



INFORMATION

AUSTRALIAN ENERGY MARKET COMMISSION LEVEL 15, 60 CASTLEREAGH STREET SYDNEY NSW 2000
T: 02 8296 7800 E: AEMC@AEMC.GOV.AU W: WWW.AEMC.GOV.AU

DWGM maintenance planning

Overview of the final rule

The Australian Energy Market Commission (AEMC or Commission) has made a final rule to clarify the Australian Energy Market Operator's (AEMO) existing maintenance coordination function in the Victorian Declared Wholesale Gas Market (DWGM) and remove minor inconsistencies within the National Gas Rules (NGR).

The rule makes amendments to clauses 200, 324 and 326 of the NGR with the effect of:

- Establishing 'minimise any threat' to system security as the threshold that AEMO and asset operators must meet during maintenance planning in the DWGM by removing the rule that requires AEMO to 'ensure there is no threat to system security'.
- Incorporating producers in the maintenance planning coordination process that currently only applies to storage providers, the declared transmission system service provider and interconnected transmission pipeline service providers.
- Simplifying the rules by replacing the need to list the various facilities types with one defined term, 'DWGM facility operator' (a collective term for storage providers, the declared transmission system service provider, interconnected transmission pipeline service providers and producers).
- Amending the definitions of 'Producer' and 'Storage Provider' in rule 200 of Part 19 of the NGR to make it consistent with the registration categories in rule 135A of Part 15A of the NGR.

The Commission has made minor amendments to the rule proposed by AEMO to clarify that the registered participants subject to the final rule are those registered in the Victorian DWGM, but in substance it is the same as that proposed by AEMO.

AEMO will update the *Wholesale Market Maintenance Planning Procedures (Victoria)* to reflect the rule change. AEMO will also make additional changes in accordance with the following two recommendations from the Commission to further clarify the coordination of maintenance planning process:

- Include reference to the *Gas Safety (Safety Case) Regulations 2018* and the Australian Standards which are used as the minimum threshold for AEMO when assessing threats to system security.
- Explain the different approval processes for 'planned' and 'unplanned' maintenance.

Benefits of the rule

The final rule will:

1. Introduce a consistent standard for system security across the Victorian DWGM when evaluating potential threats to system security posed by maintenance activities and thereby improving the safe, reliable and secure supply of natural gas.
2. Capture producers within the new definition of 'DWGM facility operator', removing the need for AEMO to issue extra maintenance directions under the National Gas Law. This will reduce administrative burden on AEMO and improve the uniformity of obligations imposed on asset operators with regard to coordination of maintenance planning.
3. The rule will remove differences in definitions in the NGR, simplifying the rules and improving consistency. More clear and consistent rules provide a greater degree of certainty and are easier to interpret and apply.

Context and rule change request

AEMO submitted a rule change request on 30 June 2020 that identified several changes that could be made to improve the coordination of maintenance planning in the DWGM. The Commission adopted an expedited process in considering this rule change request. No objections to using this process were received.

Commencement of the rule

The transitional arrangements in schedule 2 of the final rule will commence on 21 January 2021. Under these arrangements, AEMO will have until 22 April 2021 to update the *Wholesale Market Maintenance Planning Procedures (Victoria)* to take into account the final rule. The operative provisions in schedule 1 of the final rule, which amend rules 200, 324 and 326 of the NGR, will then commence on 22 April 2021.

For information contact:

Graduate Adviser, **Alice Hawkins** 02 8296 0675

Senior Adviser, **Daniela Moraes** 02 82696 0607

Media: Media and Content Manager, Kellie Bisset 0438 490 041

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