

AUSNET EDPB 2026-2031 COORDINATION GROUP MEETING #10 MINUTES

Location: Microsoft Teams

Date: 26 March, 2024

Time: 9:00 AM – 10:30 AM [meeting concluded at 9:50am]

Coordination Group (CG):

- Peter Eben (Chair of CG, meeting Chair)
- Dean Lombard (Future Networks Panel Lead) (meeting Secretary)
- Helen Bartley (Research and Engagement Panel Lead)
- Kieran Donoghue (Availability Panel Lead)
- Mark Grenning (Benchmarking and Opex Lead)
- Emily Peel (Customer Experience Panel Lead)

Attendees:

AusNet:

- Rob Ball
- Charlotte Eddy
- Lucy Holder

CCP:

- David Prins
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Apologies: Liz Ryan (AusNet)
Gavin Duffy (Tariffs and Pricing Panel Lead)

I. INTRODUCTION

- Welcome and conflicts of interest.
- Minutes from the last meeting were accepted.
- No conflicts of interest declared.
- Actions from last meeting:

- Item i completed.

II. PANEL LEAD UPDATE

- None to report.

III. AUSNET ITEMS

A. Community fund overview

- i. Held over to next meeting due to LR being unable to attend.

B. Regional long run supply planning (CE)

- i. IA Eng engaged for this. A high-level document looking at changes in electricity usage in regional areas to 2045 and what network changes might be required to support it (e.g. suitability of SWERs).
- ii. Will wrap up by May.
- iii. Issue raised about the complexity facing customers whose property is on multiple titles, due to NMs being associated with individual titles.

C. ESP update (RB)

- i. Letter sent to AER that AusNet will not be applying to participate in the Early Signal Pathway, but would like to undertake pre-lodgement engagement through the alternative Structured Engagement Pathway. Currently discussing with AER the form of early engagement under this approach.
- ii. Not clear yet what the implications of this will be for the Coordination Group, but there will likely be some, e.g. additional engagement between Ausnet and CG. This will become clearer as discussions progress.

D. Costed options workshop (RB)

- i. First deep dive coming up on 16 April.
- ii. More focused on how the engagement will work, than the building blocks.
- iii. Currently mostly at the *Inform* and *Consult* end of the IAP2 spectrum, but will be moving toward the *Involve* and *Collaborate* end.
- iv. Material for review expected on Thursday, won't be fully comprehensive due to timeframe but will inform discussion at workshop.
- v. Next session will be later this month on opex and benchmarking. Relevant material will be circulated a week before.
- vi. Dates of repex and digital sessions are still TBC because preparation is still being done. This may affect overall timeline. We will be kept informed, and CG meetings will be scheduled in June to account for this.
- vii. Placeholders for all dates will be sent out soon (*note that we should all update leave log to help with scheduling*).

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Consumer engagement status update (HB)

- i. In total approximately 17 customer interviews completed to date – still plenty of budget available.
 - ii. Gaps that will require engagement at some stage are north-east Victoria, outer Melbourne, East Gippsland.
 - iii. Last week Helen and Tony Robinson spent three days in Gippsland too meet with customers including water utilities, local councils, and several commercial customers.
- B. Feedback revealed a number of issues for customers, key and pressing issues have been raised with AusNet as appropriate
- iv. Summary of key issues:
 - 1. Lack of customer engagement on some critical issues, no key contact for large customers or essential services and frustration at having to rely on either informal relationships or AusNet's 1300 to communicate with the business.
 - 2. Repeated examples of issues with outsourced maintenance and connections requests, including safety, timeliness and other service standards.
 - 3. Frustration with inability to invest in energy resources or attain carbon neutrality due to network configuration, NMI/title issue, or capacity.
 - 4. Customers want AusNet to work with them developing solutions for some problems, rather than AusNet just doing it themselves.
 - 5. Delays reconnecting water businesses after outage events, leading to remediation costs that get passed onto water customers who are already bearing their additional costs from the events.
 - v. Next steps
 - 1. Interview writeups are proceeding and will be shared via Sharepoint and with AusNet as they are finalised
 - 2. Seeking to organise workshop with AusNet to report on and discuss implications of engagement findings, noting that while engagement findings are primarily to inform 2026-31 proposal, it also suggests some issues that could maybe be addressed sooner and be used to influence business as usual.
 - vi. AusNet notes that some of the issues raised relate to previously identified issues that the business is currently working on. Customer perspective is important but only one part of the story. At the same time, customer expectations change over time and this means solutions to issues are not always the end of the story.
 - vii. Need to agree on a date to finalise interviews (at this stage may be late May) to utilise the insights in the lead up to AusNet publishing its Draft proposal. May need to use current engagement findings for the draft proposal and CG report and utilise any subsequent feedback as inputs into AusNet's final proposal.

C. AER representative update

- i. None.

D. CCP representative update

- i. CCP looking at budget and how it will shape their role going forward.

E. Open discussion

No other business.

ACTIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Action items

- i. Rob Bell to confirm whether AER will attend future meetings.
- ii. Peter Eben to set CG meeting dates for June.
- iii. AusNet to talk with Helen and look at timing of draft proposal development with respect to when the engagement project's report needs to land to inform the draft, to assist with planning and reporting from the engagement project.

Next meeting – 23 April 9am – 10:30am