

AUSNET EDPB 2026-2031 COORDINATION GROUP MEETING #3 MINUTES

Location: Microsoft Teams

Date: October 26, 2023

Time: 2:00pm – 3:30pm

Coordination Group (CG):

Peter Eben (Chair of CG, meeting Chair)

Helen Bartley (Research and Engagement Panel Lead)

Kieran Donoghue (Availability Panel Lead)

Gavin Duffy (Tariffs and Pricing Panel Lead)

Attendees: Mark Grenning (Benchmarking and Opex Lead)

Emily Peel (Customer Experience Panel Lead) (meeting Secretary)

AusNet:

Charlotte Eddy

Sonja Lekovic

Lucy Holder (Ausnet)

Apologies: Rob Ball (Ausnet)

Dean Lombard (Future Networks Panel Lead)

I. WELCOME AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

AOC

Minutes from the last meeting were accepted.

No conflicts of interest declared.

Apologies – as noted above

Review of last meeting's Action items

- i. AusNet to revert with the link on the Community Hub with the minutes for the CG meeting.
 - Charlotte will follow up Lucy.

- ii. AusNet to further consider the engagement approach and address the issues raised by the CG.
 - The offsites in February and August will discuss the price paths with all panel members, however AusNet is also planning a separate CG meeting time in addition to the offsite in February and August. The additional meetings may be part of the normal CG meetings in the relevant month. AusNet to test draft agenda for the Feb offsite at the Nov CG meeting.
- iii. AusNet to coordinate with CG Chair to commence confirming placeholder dates / times for future engagement sessions – Peter to continue to liaise with AusNet.
 - AusNet has considered CCP involvement in CG and panel meetings based on feedback from the CG and agreed to test CG proposed ground rules re CCP attendance at CG meetings with the AER, being: CCP can attend engagement meetings as an observer only
 - CCP must commit to no surprises (perhaps via check ins with Peter)
 - CCP commitment to show an advance draft of this report with the CG for fact checking.

II. PANEL LEAD UPDATES

- **Availability (Kieran)**

Panel involved with joint DB session on resilience with several members of panel attending and 70/80 other stakeholders.

Vic Gov review following storms and gave a bunch of recommendations – more enduring arrangements around resilience. Awaiting formal response. Vic DBs engaging with stakeholders, but not sure what we are working towards until we get an indication from the government.

Key points:

- How resilience investment options will be assessed. Regional customers might not be well served if via a traditional cost benefits analysis.
- Minimum standards might be an appropriate response to that.
- Communication before and during events is key
- Partnership approach to resilience not only AusNet but also other DNSP etc. to improve resilience at a community level.

Joint Panel meeting – Availability and Customer experience – Planned outages

Very interesting data and customer feedback and satisfaction ratings. Average frequency of planned outages per customer is 0.6 a year. Some feeders have considerably more which are also the ones that have more unplanned outages. Increased work required due to the energy transition may need more work on assets, increasing planned outage frequency.

Issues discussed include:

- Communicating the duration accurately - businesses could experience lost opportunity if they have put in place plans for the full duration and outage is shorter Method and language of communications
- Info included on the comms – eg The “why” might help customers understand that its necessary – rather than just need to turn power off.
- That outages less than 3 mins – a momentary outage, MAIFI, could materially impact the customers, especially business customers with sensitive industrial processes.

- **R&E (Helen)**

Customer workshops round 2 – 2 online observed and provided feedback to AusNet. Customer qualitative values – AusNet developing questionnaire and copy next week on Tues and that will be tested with small sample with before large quantitative survey commences.

C&I engagement. Charlotte indicated we were currently considering this and can update the group shortly.

- **Benchmarking and Opex (Mark)**

Meeting focused on early opex positions, with a lot more detail to discuss on potential step changes in face to face in February.

Key issue – how long will extreme cost pressures continue.

Technical issues – opex base step trend. What is the base – historically that has been the last year with audited results. Noted the choice of base year makes no difference to revenue outcomes.

Potential step changes – AusNet could have, bushfire safety, resilience, DER integration, cloud, energy, education and electrifying the fleet, cyber security,

AusNet is arguing .5% is a reasonable productivity trend parameter while Qld 1% in their draft plans. The more efficient you are the harder it is to make changes in your efficiency.

- **Future Networks (Dean)**

Apology- no meeting

- **Tariffs And pricing (Gavin)**

No update as no tariff meetings since last CG

- **Customer experience (Emily)**

Not much more to add to Kieran's update.

It was a combined focus question on Planned outages – ‘How might we minimise the adverse impacts of planned outages on customers? Panel members’ discussion

demonstrated the many differing customer preferences regarding planned outage timing and scheduling. Planned outage communication was another strong theme, with panel members and AusNet agreeing that there are opportunities to enhance messaging associated with planned outages, including explaining why. Terminology around outages will be clarified in the Next Customer Experience workshop on 22 November – Unplanned outages.

III. AUSNET ITEMS

a. Early signals pathway update / discussion (15 mins) (slides as provided)

AusNet has made an in-principle decision to apply for this subject to ensuring we can meet the timeframes.

If accepted AusNet wants to make sure we are streamlining engagement with customers and AER and not creating 2 parallel processes. How to tie together ESP and our engagement approach – suggestions from the group (given experience on ESP network panels).

Various reflections on other networks' experiences were offered by CG members.

- Some CG panel members noted that there was significant work from the CG to meet the requirements and lot of work from AusNet.

b. Emergency backstop cost pass through discussion (15 mins) (slides as provided)

For information only

Minimum system load – Victoria Government policy obligations to distributors implementing measures for emergency backlog system. Similar in Qld, and SA. Vics turn. 2 stages – new licence conditions

- 1- 25/10 capabilities to curtail systems new above 200KW
- 2- All customers 1/01/24 20k new customers curtail generation when an email request comes through. Commissions inverters to our network – this is new in ensuring compliance of inverters ongoing compliance monitoring and lets and testing if need to test capabilities prior to high risk areas. Quite a few slide 4.

New service standard event as part of the licence conditions. \$30M in capex and also opex as need additional staff to manage this.

Significant IT capabilities. All new inverters that connect to network, flexible some bringing forward in the period.

c. Customer workshops (20 mins)

The second round of customer workshops has been completed. They included:

- Asking customers what services should AusNet prioritize?
- Asking customers about Willingness to pay more or less for improvement or degradation of services including EV charging flexibility, improving network resilience, and export enablement and reliability.

Feedback summarized at high level as follows:

- Reliability mixed feedback, some happy with current levels, others reported poor reliability.
- EV charging – customers willing to be charged more for ability to charge flexibly.
- Resilience - views mixed, some supported proactive resilience investments as akin to insurance
- Solar – DER exports – should be taken care of given government push to PV - resolved shouldn't be mis alignments between govt and AusNet,

Discussion on direct engagement by the Research and Engagement Panel. AusNet comfortable with concept. It is not budgeted so will come out of the \$150k CG fund. AusNet suggested it is pitched to CG for endorsement, with a focus on how the findings will be fed back into the program , noting lots of the feedback will be in the customer experience space.

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

a. 2024 meeting planning and approaches

No December meeting.

Next meeting after November 30 meeting will be in late January 2024

February onwards CG to move to fortnightly – will remain at 1.5 hours in duration.

Peter to send Doodle Poll to establish dates.

V. ACTIONS AND NEXT STEPS (<5 MINS)

a. Action items

- AusNet to revert with the link on the Community Hub with the minutes for the CG meeting - Charlotte will follow up Lucy
- AusNet to check doodle poll and send to Peter and Emily
- R& E group – simple proposal; to go to Coordination group re direct engagement with customers to inform CG report .
- Sonja to send link to gazette information for emergency backstop
- CG to send through any big leave plans late January 2023 to Peter, and Peter to arrange Doodle poll to confirm meetings for 2024.
- AusNet will advise Peter of CCP attendance in advance

b. Next meeting – November 30th 2pm Eastern daylight savings time