beyond 2026[3]. Most in-home displays do not use Zigbee technology and instead connect to an LED light in the smart meter installation. The different uptake of these technologies provides a clear example where access to RTD may not necessarily translate into consumer uptake, unless it's supported by clear customer value and low barriers to installation.

[1] CitiPower, Powercor and United Energy submission to the AEMC's Real-time data consultation paper, 7 November 2024, https://www.aemc.gov.au/sites/default/files/2024-11/citipower_powercor_and_united_energy.pdf

[2] Victoria State Government, In-home display discounts, Accessed 21 October 2025, https://www.energy.vic.gov.au/victorian-energy-upgrades/products/in-home-display-discounts

[3] Victorian Government, Victorian Energy Upgrades 2026-27 Targets Regulatory Impact Statement, November 2024, https://engage.vic.gov.au/download/document/37796.

Question	Response
Question 2: Should the min specs be changed to require all new meters installed from 2028 to be able to communicate real-time data both wirelessly and through a wired connection? Would changing the min specs increase benefits whilst imposing low costs on all consumers?	AGL would support changes to the minimum services specification which do not dictate wireless and wired capabilities, but rather RTD capabilities. A technology agnostic solution would enable metering parties to meet this requirement at the lowest cost and in the shortest timeframe. Should the AEMC determine it is necessary to dictate the communication pathway, then AGL would be broadly supportive of retaining the wireless connectivity requirement. AGL notes that changes to meter configurations, especially requiring physical connections, can require amendments or complete Patten Approvals by the Australian Government National Measurement Institute (the Institute). If these approvals are required, then new hardware cannot be made available to the market until the Institute certifies the new meters and then the manufacturers produce them. The AEMC should also maintain the following draft decisions, which are essential to reduce costs to all consumers: • metering coordinators are not required to extract, receive or translate RTD. • metering coordinators are not responsible for increases in latency that may be caused by devices other than the smart meter (e.g., due to Wi-Fi connectivity issues). AGL's view is that including a wired connection requirement in the minimum services specification would significantly increase the costs of enabling RTD. Meeting this requirement would also take longer to implement than wireless capabilities, due to the careful design required to mitigate safety and security risks. AGL also urges the AEMC to ensure there is sufficient time between the finalisation of AEMO's procedures and the commencement of the Rule. Should the final Rule support a technology agnostic solution, then AGL's preference would be to allow a minimum of 2-years between the publication of AEMO's guideline and the new obligations.

Question	Response
Question 3: Do you agree with the costs the CBA estimates would be incurred to implement our draft rule? Would these costs decrease over time?	The CBA underestimates the retailer costs associated with this Rule change. The CBA estimates metering coordinators and retailers would incur implementation costs of $5 per NMI to implement the Rule. AGL understands these costs are associated with "Costs of developing and implementing and administering a means for restricting access to the RTD by authorised parties." The CBA does not account for other substantial retailer costs including changes to retailer IT systems, consumer communications, access enablement and revocation, customer service, and complaint handling (retailers will be the primary contact for consumers seeking to resolve issues with their RTD access, regardless of the cause). AGL notes that these are not one-off services for customers, but are likely to be services provided multiple times for each RTD enabled customer. Furthermore, AGL understands the $5 implementation cost per NMI is calculated as the total implementation costs divided by customers in the NEM (excluding Victoria). A more meaningful number would be to calculate the cost per service (i.e., customers with real-time data enabled). The CDR offers an example of a framework which has had very low uptake in the energy sector and has come at very high costs for consumers. Outside of the energy sector, the Australian Banking Association estimated that its members had invested over $1.5 billion to meet the regulatory requirements to establish data sharing under the CDR and at the end of 2023, only 0.31 per cent of bank customers had an active data sharing arrangement. AGL's experience is consistent, with only a very small number of active data sharing consents after millions were spent to implement the framework. AGL's submission to the AEMC's directions paper includes further information on this matter. The CBA also does not account for the substantive costs associated with enabling RTD services in a Type 4A meter, which would require physical visits to site associated with outage notifications. AGL encourages the AEMC to reconsider RTD obligations for Type 4A meters, as these installations will incur higher enablement and operational costs. AGL supports the objective of offering RTD to customers in areas with poor connectivity, but retailers could be allowed to offer other lower-cost options (e.g., a CT clamp) where the cost to enable and maintain the RTD requirement are prohibitively expensive.
Question 4: Our draft approach is to progressively enable consumers with new meters installed from 2028 to access real-time data at no charge. What is the benefit of enabling more consumers to access real-time data from smart meters, at no charge, sooner?	AGL agrees that a no-fee additional cost option for consumers with RTD enabled smart meters would increase the likelihood of uptake by consumers, noting that the higher cost of the hardware would be part of the overall cost of the meter to each customer. Higher consumer uptake increases the likelihood of realising the benefits of the rule. However, this feature should be balanced by: • Minimising the costs associated with this reform to limit the impacts on the broader consumer base. • Ensuring the no charge obligation is limited to the costs associated with the provision of an enabled meter, and does not inadvertently prohibit retailers from charging for other RTD related-services, such as password establishment, and reset, subsequent site visits and meter investigations. This would be particularly relevant to cases where the service was associated with a defect or issue caused by a third-party product. The same principle should apply to the real-time data facilitation charge (where applicable).

Question	Response
Question 6: Would any other regulatory mechanisms better enable all consumers to access real-time data from smart meters, at low cost to the market?	As noted earlier, AGL's view is that the objectives of this Rule would be better delivered through non-regulatory mechanism with products and services developing organically based on customer needs. AGL is delivering a broad range of innovative propositions to support our customers at every stage of their transition journey. AGL has also developed effective tools for customers seeking to understand their energy usage to optimise their consumption profile, shift behaviours and take advantage of variable pricing structures and demand-response programs.
Question 7: We proposed a definition of real-time data and a requirement on AEMO's real-time data procedures. Would these provide industry with sufficient clarity on what real-time data is, and how real-time data would be made accessible from smart meters?	AGL broadly supports the definition of RTD in the Rules, but notes the definition of voltage, current and phase angle should be consistent with Power Quality Data requirements under the Accelerating Smart Meter Deployment Rule. AGL notes that industry would not have clarity on the extent of the RTD requirements until AEMO has finalised its procedures. As noted earlier, AGL's preference would be to allow a minimum of 2-years between the publication of AEMO's guideline and the obligations, subject to the minimum specification requiring technology agnostic RTD capabilities. Furthermore, the AEMC should clarify that AEMO's procedures should not overlap with matters in scope of the IEC's B2B procedures. AEMO's procedures should only specify matters related to transactions between participants and AEMO (e.g., in scope of the Market Settlement and Transfer Solutions, or MSATS), while B2B procedures should specify matters related to transactions across participants (e.g., data from retailer to retailer, or retailer to metering coordinator). Obligations, such as compliance of service, are matters which should be left with the appropriate regulator. The AEMC should also provide AEMO with sufficient time to engage in detailed industry consultation on open standards communications protocols, to ensure these support product and service innovation.
Question 8: Our draft rule would introduce a range of requirements on different parties to enable customers to access real-time data. Do you consider that our draft rule would support a good customer experience for customers requesting access?	There is a risk of poor customer experience as customers navigate multiple service providers (e.g., retailers and non-retailer customer appointed representatives). Customer appointed representatives should be held accountable for resolving issues related to their own products and services, particularly as retailers are expected to become the first point of contact during customer complaints. Customer experience could also be improved by ensuring communication requirements across participants (e.g., between retailers, or between retailers and metering coordinators) are not prescriptive, enabling participants to leverage existing processes and systems to meet the Rule's requirements. For example, the draft determination includes a requirement for outgoing retailers to inform the incoming retailer that real-time data access has been provided to the small customer at a premises. There are challenges in effecting this requirement as drafted – these could be overcome if the AEMC's drafting were to focus on objective (e.g., that customers who have already been facilitated access to RTD should not be charged more than once), rather than the method / sequence of communication.

Question	Response
Question 9: Would our draft rule introduce appropriate security measures to protect customer information from being accessed by unauthorised parties?	The AEMC should seek to leverage CDR processes to authorise access to consumer appointed representatives, as industry has already invested in comprehensive systems to facilitate secure data sharing arrangements. Under the draft Rule, there is a risk of disconnect between the customer appointed representative consent process, and the retailer's verification of consent when providing access to third parties.

Appendix B – Technical considerations on draft changes to the NER and NERR

This section outlines technical matters the AEMC may wish to consider for its final determination to simplify the implementation of this rule change. Incorporating these suggestions would support the delivery of the objectives of this rule, without unduly prescribing how these must be met. The requirements identified in the tables below would result in unnecessarily prescriptive processes either between market participants and AEMO systems or between market participants, and/or would limit the ability for different providers to meet the requirements with different technologies.

AEMC's draft changes to the NER

NER Rule	Comment
7.15.7 (c)	This requirement could be simplified by not specifying signal requirements (i.e., via a one-way or unidirectional signal) as this provides flexibility to facilitate RTD differently, depending on the characteristics of the installation.
7.15.7 (d)	AEMO's draft HLIA proposes that information associated with these services is stored in MSATS. MSATS would identify whether an installation is RTD capable or RTD enabled. However, the AEMC is proposing requirements on metering coordinators to 'notify' retailers at certain stages. The Metering Coordinator could be required to ensure the Retailer is aware of the RTD status, without specifying how this should be done. This would allow both B2B and MSATS solutions to be used appropriately.
7.15.7 (f)	AGL notes that some connections points may have multiple meters and, in some cases, the meters can be in located in different areas on the property. AGL suggests that this Rule should apply to meters, not connection points. Additional charges could be allowed if there are multiple requests per meter per annum, similar to the existing way the provision of historic meter data incurs charges after two requests.
7.15.7 (h)	This activity is built into the contractual arrangements between the metering coordinator (MC) and the metering provider (MP). Regardless of which MC is appointed, the MP is the party who would enable and disable the security arrangements. Therefore, it may be unnecessary to have this obligation on MCs.
7.15.7 (i) and (j) (i)	AGL supports the objective of ensuring RTD access is secure. However, the MC does not usually have a direct relationship with the account holder so it would be difficult to meet this obligation as currently proposed.
7.16.6E (a) (2)	AGL's view is that AEMO procedures should not extend to devices outside of the metering installation. Connections from the metering installation are either covered by AS/NZS 3000, or by the various telecommunications technical requirements, and AEMO procedures could be inconsistent with these requirements.
7.16.6E (a) (3)	AEMO should work closely with industry on its open standards-based communications protocols requirements, to ensure they can be used by industry to support innovation and product development.
7.16.6E (b)	AGL does not consider AEMO is best placed to define security controls for this service. Different providers may have different solutions, and noting the speed with which IT security needs updating and maintenance, AGL proposes that at best the Procedures should point to an industry minimum standard, rather than being prescriptive.

Indicative changes to the NERR

NERR Rule	Comment
59E (2)	AGL reiterates its comments about providing support services to access RTD. The provision, removal, reset, etc of data access may require site visits and manually intensive work between the retailer and MC. The Retailer should be able to charge customers in circumstances when the services are being called on multiple times, or when further work is required due to issues related at the third-party service. AGL also notes there is a disconnect between the requirements in the NERR (which refer to meters) and the NER (which refer to connection points). AGL's view is that both should refer to meters. The draft requires the retailer to offer the small customer the choice of either retrofitting or replacing the meter in order to enable access to RTD where the meter was installed prior to 1 January 2028 and does not meet the minimum services specification. AGL's view is that it is not necessary to specify how access to RTD may be delivered. The retailer / MC should be able to find the most cost-effective pathway to deliver RTD data, and this could require a different action.
59E(7)	AGL also considers that the retailer and MC should not be required to facilitate access to RTD if the customer does not provide safe and unhindered access to the metering installation.
59E(8)	AGL notes that if a site requires a field visit (including an outage) to inspect (and enable RTD) a period of 10 days may be insufficient as the retailer would not necessarily be aware of the status of the meter until that visit was completed. AGL encourages the AEMC to consider a 15 business days requirement as is normal for fault rectification.
59E(9)	AGL notes that MSATS links NMIs to addresses so this is requirement may be unnecessary. A NMI can have multiple meters, so it is likely that the meter ID may be needed. AGL also notes the person making the request may not always be the account holder or authorised, and their request would therefore be rejected by the retailer. Rather than be specific, AGL proposes that the AEMC simply require the retailer to provide the MC with the information necessary to facilitate RTD access and allow the IEC's B2B procedures to specify the content.
59E(12)	AGL considers that this obligation needs further assessment. Retailers are not aware of a customer churn until the churn has completed, or why the churn occurred (e.g., move out or change of retailer), and therefore the current retailer (or AEMO through an MSATS notification) should facilitate the resetting of access to the data streams. Equally, an incoming retailer is the only party who **may** be able to determine if the churn occurs in-situ or not. Due to privacy concerns and domestic violence concerns, AGL considers that these obligations need careful analysis to ensure that customers privacy is protected.
59 F	AGL notes there may be instances where a customer refused communications for a smart meter and subsequently requests access to RTD. Meeting this request would be substantially more expensive and complex to meet if the meter communications are not first made active.