Strategic Deliverability Plan for Electricity Distribution

In Relation to EDPR Revenue Proposal 2026 - 2031

Friday, 31 January 2025

Pictured: 2024 Federation University scholarship recipient and AusNet's EGM People & Safety.

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Glossary

AEMO Australian Energy Market Operator

ADMS Advanced Distribution Management System

Augex Augmentation Expenditure

Capex Capital Expenditure

CER Customer Energy Resources

CY Calendar year

DNSP Distribution Network Service Provider

EDPR Electricity Distribution Price Review

FTE Full-Time Equivalent

IT Information Technology

NER National Electricity Rules

Opex Operational Expenditure

REFCL Rapid Earth Fault Current Limiter

Repex Replacement Expenditure

Totex Total Expenditure

Executive Summary

This document details the processes, strategies, plans and initiatives that AusNet has in place to ensure its works programs are feasible and deliverable to enable us to prioritise communities and customers and deliver on our business objectives.

The 2026-31 regulatory proposal for AusNet's distribution network contains a significant increase in investment compared to actual and expected expenditure in the current regulatory period. This increase is driven by both price increases and the need to deliver more work to meet our customers' expectations and the requirements of the energy transition, enabling government net zero targets to be met.

Our work volumes have been gradually increasing prior to 1 July 2026, and as such we have been increasing resources gradually over time and have plans in place as to how we will continue to build the efficient level of resourcing necessary to deliver our forecast works program.

This document containing outcome of reviews of resourcing requirements (comprising labour and materials) to deliver the proposed works underpinning the 2026-31 expenditure forecasts. This is presented at a category level and demonstrates we are well-placed to deliver our forecast works program. We do not anticipate labour supply shortages over the 2026-31 period due to actions we have taken and will continue to monitor and adjust our plans accordingly. We have also taken action to mitigate material shortage risk.

Key components of this review and associated responses are as follows:

Labour

A review of external labour supply and demand shows an increasing number of distribution lineworkers will be required. To secure these additional resources we are taking several actions including:

- Change in primary delivery partner to ensure more control over key operational resources (including Digital field mobility solutions), enabling us to make strategic investments to increase productivity
- C-I-C
- Underwriting delivery partner apprenticeships
- A strategic depot reset involving targeted relocations, major renewals and strategic upgrades to enhance site functionality, accessibility and future readiness, aligning with AusNet's long-term goals and uplifting the condition of our depots to a standard that assists with attraction and retention of the regional workforce
- Investment in renewing a lineworker training facility to accommodate training of additional resources, to support our transmission and distribution networks
- Explore further opportunities with the Victorian Energy Supply Industry (VESI) Electrician to Lineworker (E2L) program, requiring significant union engagement.
- Remaining an active voice with government and industry to support broader initiatives to increase workforce capacity over the medium to long term

Also contained in this plan are other general attraction and retention initiatives that continue to ensure we have the right workforce, who are trained and developed, capable and supported to deliver.

Supply chain

Materials required for the proposed works include 11 materials with lead time risk. Strategies and material -specific plans are in place to mitigate these risks - including formalising key supplier relationships, increasing AusNet's attractiveness as a customer and simplifying procurement business processes. These plans are continuously reviewed and adapted as required to reflect changes in our operating environment and requirements.

Digital enablement

Digital enablement initiatives to support better works management will improve the productivity of resourcing through optimising delivery of works. This will help minimise required resourcing, lowering costs to customers and supporting the delivery of increased works programs across AusNet and other energy businesses required to support the energy transition.

Key initiatives included in our Digital expenditure forecast, such as Field Enablement, Network Models and Asset Management are central to these efforts.

Digital program deliverability

To optimise delivery of our digital works program we have in place:

- A strategic partnership model [C-I-C] , enabling flexible scaling of resources to meet project needs; and
- Complementary in-house teams to ensure effective coordination and streamlined delivery performance.

Outage management

Increased complexity and volume of works during the next regulatory period could have a significant impact on customers (long and multiple outages) presenting a potential barrier to delivery that will need to be managed closely. Along with extensive community consultation, pipeline visibility programs and alternative delivery method reviews (to minimise customer disruption) are underway and will ensure risk to project delivery is minimised.

Organisational structure

AusNet has restructured to put in place end-to-end accountability for the outcomes of each of its network businesses, supported by functions that can leverage the scale and scope of AusNet's activities to position it well for securing required resources.

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Strategic Deliverability Plan (SDP) is to outline AusNet's capability to successfully deliver the 2026-31 electricity distribution price review (EDPR) works plan whilst continuing to maintain the network and respond to faults and unplanned events. The document will highlight the known and emerging deliverability considerations associated with the 2026-2031 EDPR submission and the initiatives AusNet is progressing to mitigate these.

This is supported by the outcomes of labour resource and material modelling that show demand from the work plan and supply available to meet estimated demand.

All dollar amounts are expressed in real $2025-26 unless otherwise stated.

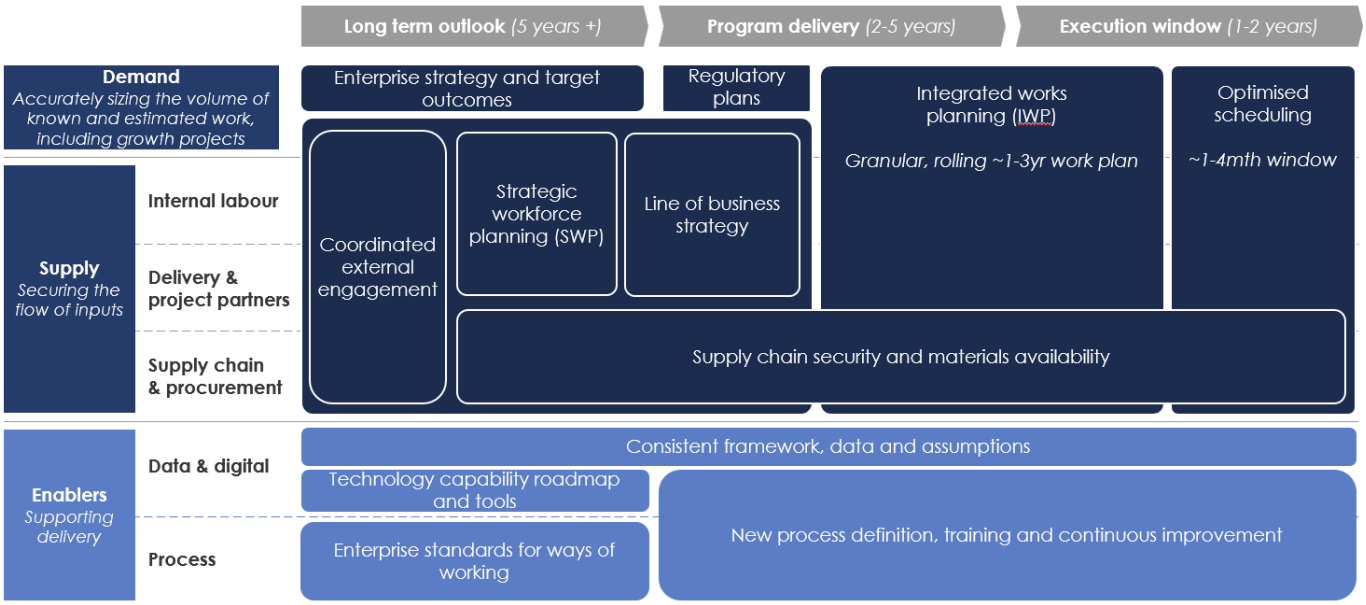
2. Introduction

The proposed 2026-2031 EDPR submission has been developed with deliverability implications in mind. It includes an increase of 72% net capex compared to current period expenditure. This increase includes the impact of higher unit rates, so the increase in the volume of work to be delivered is less than this. The drivers of the increase in works volumes are explained comprehensively in our Revenue Proposal.

While the period average increase is significant, the profile of the works program has been gradually increasing over time. This means we have been building capacity gradually in the current period. The capital expenditure profile over the next regulatory period has been smoothed to minimise step increases or decreases in resourcing which are more difficult to manage efficiently.

AusNet has established a deliverability framework to monitor and manage demand and supply of labour and materials, and outlines the enablers that will support these processes (Figure 2.1)

Figure 2.1: AusNet Deliverability Framework



This document contains the following:

- **Section 3** – Current Regulatory Period Performance
- **Section 4** – Proposed EDPR 2026-31 work
- **Section 5 –** Workforce resource assessment
- **Section 6 –** Workforce planning initiatives
- **Section 7 –** Supply chain management
- **Section 8** – Digital enablement
- **Section 9** – Managing project complexity
- **Section 10 –** Operating model

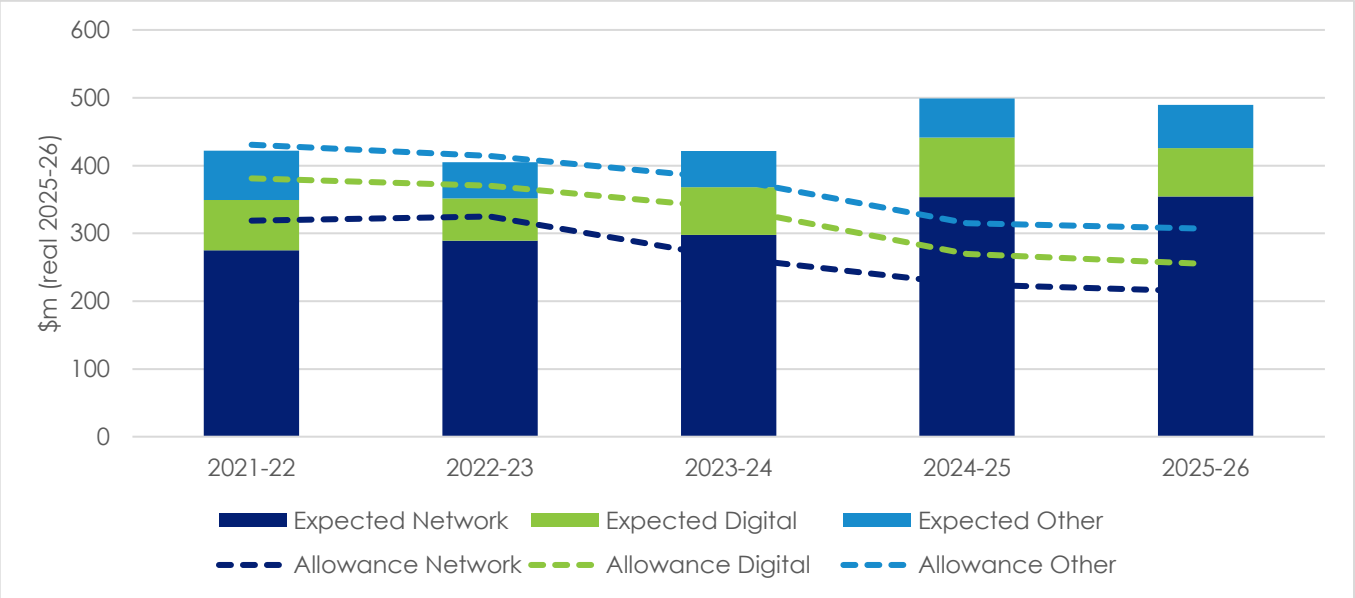
This Strategic Deliverability Plan is to be read in conjunction with the 2026-2031 Regulatory Proposal and supporting documentation.

3. Current Regulatory Period Performance

3.1 Current Regulatory Period Performance

AusNet has delivered higher value of work exceeding the distribution allowance level in the current Regulatory period. **Figure 3.1** shows the current EDPR Capex forecast and actual delivery spend.

Figure 3.1: Distribution Capex Spend 2022-26 ($m)



*Gross capex spend/allowance is presented instead of net capex (Gross capex minus customer contribution) as customer contribution value has no direct impact on resource supply analysis.

In the regulatory period from 2022 to 2026, we are expecting to overspend the gross capex allowance by $389.5M (21%) due to:

- Increasing labour and material costs due to market-driven cost pressures;
- Delays and cost increases for REFCL compliance augmentation investment (augex), relative to the approved timing and costs;
- Investment to address strong anticipated demand growth, including land purchases (not previously forecast) to accommodate new zone substations;
- Overspend of connections allowance, both for load connections and unanticipated hybrid/battery connections (not previously forecast); and
- Addressing unanticipated issues that have arisen over the period, including reliability issues.

The over-spend of the capex allowance reflects the upwards trend in capex to deliver new customer, network and energy transition outcomes alongside traditional requirements and demonstrates AusNet's capability to increase resourcing to deliver additional work programs.

3.2 Current workforce

3.2.1 Field Workforce

In recent years, [C-I-C] has been the main strategic delivery partner for electricity distribution network operations and maintenance works. [C-I-C] is our current delivery partner for fitter and tester resources, performing operations and maintenance work in our distribution zone substations. The trade workforce includes lineworkers, cable jointers and stations workers [C-I-C]

The [C-I-C] workforce is supplemented by additional delivery partners that provide trade resources including for project capital works. We have agreements in place with other partners who provide the balance of the necessary resources required e.g. [C-I-C] . Our objective is to ensure that we have suitably qualified and experienced resources that safely and efficiently deliver the work and continuously improve productivity, where safe to do so.

In October 2024[1], AusNet announced a change in its primary delivery partner, from [C-I-C] to [C-I-C] . [C-I-C] . Along with this change come a range of efficiency improvement agreements designed to further increase the productivity and delivery of the workforce. These include: insourcing of digital field mobility systems and contractual changes to allow for AusNet to improve portfolio works planning and improve scheduling practices. Given that [C-I-C] already manage our zone substation work, this alignment with our lines program enables greater efficiencies within our total works program.

3.2.2 Internal AusNet Workforce

AusNet currently employs around 1,400 direct employees who are highly skilled and dedicated to delivering the operational and strategic work required to serve our total customer base of over 1.5 million. Of this 1,400, there are approximately 450 employees in the distribution line of business and approximately 120 further FTE are estimated to support distribution via support functions (as estimated by portion of enabling function FTE). Support functions include Health and Safety, People, Finance, Legal, Compliance and Corporate Affairs and Group Operations.

Efficiently growing and building our internal workforce to support delivery of a larger works program will be required. We are prioritising the attraction, growth and retention of our internal workforce to meet the projected demand, while simultaneously addressing any resourcing gaps through initiatives such as external recruitment, our graduate program and cross-skilling across internal functions. Our workforce planning initiatives are described in **Section 6**.

3.3 Preparing for the next regulatory period

AusNet have established a new distribution works management function to provide centralised resource management and works planning across the entire network due to increasing work volumes.

New planning capabilities will be introduced to realise integration opportunities across the entire network, improving overall resource management and reducing outages that impact customers. This includes improved works management and Digital solutions such as upgrades to mobility capabilities which will be introduced in 2025 to improve safety of field-based employees and enhance efficiency of information deployment and retrieval (see **Section 8** for more information about the Digital Enablement initiatives, specifically our Field Enablement program).

More broadly, AusNet is taking action now across a range of areas to ensure deliverability of increasing works volumes.

[1] See AusNet changes to improve electricity customer outcomes - AusNet

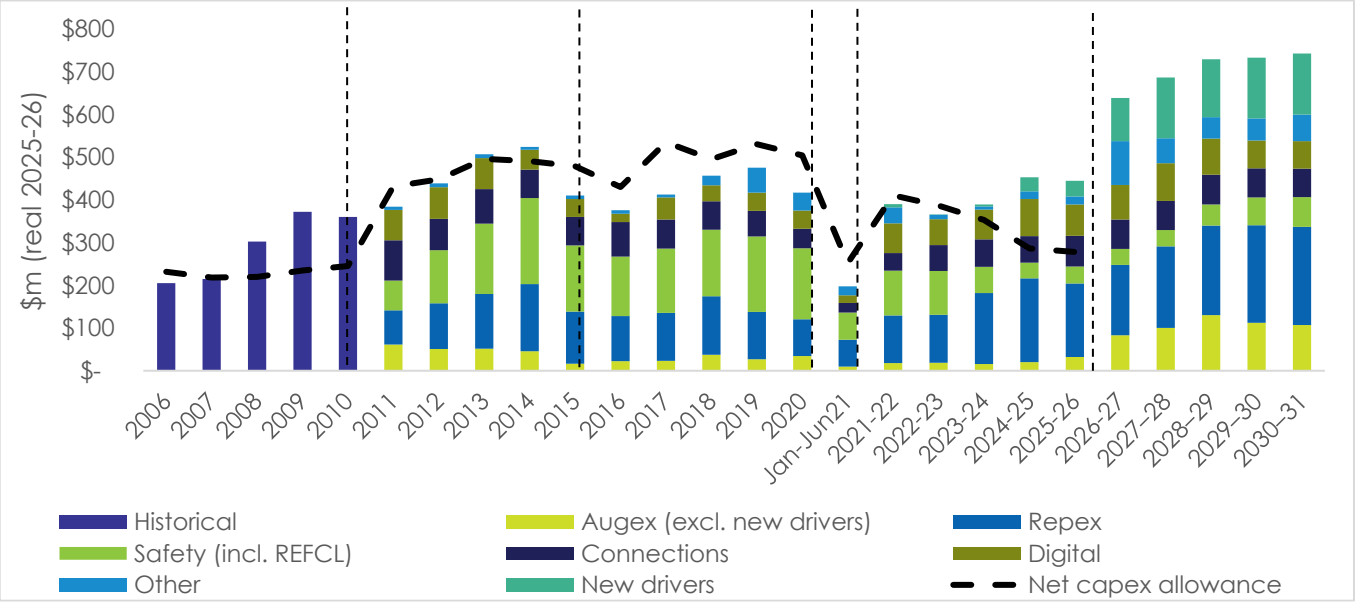
4. Proposed EDPR 2026-31 Work

4.1 Work plan by expenditure type

The 2026-31 EDPR capital program includes the traditional areas of augex, repex and safety expenditure as well as new drivers, which include unlocking large-scale renewables, network resilience and reliability uplift projects for worst served customers (**Figure 4.1**). The forecast increase in network capex is driven by responding to customers changing expectations, managing our risks, increasing reliability and resilience, and readying the network for additional electrification.

A full description of our EDPR works program can be found in our Regulatory Proposal and relevant supporting documents.

Figure 4.1: Proposed 2026-31 network capex ($m, real 2025-26)

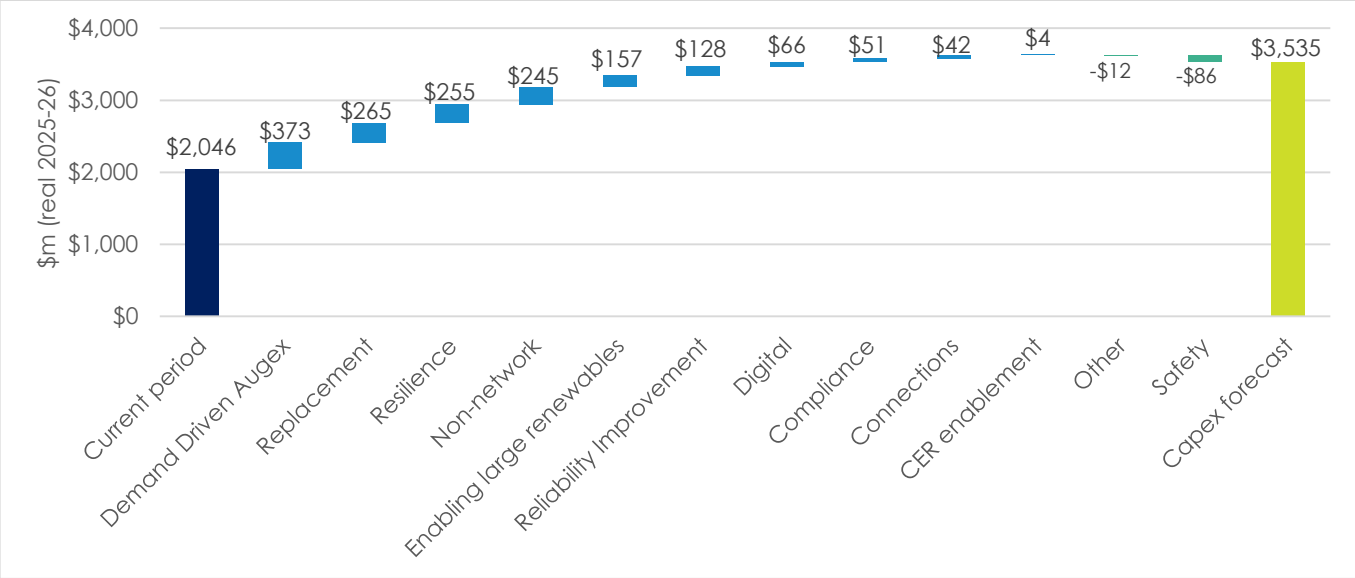


4.2 Variance from current to 2026-31 period

4.2.1 Overall Capex variance

Figure 4.2 shows the current period expected capex spend and the drivers of higher capex in the 2026-31 period. The detail of variances within each capex category are described in **Sections 4.2.2-4.2.8**.

Figure 4.2: Current to next period capex spend variances ($m, real 2025-26)



4.2.2 Repex spend and volume variances

Repex spend is increasing by $199m (29%)[2] on current period predominately driven by the escalating unit cost and followed by replacement volume increase in pole and switchgear in response to asset risk management, to improve reliability and safety.

The five asset classes in **Table 4.1** account for approximately 65% of the age- and condition-based repex investment portfolio. The expected and proposed asset replacement volumes in the current and forthcoming regulatory period are summarised below.

Table 4.1: Current to next period Repex volume variances

Repex Category	Number of units replaced in 2021-25	Number of units replaced in 2026-31	Reason for variances
Conductor	1,037	929	Forecast volumes are largely consistent with the current period.
Crossarms	13,293	10,034	Modest decrease reflects progressive, historical replacement of wooden crossarms with longer-lived steel crossarms. Replacement is based on inspection and dominated by wood cross arm and aged timber fleet replacement.
Plant	160	289	Large increase reflects an uplift in replacements of 66kV Circuit Breakers, 66kv Surge Arrestors and Power Transformer Bushings
Pole replacement	15,401	16,933	AusNet's pole population is aging, and some will approach their end of service life in the next EDPR period and require replacement, including a large portion of wooden poles. Pole replacement is inspection-based and, due to a recent change in our obligations, our inspection frequency increased from six to five years in 2024, increasing the rate at which we find and replace unserviceable poles.
Switchgear (including BA Fuse)	3,997	5,684	Increased volumes reflect the need to replace many poor performing inoperable switches and control boxes to maintain service levels and prudently manage network risk. These assets are experiencing an increasing failure rate and deteriorating performance.

4.2.3 Augex spend variances

Augex spend is increasing by $736m (391%) on the current period predominantly driven by the new drivers of unlocking large renewables, resilience, compliance (includes reliability) and demand (**Table 4.2**). Demand driven augmentation is due to customer growth and increased electrification. Escalating labour and materials costs are also influencing the increased spend.

Table 4.2 Spend variances from current EDPR period to 2026-31 for each Augex spend category ($M)

Augex Category	Reg spend 2021-2025	2026-31 total spend ($M)	Reason for increases
Resilience	25	279	Additional network hardening (pole reinforcements, undergrounding and ACRs) and Standalone Power Systems (SAPS) to increase network resilience.
Compliance (including Reliability)	262	290	Upgrades to worst served feeders - targeted and optimised upgrades responding to poor reliability performance, REFCL and Security Programs

[2] Real 2023-24 direct costs

Enabling large renewables	37	194	The Large Renewable Connection Program is a new category of investment. Loops and augmentation projects currently going through Regulatory Investment Test.
Demand driven Augex	58	431	LV augmentation, 2x new ZSS and new distribution feeders
CER integration	40	43	CER (Solar) enablement

4.2.4 Safety spend variances

Safety expenditure is increasing by $67m on the current period predominantly driven by expanded programs in Codified areas (increase $36m) Fuses Replacement Program (increase $25m) and environmental program for oil containment of $25m (see **Table 4.3**).

Table 4.3: Spend variances from current EDPR period to 2026-31 for Safety spend category ($M)

Augex Category	Reg spend 2022-2026 ($M)	2026-31 total spend ($M)	Reason for increases
Environmental	1	30	Increase due to Oil containment program
Compliance	15	30	Expanded Low service Conductor Program
Safety (other)	96	120	Program includes Codified Areas, Fuse replacement and fall arrest systems

4.2.5 Metering spend variances

In the current period EDPR, there is reduction in our customer's average meter charge per year from the use advanced metering infrastructure (AMI) or smart meters. The uplift in new and replacement meters spend from 2028-29 is for the smart meter replacement program required to maintain compliant operational metering service levels.

Table 4.4: Spend variances from current EDPR period to 2026-31 for new and replacement meter spend category ($m)

CATEGORY	AVERAGE 2022-26 ($M)	2026 – 27 ($M)	2027-28 ($M)	2028-29 ($M)	2029-30 ($M)	2030-31 ($M)
Metering	16.4	14.0	13.5	32.4	49.4	51.3

4.2.6 Public lighting volume variances

While we are forecasting an increase in public lighting replacement volumes from current levels, the increase in the 2026-31 regulatory period is consistent with the expected actual volume of replacement work to be performed in 2024-25 and 2025-26, which we are resourced to deliver. This is due to the majority of replacements for our inefficient and obsolete light types to be staggered across this period until 2031 as we replace on failure. In addition, forecast O&M savings from the move to an almost entirely LED public lighting population over the next regulatory period is expected to offset increases in light replacement capital works program. This supports deliverability of public lighting expenditure.

Table 4.5: Volume variances from current EDPR period to 2026-31 for public lighting spend category

PUBLIC LIGHTING CATEGORY	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31
ROAD LIGHT REPLACEMENT	4488	4533	4579	4624	4670	4718	4767

4.2.7 Connections spend variances

Contestable connections spend is based on current work volumes and percentages of contestable connections work completed by AusNet and its delivery partners.

Energy Connections work relating to BESS and hybrid generation facilities >1.5MW, data centres, EV charging stations are additional work that is not included in the current period – and partially driving resourcing increases outlined in **Section 6**.

4.2.8 Digital and Non-network spend variances

Digital spend is forecast to increase by 22% on the current period, predominantly driven by major systems upgrades and capability enhancements, including Advanced Distribution Management System (ADMS), Customer Experience, Network Models, Asset Management and Field Enablement. The investments in these systems will deliver the following customer benefits during the 2026-31 period:

- ADMS - An in-flight project which will improve network control functionality to enable reductions in outage restoration times and asset failure outages to improve customer experience
- Customer Experience – Improvements to customer interaction portals, communications, and information integration
- Asset Management - Improve asset performance management, risk framework and digital asset monitoring to enhance network stability
- Network Models Management - Improvement on geospatial system and data to operate and maintain the network
- Field Enablement – aims to enhance field crew management through improving planning and scheduling efficiency, and improving the ease and effectiveness of workflows for field workers.

Non-network spend is increasing by 263% on the current period driven by:

- Making significant changes to our fleet arrangements, as we acquire the fleet previously provided by Downer following a change to our business model. We are also planning to transition 70% of the existing AusNet-owned light vehicle fleet to electric vehicles.
- Investing in our depots to enable us to maintain acceptable standards of workplace accommodation, required by our compliance obligations, to support staff safety which remains a priority. Improving depot condition will also encourage staff retention and therefore the deliverability of our capital program. This investment will also support our response to outages and regional communities following storm events and mitigate the risk of more costly reactive depot maintenance which will provide savings over coming regulatory periods.

Table 4.6 Non-network spend

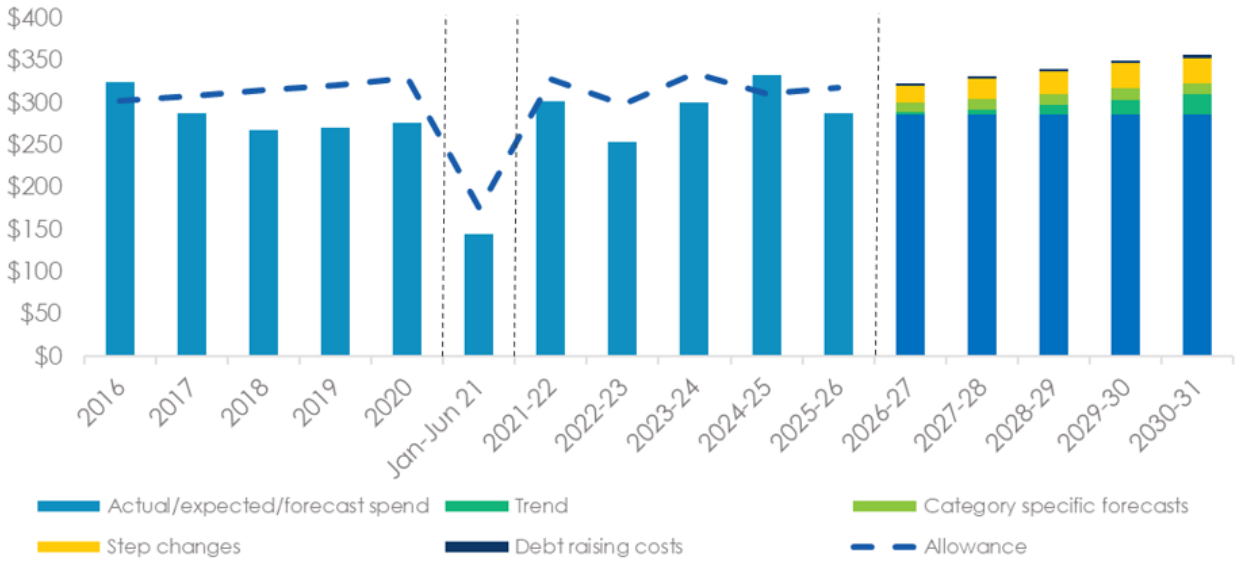
NON-NETWORK CATEGORY	2023-24 ($M)	2024-25 ($M)	2025-26 ($M)	2026 – 27 ($M)	2027-28 ($M)	2028-29 ($M)	2029-30 ($M)	2030-31 ($M)
Digital	59.9	69.8	62.0	76.0	83.3	79.0	61.7	60.7
Motor vehicle and mobile plant [3]	1.0	1.2	3.9	23.3	23.3	27.8	30.2	29.0
Buildings and Property (inc CEOT refurbishment and FWP Lease)	0.3	9.6	3.0	68.5	28.6	18.0	17.2	28.2
BAU Minor Tools and Equipment + General Equipment	2.0	1.4	8.6	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.9	0.9

4.2.9 Opex spend variances

Next period spend will be 14% greater than current period expected opex spend, chart shows additions above the base year of 2022-23 for the forecast period

[3] Includes capitalised running costs relates to running fleet and plant in 2026-31

Figure 4.3: Actual and forecast opex, 2016-31



Required increases in opex are driven by several step changes, largely driven by capex-opex trade-offs and new compliance obligations. These are not expected to present resourcing challenges, for the reasons set out in the table below.

Table 4.7: Deliverability assessment of opex step changes

STEP CHANGE	DRIVER	SPEND OVER 5 YEARS (TOTAL $2025-26)	DELIVERABILITY CONSIDERATIONS
Emergency Backstop Mechanism	New Regulatory Obligation	21.6	Project implementation in flight. Step change reflects BAU resourcing.
ESV direction to conduct more frequent pole inspections	Changed Regulatory Obligation	8.0	Has required 6 additional FTEs to be employed (3 asset inspectors and 3 asset assessors); these roles are currently filled.
Digital (inc. SaaS, licenses etc.)	New Initiative and opex tied to capex	39.9	This step change does not represent a net increase in required labour but reflects a change in delivery model and licence fees.
Flexible Services and non-network solutions	Capex/Opex trade-off	8.5	Includes up to 5 FTEs to support the roll-out of flexible connections and additional FTEs to manage the CER data exchange. These roles are specialised customer support roles, which do not currently exist with any network. They will require skills-based recruitment from other industries and specialised training.
Early Fault Detection	Safety	7.8	EFDs will require a dedicated project team (contractor) to install and commission around 1,830 units on the Overhead network. An additional 3 internal resources will form the investigation team and will be charged with managing the program. Technology vendor identified to supply hardware, commissioning and software licencing.
Resilience (Hazard Tree Program)	Capex/Opex trade-off	15.0	Additional resources would be sourced from a contractor, consistent with our

			current vegetation management delivery model. These resources will be sourced through our current contractor base, often leveraging local staff.
Customer relationship management and broad communications	Customer driven initiative	15.7	Requires 14 additional FTE relative to 2022-23 base year, of which 4 are already working within AusNet. These roles can be successfully recruited from customer-facing roles in other industries and trained over time.
Preparedness and Response	Major External Factor	9.2	Additional 3 emergency management FTEs required. Of this two have been recruited and the remaining role is in the market. No significant recruitment challenges expected because of the low number of additional roles and many sectors and organisations require emergency management specialists.
Digital Efficiencies	Capex/Opex trade-off	-3.9	n/a
Fleet Electrification	Capex/Opex trade-off	-0.7	n/a
Insurance	Major External Factor	10.5	Increased expense; no additional resourcing requirement.
AEMO Fees	New Regulatory Obligation	0 (TBC)	Potential increased expense; no additional resourcing requirement.
TOTAL		131.7	

5. Workforce Resource Assessment

5.1 Overview

This section contains the outcomes of a resourcing and materials assessment of the program and projects included in the revenue proposal.

This takes into account top-down adjustments that have been made to work programs to ensure that our proposed work program is deliverable. For example, the network hardening resilience program has been staged over multiple regulatory periods to support deliverability and affordability.

This assessment is necessary because during the next EDPR period, without adequate planning and investment and active monitoring, resource availability challenges may arise as the AusNet distribution work demand increases with concurrent delivery of other internal and external Victorian and national programs/projects (e.g. VicGrid, Renewable Energy Zones (REZ), Arena projects, Big Build etc.). In addition, there are global drivers for these challenges i.e. electrification is a primary focus for energy globally.

There are highly specialised workforce segments that currently only have a small pool of resources in Victoria, meaning that there needs to be a focus on expanding the workforce for these roles in Victoria rather than rely on attracting specialised workers from other Victorian-based companies. There is strong competition for those limited resources between energy infrastructure providers in Victoria and other jurisdictions. In some cases there is a worldwide shortage of specialist capability as economies around the world compete for capability to service their customers and decarbonise their energy systems in similar timeframes.

Additionally other resourcing complexities that will require focus include:

- **Limited resources and wage growth:** With only a few large energy distributors in Victoria, those with niche skill-sets that are specific to the industry, commonly move between major employers. This creates short term wage pressures in the industry but does not necessarily resolve underlying supply in the Victorian, and indeed Australian, market.

- **Flow on to support resources, systems and logistics:** It is noted that the increase in works program volume and associated field resourcing will also flow to an uplift in support roles and resource related impacts including office/depot space, IT equipment, training and PPE etc. (See **Section 5.4**).

The resourcing information included in the EDPR is focused on electricity distribution, however this is only part of the resourcing picture for AusNet. AusNet also operates gas, transmission and commercial businesses that have the potential to share, cross-skill and leverage resources. AusNet has established a workforce planning team that is developing a detailed whole-of-enterprise workforce planning roadmap to inform resourcing decisions in the medium-term. This will enable data driven decisions such as redeploying and retraining gas business workers into electricity, when required.

A demand and supply analysis has been carried out for key roles required to deliver the distribution works program proposed for 2026-31. The results of this analysis are outlined below.

5.2 Distribution lineworkers

Distribution lineworkers are responsible for the construction and maintenance of electricity distribution lines and the installation and maintenance of associated equipment.

5.2.1 Demand assessment

Expected demand for distribution lineworkers averages [C-I-C] FTE pa over the EDPR period. This has been estimated based on the below assumptions:

1) **For programs with unit rates**

   Effort hours per unit x number of units. For distribution lineworkers, to account for unproductive hours due to travel, training etc, 1400 hours is assumed to be 1 FTE per lines worker for a year.

2) **For projects/programs with estimates**

   Estimates produced by the Project Development team detail the breakdown of costs and these are used to estimate effort hours. These estimates will vary in accuracy dependent on project/program information available.

3) **For projects/programs without estimates**

Where estimates are not readily available, previous similar project actual costs are used and internal projects experts have validated assumptions.

The percentage split of resourcing to materials have been documented and the demand for distribution lineworkers is calculated using the following steps:

i. The dollars for each resource type have been divided by an assumed salary (including on costs and margin) to get the estimated number of workers based on budget allocation

ii. This figure is then multiplied by 1400 hours to account for the total hours a worker is expected to work, considering unproductive work time (e.g., training, travel time).

iii. Finally, the total hours are divided by 1800 (standard contractual hours) to determine the actual FTE. Note: overtime assumptions are not included in calculations.

4) Operations and Maintenance Work (O&M)

In addition to the programs considered, the resource review considers the demand for distribution lineworker resources through the Opex Operations and Maintenance (O&M) activities. Demand for resources to complete the O&M activities (i.e., Line fault and repair) in CY24 is considered as a baseline to estimate the corresponding demand in future regulatory period. There is direct impact to external resource planning as the same pool of dedicated Delivery Partner resources work on both Capex and Opex programs.

5) Factoring in unplanned events

In addition, equivalent to 4 week additional work (7.7%) a year distribution lineworker resourcing has been applied to the O&M calculation to reflect the assumption that annually a storm/major unplanned event will impact the network.

6) Connections

FTE is estimated based on the proportion of contestable works anticipated to be completed by AusNet. This estimate is based on approximate proportions of work completed by AusNet in the past.

7) Productivity adjustments

The resourcing assessment has been undertaken conservatively and assumptions have not been made about productivity improvements that are expected to be achieved through investment in Digital enablement and other means. This provides additional comfort that there will be a sufficient supply of resources to deliver our works program.

Note that for the purposes of forecasting expenditure, productivity offsets have been applied directly or indirectly to our forecasts – including through explicit productivity adjustments applied to overheads and excluding from our forecasts known labour price escalation rates associated with EBA outcomes.

5.2.2 Supply assessment

Distribution lineworkers, responsible for the construction and maintenance of electricity distribution and the installation and maintenance of associated equipment, are a specialist workforce segment. The Australian Government identifies Electrical Line worker as one of 138 occupations experiencing a persistent shortage in all states in Australia in 2021, 2022 and 2023[4]. There are long training lead times, trainer shortages across Victoria and need for adequate supervision on the job. The anticipated escalating demand and supply challenges in Victoria including:

- A quarter of all Australian line workers reside in Victoria, [5] with strong competition for available distribution lineworkers from the other Victorian distributors.
- Demand for qualified electrical distribution lineworkers currently outstrips supply.[6] The suggested driver of the shortage is due to few qualified applicants per vacancy and a long training pathway (4 year apprenticeship)[7].
- Victoria is experiencing a decline in workers within the Electrical Distribution Trades, as **retirements** are outpacing the influx of new apprentices[8].

[5] Electrical Linesworkers | Jobs and Skills Australia
[6] Victorian Skills Plan | vic.gov.au (www.vic.gov.au) / Microsoft Power BI Summary-Report_2023-2.pdf (poweringskills.com.au)
[7] Skills Priority List | Jobs and Skills Australia
[8] Victorian Skills Plan | vic.gov.au (www.vic.gov.au) / Microsoft Power BI

- There is a shortage of trainers due to attraction and remuneration issues, the requirement to be a previous lineworker and an aging workforce (VESI, 2022). In 2022, VESI forecasted that 45% of their current trainer group will be over the age of 65 by 2027.
- Lack of available experienced workers to provide full-time supervision for first year apprentices.

Notwithstanding these challenges, AusNet assumes an overall supply throughout the regulatory period of approximately [C-I-C] FTE pa, through a combination of our primary delivery partner and a pool of alternative delivery partners' distribution lineworker labour.

[C-I-C]

The indicative lineworker resource plan is shown in the figure below.

Figure 5.1 Distribution resource plan – lineworker availability – [C-I-C]

[C-I-C]

5.2.3 Conclusion

AusNet expects to be able to secure ~[C-I-C]lineworkers a year, which is above the average estimation of our expected demand of lineworkers each year.

Table 5.1: Estimated Distribution Lineworker Demand (FTE) (inc. live lines) – [C-I-C]

Category	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31
Augex	[C-I-C]	[C-I-C]	[C-I-C]	[C-I-C]	[C-I-C]
Augex - new drivers	[C-I-C]	[C-I-C]	[C-I-C]	[C-I-C]	[C-I-C]
Connections	[C-I-C]	[C-I-C]	[C-I-C]	[C-I-C]	[C-I-C]
Connections – contestable	[C-I-C]	[C-I-C]	[C-I-C]	[C-I-C]	[C-I-C]
O&M	[C-I-C]	[C-I-C]	[C-I-C]	[C-I-C]	[C-I-C]
Repex	[C-I-C]	[C-I-C]	[C-I-C]	[C-I-C]	[C-I-C]
Safety	[C-I-C]	[C-I-C]	[C-I-C]	[C-I-C]	[C-I-C]
Live lines work (Augex+ Safety+Repex)	[C-I-C]	[C-I-C]	[C-I-C]	[C-I-C]	[C-I-C]
Total Estimated AusNet Demand (FTE)	[C-I-C]	[C-I-C]	[C-I-C]	[C-I-C]	[C-I-C]
Total Delivery Partner Supply	[C-I-C]	[C-I-C]	[C-I-C]	[C-I-C]	[C-I-C]

Critical to achieving this include:

- Ongoing ability to access a diverse pool of suppliers across work types and locations. This includes ongoing review and strengthening of our contracting arrangements with service delivery partners to provide firm work program commitments and corresponding contractual terms;
- Delivery of the initiatives set out in **Section 6.1** including establishing a lineworker training facility and the electrician to lineworker training program; and
- Scheduling the works program to avoid fluctuations in resourcing levels by taking a portfolio view and aligning service delivery partner capacity to deliver against works program demand. Improvements to AusNet's internal works planning function will support this.

Lineworker requirements will be closely reviewed across the period, and adjustments to our workforce planning made accordingly.

5.3 Other key field roles

We also assessed the demand and supply of additional field workforce roles including cable jointers, communications technicians, civil workers, commissioning engineers/protection testers, construction project managers and meter technicians.

Considerations with specific field roles include:

- **Distribution stations worker (electrician / fitter):** It is estimated that there is sufficient supply of Station Workers via our delivery partner arrangements, however escalating demand from other non-distribution work internally and across the country may lead to future tightening, that will need to be closely monitored and action taken accordingly.
- **Cable jointers:** It is estimated that there is sufficient supply of cable jointers via our delivery partner arrangements.
- **Communications technicians:** Currently no supply concerns anticipated, but as this is a niche role requiring specific training, this will be closely monitored.
- **Commissioning engineer / protection testers:** Although no current supply concerns, due to it being a niche role within the electrical industry, resourcing levels will be closely monitored.
- **Construction/project managers**: Construction/Project Managers within the industry require specialised skills, and demand for these roles will continue to increase as work volumes increase. Career Progression Frameworks have been established to define the pathways for team members to gain experience and exposure whilst being mentored to assist with succession planning and growth.
- **REFCL specialist resources**: Targeted recruitment for internal protection and control resources has increased our pool of internal resources, allowing retention of knowledge. Further increases will be required to enable installation of additional REFCLs in existing sites.
- **Meter technicians:** Currently no major supply concerns for meter technicians. Meter technicians are only required for complex installations and maintenance works. Registered electricians can also be utilised for metering works and there is currently available supply in most parts of the network.

Relative to distribution lineworkers and stations workers, smaller volumes of the resources listed above are required. AusNet does not anticipate constraints with other field roles, however the demand and supply will be regularly monitored to ensure adequate resourcing of works.

Other energy sector roles that AusNet will monitor include solar, battery, grid connect, and other emerging capabilities that will support the energy transition.

5.4 Supporting business roles

Business roles that will support the delivery of the program of work are generally more transferrable across sectors and can be increased gradually as required. As assessment of demand has been carried out through consultation with key teams, supplemented by external research on known supply focus areas, for example, engineering.

With the increased volume of work, it is recognised that supporting roles need to be monitored and expanded, as appropriate. Our AusNet enterprise resource monitoring will continue to determine roles of supply concern and/or increasing demand and determine estimated resourcing gaps and initiatives to address (see **Section 6**). Critical non-field roles under consideration include:

- **Engineering:** Current national shortfalls are expected to continue as demand for engineering capabilities grows in the energy sector. Clean Energy Australia classifies the supply of Electrical Engineers as 'Demand is not being met consistently and skill shortages exist in most regions' (CEC Skilling the Energy Transition 2022).

Jobs and Skills Australia projections include a 20.5% projected employment growth for Electrical Engineers (2023 to 2033) from 26,200 to 31,600[9].

- **Network control room resources:** Real-time control and operation of energy infrastructure, requires extensive understanding and knowledge of the switching arrangements, management of field operations and works around electrical assets, and managing outages, faults and repairs. Proficiency in these roles requires months and often years of training.
- **Community and customer engagement:** Securing highly skilled customer and community focussed teams will be a key success factor for projects interfacing with communities such as Community Resilience Hubs and complex works that will require extended outages, such as the 66kV loops. Early planning to understand and minimise community impacts and extensive community consultation and engagements will be required prior to the execution of works to ensure community acceptance.

Other workforce roles and capabilities that will continue to be monitored for criticality and potential delivery impacts include, but are not limited to designers, communications engineers and architects, planning and forecasting, network asset planning and management, connections and customer works, legal and contracts, portfolio management, finance, safety, fleet and human resources.

5.4.1 Conclusion

We do not anticipate constraints in most supporting business roles in the near-term, particularly as they are more transferable between sectors. However, we will continue to monitor closely critical roles including engineering, network control room resources, and community and customer engagement (see Section 6).

Initiatives outlined in **Section 6** will also assist boost supply of workforce for these roles lowering the risk of any future shortage.

[9] Employment Projections | Jobs and Skills Australia & Victoria University Employment Projections - May 2023 to May 2033.xlsx (live.com)

6. Workforce planning initiatives

6.1 Initiatives to increase supply of distribution lineworkers

As discussed in **Section 5**, analysis shows that AusNet will need an annual average of 534 distribution lineworkers in the medium-term, a substantial increase on today. To meet this estimated demand, AusNet has proactively implemented several initiatives, including a change to our primary delivery partner, onboarding of additional delivery partners, proposed new training centre and apprentice initiatives. These initiatives (outlined in **Table 6.1**) will increase our available labour supply to sufficiently meet estimated demand.

Notwithstanding we are not anticipating a shortfall, AusNet will need to continue to monitor, refine and progress initiatives to ensure sufficient resourcing to successfully deliver the work.

Table 6.1: Field Resourcing Initiatives to address resourcing challenges

Field – specific initiatives			
Initiatives	**Action taken**	**Action planned**	**Impact of action**
1. Change in primary delivery partner arrangement	• [C-I-C]	• [C-I-C]	• [C-I-C]
2. Increasing total number of delivery partners	• [C-I-C]	• [C-I-C]	[C-I-C]
3. South Morang Training Centre	• Actively working to re-establish a training centre at AusNet's South Morang location to train distribution workforce.	• Phase 1 of the project to commence in Q1 2025 and be completed by Q4 2025.	• Will support the ongoing training and capability of approximately, 1,160 FTE across AusNet's distribution workforce (internal and delivery partners)[10]
4. Apprenticeship underwriting	• [C-I-C]	• [C-I-C]	• [C-I-C]
5. Electrician to lineworker 2 year program	• The Electrician to Lineworker (E2L) Apprentices (Distribution) is a VESI program which puts electricians through a 2 year apprenticeship programme to gain the National Distribution Lineworker Qualification rather than the 4 year apprentice programme. [C-I-C]	• Exploring relevance of the 2 year E2L program.	• Reduce the lead times in boosting Victorian Lineworker supply.
6. Uplift condition of depots	• From August 2025 AusNet will either own or directly lease all its depots.	• Program designed to invest in these to uplift condition (currently very poor for some depots)[11]	• Support delivery of increased works program by improving accessibility, operational efficiency and infrastructure resilience • Support workforce morale and retention

[10] This training includes safe work practices, linesperson and safety training related to Victorian Electricity Supply Industry requirements
[11] See supporting document - AusNet Depot Strategy

6.2 Other initiatives

Additional workforce planning initiatives are included in **Appendix 1.**

7. Supply chain management

AusNet has developed and initiated a materials sourcing strategy and reviewed and aligned specifications to Enterprise requirements and current market conditions.

7.1 Supply chain management summary

AusNet is highly reliant on international suppliers for the supply of materials to support projects and asset through-life requirements. Irrespective of whether the direct supplier is based in Australia, the manufacture and fabrication of most materials (in total, or in part) is undertaken overseas. As a result, AusNet is subject to the global trends and market dynamics that affect the availability and pricing of these materials. Also, it means AusNet's competition for supply is all network operators globally. In short, the current global mega-trends are supply chain disruption and demand exceeding supply, which have resulted in AusNet experiencing increases in market prices and supply lead-times. Effectively in this market, AusNet does not have the control; it is a price taker. Exacerbating this, AusNet is remote from the source of supply, can have bespoke specifications and has a relatively small demand.

Domestically, the supply chain challenge is access to the required level of professional skills. As explained in other parts of this document, as AusNet faces a future critical skills shortage, so too is this a risk for all of AusNet's services suppliers. In the services markets, AusNet can be competing to secure supply against other State network operators.

[C-I-C]

7.2 Key materials and impacted programs/projects

AusNet has identified 11 materials with a lead time exposure (refer **Table 7.2**). Procurement initiatives established to improve the security of supply for these materials. Primarily, the materials are for station and line upgrade projects.

Table 7.2: Key EDPR programs exposed to materials and supply challenges

EDPR Category	Program	Program size (Total 2026-31)[12]	Deliverability challenge
Replacement	[C-I-C]	[C-I-C]	[C-I-C]
Replacement	[C-I-C]	[C-I-C]	[C-I-C]
Replacement	[C-I-C]	[C-I-C]	[C-I-C]
Replacement	[C-I-C]	[C-I-C]	[C-I-C]
Replacement	[C-I-C]	[C-I-C]	[C-I-C]
Replacement	[C-I-C]	[C-I-C]	[C-I-C]
Replacement	[C-I-C]	[C-I-C]	[C-I-C]
Replacement	[C-I-C]	[C-I-C]	[C-I-C]
Replacement	[C-I-C]	[C-I-C]	[C-I-C]
Replacement	[C-I-C]	[C-I-C]	[C-I-C]
Replacement	[C-I-C]	[C-I-C]	[C-I-C]

[12] Direct costs expressed in real 2023-24

7.4 Actions to respond to supply chain and sourcing concerns

Short term actions that have been recently undertaken to secure supply of the top 11 materials with lead time exposure are included in **Table 7.4** below.

Table 7.4: Key Materials Deliverability Plan

Material	Reason for Sourcing	Sourcing Status (as at Nov 24)	Outcome
[C-I-C]	• [C-I-C]	[C-I-C]	✓ [C-I-C]
[C-I-C]	• [C-I-C]	[C-I-C]	✓ [C-I-C]
[C-I-C]	• [C-I-C]	[C-I-C]	✓ [C-I-C]
[C-I-C]	• [C-I-C]	[C-I-C]	✓ [C-I-C]
[C-I-C]	• [C-I-C]	[C-I-C]	✓ [C-I-C]
[C-I-C]	• [C-I-C]	[C-I-C]	✓ [C-I-C]
[C-I-C]	• [C-I-C]	[C-I-C]	[C-I-C]
[C-I-C]	• [C-I-C]	[C-I-C]	✓ [C-I-C]
[C-I-C]	• [C-I-C]	[C-I-C]	[C-I-C]

These short-term responses will be built on through continuous improvement in our procurement processes by adopting the following objectives:

- [C-I-C]
- [C-I-C]
- [C-I-C]

- [C-I-C]
- [C-I-C]

8. Digital enablement

8.1 Work efficiencies through digital investments

AusNet proposed digital investments are being made to support the overall business performance and enable the deliverability of our program of works. These have a critical role to play in enhancing our works planning processes, minimising the number of lineworkers (and other workers) required to deliver the works program. This will reduce the risk of a supply shortfall in the next regulatory period.

Key programs that support delivery of the proposed network activity include Field Enablement, Network Models and Asset Management:

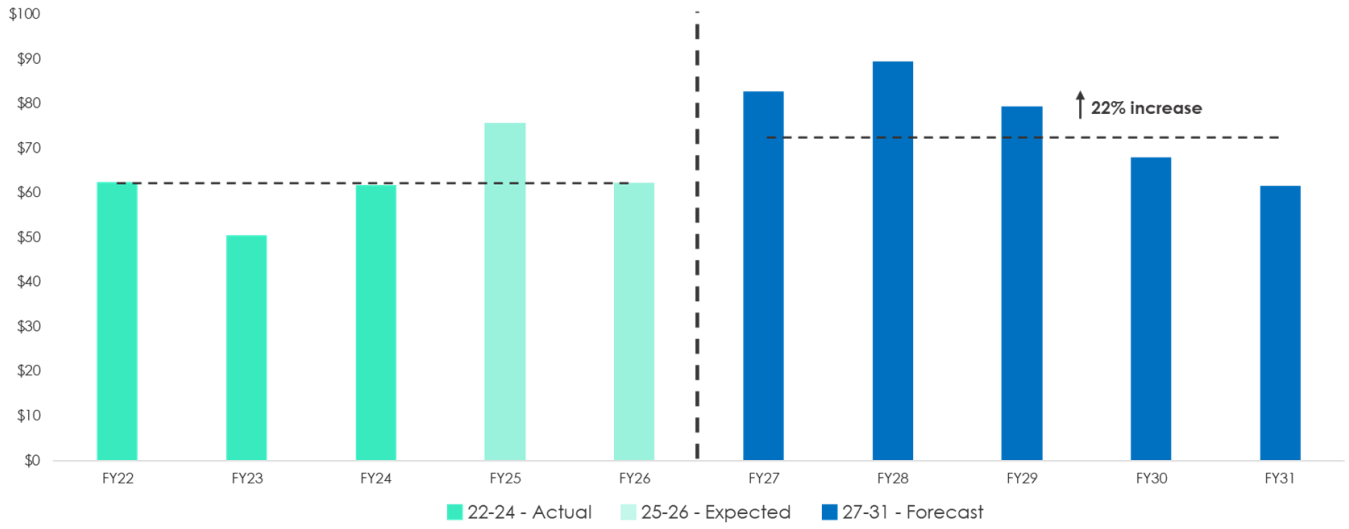
- **Field Enablement** – Improving the capability and integration of field mobility systems, to enhance works management. Improved planning and coordination, visibility and feedback on work progress, and integration with key systems (e.g. Network Control and SAP) to improve workflows
- **Network Models** – Organisational effectiveness through integrated and improved systems. Network model integration across systems, enhanced geospatial data to enable improved network and work planning, enhanced demand forecasting capabilities
- **Asset Management** – Improvements to asset data, information flows, risk tooling and works prioritisation, to most effectively manage and target works program, and improve organisational efficiency/effectiveness

8.2 Delivering digital investments

Additionally, the AusNet digital team is setup to deliver the increased digital investment that proposed in the EDPR, which in turn support the delivery of the 2026-31 proposal.

Digital investment in 2026-31 is slightly above expenditure levels in the last three years of the current regulatory period.

Figure 8.1: Digital expenditure in 2022-26 and 2026-31 regulatory periods ($ millions, 2023-24 dollars)



Our demonstrated ability to deliver Digital work programs of this level combined with our Digital operating model means we do not expect there to be Digital deliverability challenges in 2026-31.

Specifically, AusNet's Digital team is well-placed to deliver due to:

- In the current period AusNet has moved to a Strategic Digital Partnership model, [C-I-C] to deliver base-business digital systems operations and maintenance, and to provide project delivery capability
- This enables AusNet to leverage global expertise and talent pool of these organisations, and to readily scale up and down resources to match the required project delivery pipeline
- Recognising the near-term business drivers for digital upgrades and capability enhancements, particularly Emergency Backstop Mechanism, ADMS, and customer engagement (outage communications and customer connections), in CY2024 AusNet scaled up program delivery with Delivery Partners – increasing

investment by 82% from CY2023 and prior years. AusNet's proposal sees this level of investment being sustained into, and through, the proposal period.

- To support this increased investment, AusNet has additionally restructured and bolstered the Digital & Technology organisation. The organisation has established dedicated delivery governance to manage project delivery, including a portfolio management office, along with in-house domain and solution architects and business analyst teams. Collectively, these groups ensure effective and coordinated delivery performance.

The points above demonstrate AusNet's digital capability, structure and business plans will enable AusNet to efficiently and effectively deliver over the medium-term, including in the upcoming regulatory period. For more information see AusNet's 2026-31 Technology Strategy and Investment Plan, submitted as part of the EDPR revenue proposal.

9. Managing project complexity

9.1 Project complexity including community impact and outages

Unless well-managed, impacts to communities and customers associated with the delivery of works could pose a risk to the deliverability of EDPR programs. This includes where complex, new projects will have prolonged outages and/or multiple outages that impact communities, for example the Gippsland 66kV loops.

In response there is a need for extensive community consultation and engagements prior to the execution of work and early planning to understand and minimise community impacts. There is also a need to consider alternative delivery methodology e.g., modular construction offsite, building temporary bypasses, cabling, alternative network configuration where safe, possible and suitable.

Table 9.1: AusNet Actions to Address Project Complexities

Area	AusNet Actions
Alternative delivery methodologies	Review alternative delivery methodology e.g., modular construction offsite, building temporary bypasses, cabling, where safe, possible and suitable.
Pipeline visibility	Increased visibility of the pipeline of works will enable more efficient and effective planning with the ability to sequence programs of work and smooth the pipeline. Considered sequencing of the programs including ramp up in 2025 – or moving out to following period, if required
Community and customer engagement	Complex projects will have prolonged outages and/or multiple outages, for example the Gippsland 66kV loops. In response there is a need for extensive community consultation prior to works and early planning to minimise impacts. AusNet is well-placed to effectively engage due to its experience and learnings from engaging with the community on a wide range of projects and topics including Western Renewables Link, reliability issues at Benalla (for which we have set up a Strathbogie Benalla Community Group[13]), and various resilience-related programs[14]. Our revenue proposal also includes funding for 14 on-ground customer support staff who will assist with this engagement.

Impacted programs/projects

The key EDPR item/categories community impact challenges are as follows:

EDPR Category	Program	Deliverability community impacts to be managed by the project/program
Replacement	Lines	Community impacts and outages.
Augmentation	REFCL Driven Augmentation	Community interface with potential land procurement.
Augmentation	Distribution loops	Large and very complex works, requiring extensive community consultation and extensive impacts on communities (prolonged outages).
	Circuits/thermal upgrades	Large and very complex works, requiring extensive community consultation and extensive impacts on communities (prolonged outages).
Augmentation	New Zone Substations	Land acquisition and associated consultation. Community impacts and concerns.

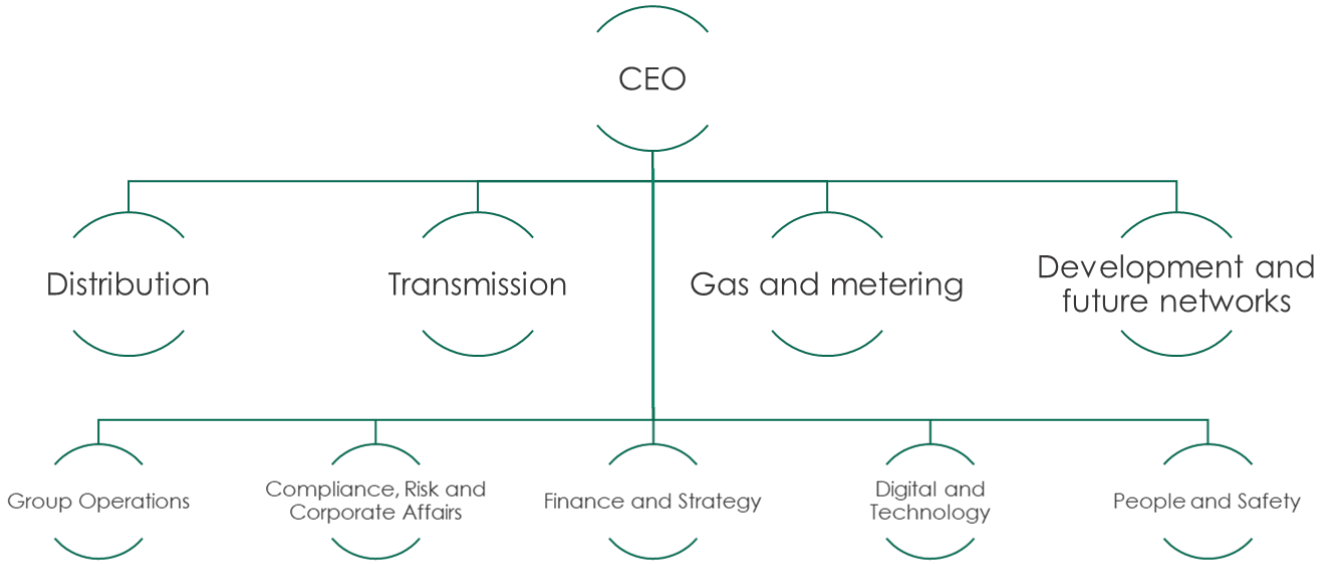
[13] Strathbogie Benalla Community Group (SBCG) - AusNet
[14] For example, AusNet helping Cardinia Shire become more energy resilient - AusNet

10. Operating model

10.1 AusNet is structured to drive end-to-end accountability for the performance of its network businesses

In July 2024 AusNet embarked on a major organisational restructure to shift from a functional operating model to an operating model organised around four lines-of-business (regulated distribution, transmission, and gas and metering and a contestable business, focused on transmission), and five support functions which work across all four of the businesses. A high-level view of the organisational structure is shown below.

Figure 10.1: AusNet Organisational Structure



This structural change was made to ensure there was executive level focus on the end-to-end delivery of outcomes of each of AusNet's lines-of-business given the markedly different operating context and strategic priorities on each. This will support the delivery of excellent operational outcomes for each while enabling an efficient energy transition. The distribution business structure contains the following functions:

- Strategy and Regulation
- Network Management
- Network Operations and Delivery
- Works Management
- Customer and Community

The support functions ensure that where organisational-wide governance is required or synergies can be realised these are achieved. Relevant to strategic deliverability, these include:

- **Workforce planning –** A dedicated workforce planning team is located in the People and Safety function. This team is identifying and supporting the delivery of a detailed whole of enterprise workforce planning roadmap to help inform resourcing decisions in the medium-term. This will enable better, data driven decisions such as redeploying and retraining gas business workers into electricity, when required. This team will also support the development and delivery of organisational-wide initiatives such as those included in Appendix 1.
- **Procurement –** A single procurement function, serving the entire organisation, is part of the Group Operations division. This allows procurement expertise and commercial relationships with suppliers to be centralised, enabling bulk purchasing power to be realised and strategic supplier relationships to be formed and leveraged across all of AusNet's businesses.
- **Portfolio management** – a Portfolio Management Office is part of the Group Operations division. This will own investment governance processes and focuses on strengthening and accelerating processes, supporting system and capability uplift where appropriate.

  As part of continuous improvement, a portfolio management improvement plan has been developed and works commenced on strengthening integrated multi-horizon planning (workforce, capital, procurement

and target state impact assessments), data hygiene uplift and enhanced portfolio monitoring and governance. This will further support the deliverability of our work program over the medium- to long-term.

10.2 Flow on impacts from increased resourcing

Additional capex spend and the resultant increased workforce numbers will lead to impacts in other areas, including:

- **Safety risk** – With a rapid influx of additional workers comes an increased safety risk if workers are not supervised and supported adequately. To combat this risk, and further enhance AusNet's current safety performance AusNet, with the support of several world-wide experts in Safety Risk Management, has developed a program to be rolled out in 2025. The Program is designed to assist the current pool of supervisors, and line managers to drive better safety outcomes through risk management concepts, works planning, resource management, behaviour awareness, and leadership.

  This same program can be utilised to rapidly upskill workgroup leaders to become supervisors, crew leaders to become work group leaders, more experienced crew members to become crew leaders, without increased safety risk. AusNet will also de-risk our workers' environment through changes in the way we specify, design, build, and undertake work on our assets.
- **Property & Warehousing** – AusNet's Property Strategy outlines longer term considerations regarding property and will take into account future resourcing profile and business requirements. For example, increasing material requirements will require a review and adjustment to warehousing volumes and storage of materials. Uplifting the condition of our depots is also a key initiative to support field workforce retention.
- **Fleet** – AusNet's Fleet Strategy considers the increased workforce and supporting fleet requirements including pool cars and work vehicles.
- **Training** – onboarding, upskilling and training programs will be required according to the shape and profile of AusNet's future workforce.

These will be considered in various business strategies that are developed and refreshed on an ongoing basis.

Appendix 1: Resourcing Initiatives

In addition to the distribution lineworker specific resourcing initiatives outlined in **Table 6.1**, **Tables A1-A3** below describe other initiatives that AusNet has actioned and plans to implement in response to the resourcing challenges.

Table A1: Field Related Resourcing Initiatives

Initiative	Action taken	Action planned
Victorian Electricity Supply Industry (VESI)	• Skills & training committee: AusNet is actively involved in the industry response to anticipated state demand through membership on the Victorian Electricity Supply Industry (VESI) Skills and Training Reference Committee (STRC) • The Electrician to Lineworker (E2L) Apprentices (Distribution) is a VESI program which puts electricians through a 2 year apprenticeship programme to gain the National Distribution Lineworker Qualification rather than the 4 year apprentice programme. [C-I-C]	• Continued active participation in VESI • E2L program: Continue if relevant
National forum	• Beyond state-based forums, AusNet is participating in a national response and plan for collaboration between Australian states on projects and workforce that will seek to share information and coordinate use of the national workforce	• Continue dialogue with other Australian states and governments to plan for national response to energy workforce requirements
Industry collaboration (government, unions, other DBs)	• Subsidising trainer wages to ensure there are enough trainers to train current and future apprentices • Committing to minimum apprentice numbers on sites to ensure there are enough Lineworkers for anticipated Victorian demand	• Continue engagement on industry-wide collaboration on solutions to trainer shortages and restricted apprenticeship intakes
Adjacent industry	• No actions to date	• Planned conversations with businesses in future network growth areas such as Gippsland. [C-I-C] • Upcoming completion of large state infrastructure projects such as Big Build and Metro Tunnel may also lead to available supply for electricians, commissioning engineers, electrical engineers and civil workers.
Vegetation Management	• [C-I-C] Numbers remain stable and meet current demand	• No additional planned actions
Pre-emptive increase in inspection resourcing	• Resource allowance for this uplift in inspections has been included in the	• Secured new 11 Asset Inspectors to ensure a workforce of Asset Inspectors through to 2031. Additional Assessment resources have

	recent recruitment of additional Inspectors.	also been secured to compliment the Asset Inspection activities.

Table A2: AusNet Attraction and Retention Initiatives

Initiative	Action taken	Action planned
Company strategy and operating model	• Organisation-wide restructure to align operations to a line of business model – allocating resources and accountability to support better customer and network outcomes • Ongoing review of internal vs. external resourcing arrangements (see field-specific item below)	• Further review of delivery partner arrangements and roadmaps to support deliverability of works across all AusNet networks
Employee Value Proposition (EVP)	• Investment in an EVP that responds to our workforce and makes AusNet an attractive employer for a career in the electrical supply industry • Talent Acquisition model review underway (incorporating how our EVP is used for prospective and current employees)	• Ongoing promotion and development of AusNet's EVP, internally and externally
Industry collaboration	• Connected with other distributors to understand their approaches to addressing deliverability challenges.	• Initiate a cross-industry working group with other distributors to collaborate on potential solutions to the deliverability challenges facing the industry
Graduate program	• Increased investment in our graduate program has seen a steady increase in graduate intake in recent years (from a cohort of 10 in 2023 to 30+ for 2025) and graduate placements occurring in more parts of the business	• External review of all recruitment/sourcing activity and operating model to improve our ability to source, attract and grow talent and therefore support delivery of our strategy
Scholarships and tertiary partnerships	• Established scholarship and internship opportunities to provide direct support to individuals early in their education/career. Recently established scholarship fund with Federation University to support women in STEM and first nations students.	• Investigate expansion of existing and prospective partnerships to create supply/pipeline of more regional talent – where required for our networks
Internal referral program	• Program providing financial reward to employees who refer employees to the organisation. Since the program commenced, has resulted in an increase in high quality candidates that have successfully been appointed to the role, or talent pooled for another role in the business that is more suitable	• Continuation of program to building workforce, aligned to business planning and strategy
Internal mobility	• Promotion and positing of internal jobs and opportunities designed to encourage internal career development and progression internally, supporting retention of our existing workforce	• External review of all recruitment activity to ensure our internal processes are competitive and growing talent to deliver our strategy
Workforce planning function	• Established a dedicated workforce planning function to stand up processes for labour analysis, forecasting and action planning	• Embed processes, forecast and plan and plan for medium/long-term workforce requirements to deliver strategic objectives
Inclusion and diversity (I&D)	• AusNet is an Energy Sector Member of Champions of Change Coalition	• Continue to build workplace and culture that is safe and inclusive for all

	Energy Group, whose purpose is to ensure women's expertise, innovation and insights are harnessed as part of Australia's energy transition. • Investment in employee network groups and education initiatives, development of an I&D strategy and instating of an I&D Council, improvement of parental leave policies, female development program, diverse selection panels and sustainable procurement strategy	employees by supporting our Employee Network Groups and Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) • Continue to build on sustainable procurement activity and improve AusNet's social license
Leadership development	• Investment in an externally facilitated leadership development program and assessment to build internal capability	• Continuation of program for all senior leaders

Table A3: Supporting functions Specific Initiatives

Initiative	Action taken	Action planned
Engineering-specific initiatives		
Dedicated graduate engineers	• AusNet's annual graduate recruitment includes dedicated engineering positions to engage engineers early in their careers. The program provides a competitive offer for graduates and increases our internal supply of engineering talent.	• Review of graduate program (and all recruitment activity) underway to ensure program is structured and aligned to medium-term and long-term business objectives
Engineering career framework	• Early stages of developing a career framework to support the development of engineers internally, and promote cross business engineering upskilling and career paths in the business	• Roll-out and testing of framework with business
Formal knowledge transfer	• Ad-hoc instances of engineers returning part-time from retirement	• Forming a formal mentoring and knowledge transfer program for engineers nearing retirement
Control room-specific initiatives		
Forward planning	• Formalised planning process for resourcing and recruiting in advance of retirements and attrition to ensure a pipeline of training resources is available to fill demand	• Continue current forward planning process
Career pathways	• Developing of control-room specific career pathways to support retention of existing employees	• Review success of pathways and refine as necessary
International recruitment	• International recruitment program for AusNet controllers reduces training time to 12 months (instead of several years). Once qualified on our networks, these controllers can leverage their international experience. A costly but effective program	• Continue where and when required
Cross-skilling	• Internal cross-skilling program to develop a broader set of skills and support the function	• Continue current program
Benchmarking/market testing	• Yearly control room remuneration benchmarking to ensure market competitiveness and ability to attract/retain	• Continuation of current procedures

Trainee programs	• Control-room program targeting school leavers or candidates with no industry experience. This 3-year program includes cross business work experience and results in advanced diploma qualification	• Continuation of trainee programs to grow required talent
Customer and Community		
Boost customer and community capabilities	• Gathering learnings from progressing projects, for example, Western Renewables Links.	• Boosting the internal community teams capabilities and capacity will be crucial to ensure success of these projects