



# Stakeholder Reference Group

## Meeting #1 | Summary Notes

Details	Members	AusNet Staff	External Observers
<b>9.00am-12.00pm Thursday</b> <b>23 February 2023</b> <b>Online (MS Teams)</b> <b>Chair: Tony Robinson</b> <b>Secretariat: AusNet</b>	Tony Robinson ( <i>Chair</i> ) Helen Bartley Emma Chessell Lynne Chester Kieran Donoghue Gavin Dufty Mark Grenning Tricia Hiley Jonathan Kneebone Darren McCubbin	Tony Narvaez Liz Ryan Charlotte Eddy Rob Ball Lucy Holder <b>Observing:</b> James Bleed Gaurav Sharma Michaela Jackson Jade Park	Nil

<b>Purpose of Session</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confirm the ground rules and forward plan for the SRG (Stakeholder Reference Group)</li> <li>• Address questions on the pre-reading materials</li> <li>• Obtain SRG feedback on upcoming research and engagement, and on draft Engagement Plan (<i>for endorsement</i>)</li> </ul>
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Item	Time	Topic	Lead/s
	9.00-9.30am	SRG Private Meeting	Tony Robinson
<b>1</b>	9.30-9.50am	Welcome and Introductions	Tony Narvaez, Tony Robinson
<b>2</b>	9.50-10.40	The EDPR (Electricity Distribution Price Review) & the SRG's Important Role in It	Tony Robinson, Charlotte Eddy, Rob Ball
<b>3</b>	10.40-11.00am	Our Business, Customers & Operating Environment	Tony Robinson, Charlotte Eddy
<i>Break (5 mins)</i>			
<b>4</b>	11.05-11.55am	Starting Work ... Designing Upcoming Research & Engagement Activities	Tony Robinson, Charlotte Eddy, Lucy Holder, Rob Ball
<b>5</b>	11.55-12.00pm	Meeting Close & Next Steps	Tony Robinson

## Summary

### 1. Welcome & Introductions

#### Key points

- AusNet’s commitment to this process and excitement about the genuine, open, and honest conversations to come
- AusNet’s senior leadership has confidence in the team to deliver the EDPR process and the right outcomes for customers
- The importance of building on past learnings (particularly AusNet’s and others’ price reviews), and on AusNet’s business-as-usual research and engagement activities
- This planning process is coming at a challenging time for customers, and a challenging time in AusNet’s operating environment
- The larger SRG was a deliberate choice and member selection has been based on expertise, diversity, and community links.

### 2. The EDPR & the SRG’s Important Role in It

Topics	Discussion points
Getting adequate participation in process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Always consider the underlying benefit/value for the customer in engaging</li> <li>• Focus on how customers want to engage, gathering unprompted stories, the value of going to them, and balancing structured engagement with stories of lived experience</li> <li>• Constantly looking for “voices missed” (e.g. CALD (Culturally and Linguistically Diverse), major customers, agriculture). How might these be captured? E.g. mining AusNet and Ombudsman feedback channels, Community Hub, other data sources</li> <li>• Engagement fatigue, and “over-consulted” communities (e.g. First Nations Communities on a range of issues, Gippsland customers on offshore wind and transmission), and that AusNet still needs to engage with them but in smarter ways</li> <li>• That there is no such thing as an “average customer”, and that the impact of decisions on diverse groups needs to be thought through</li> <li>• Clarification that these are the types of conversations the SRG has been set up to have</li> </ul>
Panel roles & remits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 members offered / were volunteered to lead an information session on energy regulation to provide additional background to other members</li> <li>• Importance of SRG members staying across conversations happening in Sub-Panels</li> <li>• Some discussion on SRG members observing sub-panels they do not sit on, and what the “feedback loop” looks like between the SRG and various sub-panels</li> <li>• Clarification that the panel remits are not “fixed”, and that AusNet is open to members exploring topics not specifically listed, and contributing their own ideas and solutions (in addition to any AusNet might contribute)</li> <li>• That the group should focus on the parts of AusNet’s proposal that they can meaningfully influence – this might be areas with significant dollars attached, and/or other things that are important to customers such as identifying which</li> </ul>

services (and service levels) are most valued by customers and, therefore, should be prioritised by AusNet

### 3. Our Businesses, Customers & Operating Environment

Topics	Discussion points
<b>What more information might the SRG like?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agreed that more information on the AusNet network and its uniqueness compared to the state average (rather than just the other networks) is more meaningful for most discussions (and for customers)</li> <li>The importance of being kept abreast of VicGov policy changes</li> <li>AusNet agreed to share trend forecasts with the group (e.g. forecasted population shifts, EV (Electric Vehicle) uptake, electrification, and the like)</li> </ul>

### 4. Starting Work ... Designing Upcoming Research & Engagement Activities

Topics	Discussion points
<b>Mapping of Customer and other Stakeholder Groups</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The group discussed which customer and other stakeholder groups need to be identified up-front, and gave several suggestions of additional customer sub-segments that need to be highlighted through the process, including agriculture, renters, electric vehicle owners, commuters etc</li> <li>Suggestion that we adopt a "matrix" structure when considering who to engage on each issue, as the right groups to engage will be different for each topic – some topics/issues that networks are considering will not matter to consumers, and some things that are important to customers might not be things that AusNet is considering in its proposal (or are captured in base opex and therefore not intended to be a focus of engagement) but should be included in the engagement process</li> <li>Suggestion that emergency services – e.g. CFA (Country Fire Authority) – be engaged on reliability and resilience issues</li> <li>Need to be on constant look-out for voices that are missing or underrepresented through the process</li> </ul>
<b>Overview of AusNet Research Programs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Significant interest in the Segmentation research underway, particularly re: applications in tariff reform, and overlaying it with demographic data</li> <li>Some interest in the customer satisfaction (C-SAT) program</li> </ul>
<b>Quantifying Customer Benefits Study</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AusNet is intending to undertake a study to Quantify Customer Benefits to ensure its economic assessments account for the full set of benefits customers receive from its investments, particularly in relation to DER (Distributed Energy Resource) integration and resilience services</li> <li>The relevant Sub-Panels will be engaged on the benefits to quantify</li> <li>Suggestion that the term "value" be used rather than "benefit" – there may be differences between a network's view of customer benefit from a service and the value placed on it by consumers</li> <li>Need to consider unintended consequences for behaviour change that might flow out of changes to service levels</li> </ul>

- Suggestions that the values for different customer groups should be considered (not just overall average), and that it links back to lived experience

## Long-Term Modelling of Household Energy & Transport Costs

- AusNet is looking to quantify the long-term costs and benefits of electrification (of transport and gas) on customers, to provide important context for its proposed investment plans
- Much support for looking into the household bill impacts of electrification, and what electrification means for gas and transport bills, as well as implications for energy system planning (electricity and gas)
- Suggestion that this modelling work should also consider costs that customers will bear themselves (e.g. voluntarily paying for solar panels, batteries, electric vehicles), in addition to network charges.
- AusNet clarified that it is looking at putting some placeholder values on emission reductions in line with upcoming changes to the National Electricity Objective (NEO)

## 5. Close & Next Steps

Tony closed the meeting.

### Action items

Action	Assigned to	Status	Due date
AusNet to update Engagement Plan with changes discussed and recirculate for endorsement	AusNet R&E* Team	Underway	7 March 2023
AusNet to progress with recruitment of CALD customer representative for panels	AusNet R&E Team	Underway	Early March 2023
If needed following Energy Consumers Australia recordings, AusNet/members to arrange "Regulation 101" briefing for SRG and interested Sub-Panel members	TBC	Not yet started	28 March 2023
AusNet to share forecast information regarding its customer base	AusNet Reg*	In future	TBC
AusNet to share results of Segmentation research with the group	AusNet R&E Team	Underway	April 2023
AusNet to progress with design of Quantifying Customer Benefits study (incl. with Sub-Panels) and re-visit at next SRG meeting	AusNet	Underway	28 March 2023
Updated versions of charts showing AusNet vs the Victorian average (rather than other DBs (Distribution Businesses))	AusNet Reg	Not yet started	TBC
AusNet to reach out to other "data holders" (e.g. EWOV (Energy & Water Ombudsman Vic), VicGov departments, social service orgs) to understand trends they are seeing and data sources they hold	AusNet R&E Team	Not yet started <i>(looking to do with other DBs)</i>	TBC

\*R&E = Research & Engagement

\*\*Reg = Regulation

## Other items on radar

- Opportunities for the SRG meeting face-to-face
- Record-keeping and minute-taking – *Who does this going forward (members or AusNet?) and in what format?*
- Opportunities for SRG members to observe engagement activities
- How to best engage the AER (Australian Energy Regulator) and its Consumer Challenge Panel (CCP) in the engagement process
- How to engage with the Victorian Government through the process, and on what
- Encouraging customers to participate in the engagement process, and interact with Community Hub
- Engage with local councils to understand electrification plans
- Revisiting issues raised during last EDPR to check progress (under relevant Sub-Panels)