



Reference: DOC/24/60127

14 May 2024

Kris Funston
Executive General Manager
Australia Energy Regulator
GPO Box 3131
Canberra ACT 2601

Dear Kris,

RE: SA Power Network Proposal 2025-2030

The Mount Barker District Council submits the following comments and considerations regarding the SA Power Network's (SAPN) proposal for the 2025-2030 period.

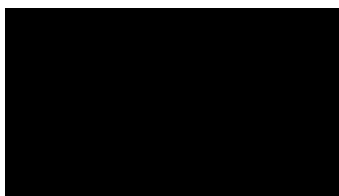
- 1. Bushfire Risk Mitigation:** Given the heightened risk of bushfires in our region, we emphasise the critical importance of incorporating robust measures to mitigate these risks into the network's infrastructure planning. We support SAPN's 'bushfire risk management' program to upgrade network assets via the use of aerial bundled cables and feeder-level ultra-fast protection.
- 2. Rooftop Solar Export:** We support initiatives that promote the transition to renewable energy sources. We encourage SAPN to continue investing in infrastructure that facilitates the integration of renewable energy into the grid, thereby reducing emissions and enhancing sustainability. As an area with a high uptake of rooftop solar systems, it is imperative that residents are able to continue exporting surplus energy to the grid without interruption. We urge SAPN to ensure that their proposal includes provisions to support and accommodate the increasing capacity of rooftop solar installations, thereby promoting renewable energy generation and fostering community resilience.
- 3. Support for Home and Community Batteries:** We strongly advocate for the inclusion of measures that support the widespread adoption of home and community battery systems. These systems are integral to facilitating the transition away from fossil fuels towards renewable energy sources. By empowering residents to harness and store renewable energy, we can reduce reliance on traditional, polluting technologies like home gas systems. We urge the Australian Energy Regulator to prioritise initiatives that promote the installation and affordability of battery storage solutions. Furthermore, we emphasise the importance of education and outreach programs to inform residents about the benefits of transitioning to clean energy alternatives.
- 4. Infrastructure Upgrades and Replacement:** Council recognises the challenges posed by aging infrastructure, and appreciate the need for strategic investments in upgrading and replacing outdated assets. This includes modernising substations, transformers, and distribution networks to improve reliability, efficiency, and safety. We urge SAPN to prioritise these upgrades in areas experiencing rapid development and population growth to meet current and future energy demands effectively.

5. **Accommodating Increasing Energy Demand:** With our region experiencing sustained population growth, it is essential that the power network is equipped to accommodate the corresponding increase in energy demand. This requires proactive planning and investment in expanding capacity, enhancing grid resilience, and deploying smart grid technologies to optimise energy distribution and utilisation.
6. **LED Public Lighting Upgrade:** We believe that upgrading public lighting to LED technology presents a significant opportunity to enhance energy efficiency, reduce carbon emissions, and improve the quality of lighting in our community. LED lighting offers numerous benefits, including lower energy consumption, longer lifespan, and superior light quality, which can contribute to safer streets and public spaces.
7. **Encouragement of Smart Lighting Adoption:** The adoption of smart lighting technology holds immense potential for enhancing energy efficiency and promoting sustainability within our community. We encourage SAPN to prioritise the deployment of smart lighting infrastructure and incentivise its adoption among consumers. Smart lighting not only reduces energy consumption but also offers opportunities for innovative solutions such as adaptive lighting control and remote monitoring. Additionally, we request provisions that allow local councils to utilise smart lighting technology for public infrastructure and urban development projects. By integrating smart lighting systems into our municipal operations, we can optimise resource utilisation and create safer, more environmentally friendly communities.
8. **Funding Support:** We support SAPN's innovation fund to extend or upgrade the sub-transmission, distribution, Low Voltage networks and substations, increasing the networks capacity. We hope that this could be also applied to counter the upfront costs of LED lighting upgrades and adoption of smart lighting.

In conclusion, the Mount Barker District Council appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback on the SA Power Network proposal. We trust that these matters will be carefully considered by the Australia Energy Regulator in their assessment process.

Thank you for considering our input.

Sincerely,



Andrew Stuart
Chief Executive Officer