23 October 2025

Ms Anna Collyer
Chair
Australian Energy Market Commission
Level 15, 60 Castlereagh Street
Sydney NSW 2000

Lodged electronically: https://www.aemc.gov.au/contact-us/lodge-submission

Dear Ms Collyer,

RE: REAL-TIME DATA FOR CONSUMERS – DRAFT DETERMINATION

Origin Energy (Origin) appreciates the opportunity to provide a submission to the Australian Energy Market Commission's (AEMC) Real-time data for consumers – draft determination (ERC0399).

Increased availability of real-time data is likely to support greater innovation and better customer outcomes, especially for those customers using consumer energy resources (CER). We consider that the proposed staged implementation of real-time data aligned with the ongoing smart meter rollout, is a pragmatic approach.

Real-time data can be used for a multitude of purposes such as improving services, enhancing efficiency, and informing automated systems. It is important that real-time data access and use is governed by strong safeguards to protect consumers and ensure trust. This includes implementing robust privacy protections, limiting data access to authorised and transparent purposes, and enforcing strict cybersecurity measures. Clear consent mechanisms, accountability frameworks, and regular audits should also be established to prevent misuse.

We support the proposal for the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) to develop and publish detailed real-time data procedures, interoperability requirements and relevant security protocols and any other technical features of the data. Standardisation of protocols and procedures is critical for promoting competitive provision and ensuring interoperability between meters and customer devices to maximise consumer choice.

We believe that retailers are best positioned to manage consumer consent, as they directly interact with consumer data, ensuring transparency and consumer control. However, given the sensitivity of real-time data, we are concerned that the process for ensuring and managing consumer consent is not sufficiently explained and requires further guidance from the AEMC.

While most customers are expected to access real-time data through an appointed representative who will transform the data into a usable format, there is potential for customers to seek access directly. We are concerned that these customers may expect the data to already be in a usable format or that the retailer will transform the raw data. It is important that the AEMC manage customer expectations to ensure customers are aware that any data provided under the proposed rule change will be in a raw, unverified format and will require transformation, either by the customer or an appointed representative, before it can be meaningfully utilised.

Origin's response to specific questions raised by the AEMC are set out below.

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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?

We believe that most customers will access real-time data through various products and services provided by a services provider – whether this is a retailer or some other appointed representative.

Access to real-time data is a key enabler for the development of more innovative products and services. However, providing access to real time data is just one of several necessary components to support a more progressive and efficient market.

How real-time data is utilised in future services will be heavily influenced by several current regulatory reviews including the Federal Government's 'Better Energy Customer Experiences', the National Consumer Energy Resources Roadmap, and the AEMC's 'Electricity pricing for a consumer-driven future'. How these reforms influence the future market structure will have a greater impact on encouraging the use of real-time data. Notwithstanding, real-time data is a necessary pre-condition for the market to evolve.

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?

We consider that few consumers are likely to require both wireless and wired capability and, in some instances, wired may be preferable where customers require a more secure/reliable connection. Nevertheless, by supporting both wireless and wired, the meter is more versatile and future-proof, accommodating a wider range of use cases and facilitating more options and products. Provided the AEMC's cost estimates are reasonably accurate, changing the minimum meter specs represents a relatively low-cost option for providing access to real-time data – the meters are already being replaced as part of the smart meter rollout resulting in substantial savings compared to an out-of-sequence meter replacement or retrofitting.

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 estimates that the cost of a smart meter with wireless functionality and a port is approximately $10 more than a meter without these features. The AEMC also indicates that the CBA also identifies a once-off implementation costs of approximately $5 per NMI. We consider that meter providers are best qualified to confirm whether the CBA estimates are reasonable.

We would expect technological advancements and economies of scale in future meter replacements to contribute to lower meter and implementation costs over time.

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?

Enabling customers to access real-time data, at no charge, sooner brings forward the potential consumer benefits e.g. potential consumer energy cost savings, access to new energy plans, integration and optimisation of CER. Those customers with CER are expected to be the greatest beneficiaries of access to real-time data. However, the socialisation of costs associated with the AEMC proposal means that customers that are unlikely to benefit from the availability of real-time data (e.g. non-CER customer) will bear some cost. While the cost impact is relatively minimal based on the current CBA assumptions and modelling, to the extent actual costs are higher than assumed there is a potential for a greater cost impost and heightened equity considerations for non-CER customers. In this case, it may be necessary to revisit the imposition of costs.

Question 5: What information would be useful for consumers to help them determine if accessing real-time data is beneficial and if any charge to them, to upgrade the meter, is reasonable?

We consider the following information may be useful to customers:

- An explanation of real-time data; how it can be used (by the customer or the customer's agent) and how this can provide benefits to customers, including potential case studies.
- What delivery options are available e.g. whether the customer will receive an upgraded meter as part of the current smart meter rollout or do they need to wait for next meter replacement. Options to request a replacement meter or a retrofitted meter.
- The cost impost for each of the above options, including any upfront or ongoing costs.
- The process involved in a customer accessing the data e.g. customer to contact retailer and retailer to facilitate the process.
- The process for providing consent, including consent for other parties to access the data, safeguards concerning customers experiencing family violence and the process for revoking consent.
- How customer privacy will be safeguarded and what measures have been implemented to ensure the data is not compromised.
- Timeframe for receiving access to data.
- What happens if the customer moves address.
- The process for accessing customer support and raising a dispute.
- Which retailers/service providers provide services/products using real-time data and the offers available.

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?

We support the AEMC's revised proposed definition of real-time data. We also support that real time data will not be validated.

We agree with the requirement on AEMO to develop and publish detailed real-time data procedures, interoperability requirements and relevant security protocols and any other technical features of the data. Standardisation of protocols and procedures is critical for promoting competitive provision and ensuring interoperability between meters and customer devices to maximise consumer choice.

We support AEMO's proposed inclusions for the real-time data procedures but consider that the development of an agreed procedures is a complicated process and will require considerable industry consultation. On this basis, we consider that the proposed 1 July 2026 timeframe to publish the procedures is unrealistic. We suggest a minimum further six months is required. The implications of any extension on the timeframe for the delivery of the proposed rule will need to be considered as part of the development of the final rule.

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?

We agree with the AEMC's proposed roles and responsibilities.

Given their existing customer relationship, retailers should manage the process for their customers' access to real-time data. Similarly, we believe that retailers are best positioned to manage consumer consent, as they directly interact with consumer data, ensuring transparency and consumer control. Retailers have existing processes and governance models in place, and we believe these can be reasonably extended to capture customer consent for the access to their real-time usage data. Confining customer (or their agents') interactions to the retailer ensures that customers have a single point of contact for enabling access to real-time data and addressing any issues associated with that access.

Given the sensitivity of real-time data, we consider that the AEMC should provide further guidance for verifying and managing consumer consent, including:

- What constitutes valid consent (e.g., explicit, informed, and voluntary):
  - Whether consent can be verbal, digital, or written.
  - Whether consent can be broad (ongoing) or narrow (one-off).
- How to authenticate and verify consent, including verification methods and minimum security requirements e.g. two-factor authentication etc.
- How to record, retain, and allow revocation:
  - How consent must be recorded (e.g., database logs, digital receipts).
  - Retention period for consent records.
  - Format of records for auditability and regulatory compliance.
  - How to track revocation or changes in consent.
- How to ensure compliance with privacy, security, and audit requirements:
  - Guidance on measures to prevent unauthorised access.
  - Procedures to log and report access attempts or breaches.
  - Integration of consent verification with existing privacy and cybersecurity obligations.

Question 9 Would our draft rule introduce appropriate security measures to protect customer information from being accessed by unauthorised parties?

We agree the draft rule introduces appropriate security measures. The rule requires consumer consent for access to real-time data and requires real-time data to be treated as affected customer information to protect consumers experiencing family violence. In addition, accreditation requirements and real-time data procedures to be developed by AEMO will ensure access is restricted to appropriate parties and that relevant security protocols, including cybersecurity protections, are applied to the data. We look forward to participating in the development of AEMO's real-time data procedures.

While the AEMC's proposal does not specifically address the requirements for accessing real-time data, we note AEMO's proposed amendments to both the NER (rule 8.6) and NGR (part 16) to include enabling provisions that expressly permit AEMO to disclose confidential information to authorised representatives of registered participants entitled to receive that information, specifically service providers.[1] We assume that these proposed changes will facilitate the provision of real-time data to authorised representatives whilst ensuring appropriate consumer protections.

If you have any questions regarding this submission, please contact Gary Davies in the first instance at gary.davies@originenergy.com.au.

Yours sincerely

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[1] AEMO, Request for Rule Change – Access to Information by Participant Representatives, May 2025.