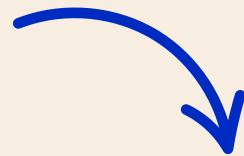




Jemena Electricity Networks (JEN)



Large Customer Forum

Prepared 12 March
2024

Summary Report





Introduction

Purpose

On Monday 19 February 2024, large customers of Jemena Electricity Networks (JEN) met at the Hyatt Centric in Melbourne. This meeting enabled large customers to share their current and anticipated energy-related **challenges and opportunities**, describe their **desired outcomes** and communicate their **expectations for JEN’s role** in supporting those outcomes.

These insights will inform JEN’s 2026-2031 Regulatory Proposal, business-as-usual (BAU) operations and ongoing sector advocacy. The forum also helped customers better understand the challenges and opportunities faced by other organisations connected to JEN’s electricity distribution network.

Attendance

The forum was attended by 21 representatives of 12 large customers, as well as 16 JEN staff. The combined energy of the attending customers on Jen’s electricity distribution networks makes up over 200 MWh per annum.

Customers	JEN Staff
Austin Health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manager Asset Services • Project Manager 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing Director (<i>opening address</i>) • Commercial Manager • General Manager Asset Manage & Operations • Senior Grid Transformation Engineer • Business Development Manager – Data Centres • Customer Engagement Lead • Project Director • Commercial & Contracts Lead • Connections Improvement Specialist • General Manager Customer & Commercial • Graduate
Coles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy Manager 	
CLS Behring <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior Electrical Engineering Manager • Senior Process Engineer 	
NBN <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior Power Account Manager • Operations Delivery & Integration Partner • Graduate 	
MAB <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civil Project Manager • Project Manager 	
Telstra	



Customers	JEN Staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National SAED Manager - Wireless / Network / Engineering • Senior Commercial Analyst • Southern Region Site Acquisition Team Leader 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Development Manager – Data Centres • Key Accounts Manager • Executive General Manager • Future Network Team Lead • Future Networks Planning Manager • Connections SME
La Trobe University <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director Net Zero 	
Melbourne Airport <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head of Engineering 	
NextDC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead HV Engineering Manager 	
VicTrack <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior Telecommunication Access Specialist 	
Vicinity Centres <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Manager • Renewable Manager 	
Victorian Health Building Authority <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical Engineering Manager • Senior Project Manager 	

Approach

Ahead of the forum, JEN surveyed large customers and conducted 1:1 meetings to understand their pain points and identify priority topics for discussion. One the day, participants worked individually – and then in small groups of customers and JEN staff – to share their organisation’s main current and anticipated energy-related challenges and opportunities. These were organised under topic areas that emerged from JEN’s prior engagement with large customers:

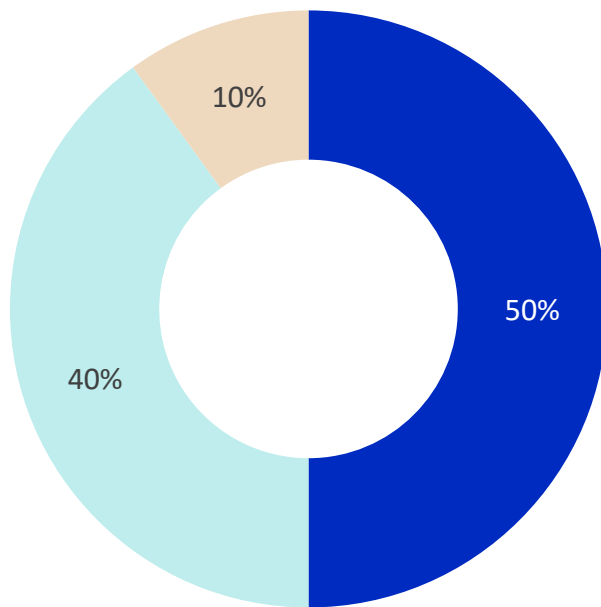
1. **Network reliability and security**
2. **Tariff structures and how Jemena charge**
3. **Sustainability and decarbonisation**
4. **Enabling growth across your business**
5. **EV solutions for commercial/fleet and residential**
6. **Digital solutions for engaging with Jemena**
7. **Facilitation of energy trading**
8. **Other**



Following a plenary report back, participants worked again – individually and in the same small groups – to articulate the outcomes they desired under these same topic areas and any expectations they had for JEN’s role in supporting those outcomes. Again, these were shared in a plenary report back.

Participant experience

■ Extremely satisfied ■ Very satisfied ■ Somewhat satisfied



50% of the customers who evaluated the forum were ‘extremely satisfied’ with the event, 40% were ‘very satisfied’, and 10% of participants were ‘somewhat satisfied’.

Customers appreciated the facilitation and the chance to engage with JEN staff and fellow customers.

Attending customers expect JEN to provide feedback post-forum on how their input has been taken on board.

Next steps

JEN will use the outputs of these discussions – summarised in the remainder of this report – to prepare proposed regulatory proposal, BAU and advocacy responses. The distributor will test these responses with customers in virtual workshops before including them in the Draft 2026-2031 Regulatory Proposal.



Challenges + Opportunities

Introduction

The table below summarises the key challenges and opportunities to emerge from the first forum session, drawn from the small groups reporting back and table scribe notes.

Theme	Summary Challenges + Opportunities
<p>Network reliability, security and power quality</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outages - long and momentary - are impacting business operations and their stakeholders. For example, every disturbance requires a manual reset of Austin Health’s medical equipment, which comes with an operational cost and burden on staff time. Another customer was concerned about the impact of outages on communication capabilities during major events, while another was concerned with an outage’s impact on their regulatory requirements as a manufacturer. • This impact grows as customers’ new technologies demand more energy from the grid. • Solutions like back-up generation can be costly and inefficient for customers. • With the right data access, customers could better prepare for outages, especially as increasing climate events puts greater pressure on the network. • Customers are also open to sharing valuable insights on their vulnerabilities and resilience to outages, to inform network responses to outage events. For example, one customer suggested its shopping centres might sustain themselves on generators for longer to free up energy for more vulnerable customers in JEN’s network.
<p>Tariff structures and how Jemena charge</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes and uncertainty in pricing estimates are making it difficult for customers to plan for the future. As one customer put it “It’s like throwing a dart at a dart board”. Examples included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developers dealing with changing energy pricing estimates through different stages of the planning process • One customer was dealing with price increases in unmetered sites • Businesses uncertain of the best investment decisions for improved sustainability outcomes (e.g. electric vehicle uptake) • Customers would benefit from (i) improved data and forecasting of future pricing and tariffs that are simple to explain and that include levers that customers can meaningfully control. This involves improved communications from JEN, including real-time information on the impacts of tariffs on customer costs to inform operational decisions (e.g. when to reduce usage). • This would enable them to better forecast for their budgets and internal management reporting, and would help provide greater certainty to support investment decisions.



<p>Sustainability and decarbonisation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customers are increasingly embracing solar and battery solutions. However, some are finding it difficult and costly to plan for and manage, especially large-scale assets for self-generation. • While some participants praised the partnered approach JEN has taken to supporting them through the energy transition, some were still finding it difficult and costly to meet their sustainability targets, and are becoming increasingly nervous about planned and other outages as they move away from gas. • Some customer suggested that joint investment and improved sharing or interfacing of regulated and non-regulated infrastructure, land and assets could improve sustainability outcomes.
<p>Enabling growth across your business</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some customers’ historic assets are no longer fit-for-purpose and the retrofitting process has been resource- and capital-intensive.
<p>Digital solutions for engaging with Jemena</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many customers acknowledged the good relationship and understanding they share with JEN. • However, as outlined under other challenge themes, customers are lacking sufficient data (e.g. on energy export pricing and outages) to inform internal briefs and decision-making, as well as reporting to their own regulators. They were looking for proactive information provision from JEN. • Customers also require improved service during outages, to inform their decision-making in the response phase.
<p>Facilitation of energy trading</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some customers were seeking support with complex energy trading decisions that were not their core competency, especially with the increased availability of government grants for solar installations.



Outcomes + Expectations

Introduction

The table below summarises the key desired outcomes and expectations of JEN that emerged from the second forum session, drawn from small group report backs and table scribe notes.

Theme	Summary Outcomes + Expectations
Network reliability and security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce outages; not just long outages but momentary ones too. Example customer suggestions included targeted under-grounding, multiple feeder supplies, vegetation clearance and/or joint investment in back-up power and customer-side power quality equipment. • For those outages you can't reduce, provide better data more swiftly (in advance and live) to enable customers to plan for and respond to outages. This includes mid-outage information (e.g. supply restoration times), as well as longer-term predictions (e.g. potential climate impacts on future reliability in each LGA). • Opportunity for JEN to work with customers to better understand their vulnerabilities and resilience, to inform whole-of-network outage responses (e.g. prioritisation of restoration, opportunities for customers to support grid stability) and support customers to prepare (e.g. coordination of backup supply, batteries/generators and load shedding; sharing of outage causes and other post-event data). • Some customers asked JEN to review the load shedding process to identify opportunities for customers to disengage from the network and be self-sufficient for a time period to avoid other customers having to load shed.
Tariff structures and how Jemena charge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support simpler and more consistent tariffs and guidelines (in partnership with retailers and other Victorian distributors) which can be more easily explained to executive teams (e.g. around maximum demand and energy consumption). • Develop tariffs that are based on levers customers can meaningfully pull (i.e. variables within their control) and provide tools to support them to predict the impact of different investment decisions.
Sustainability and decarbonisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make it easier for large customers to invest in renewable assets. This might include tariffs that better incentivise sustainable investments, information on best locations for battery energy storage systems (BESS) and/or lobbying for customers to be able to build large-scale batteries without a certificate. • Explore joint investment (e.g. through grants / EOIs) or improved sharing/interfaces of regulated and non-regulated infrastructure, land and assets. VicTrack offered the example of community batteries and EV-charging assets on their land. • Provide more information on what Jemena is doing to support electrification.
Enabling growth across your business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide greater clarity and certainty on cost schedules and future price signals (e.g. through master agreements or fixed costs arranged upfront).



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist customers to “do better with what they have”, including working with their current technologies, load profile and supply requirements. • Support customers to more cost-effectively retrofit historic assets to ensure they are fit-for-purpose for the modern network. This might include JEN sharing its expert knowledge of new-generation technologies, to help customers persuade more cautious internal decision-makers. • Improve coordination of customers’ large assets (e.g. data centres) through a more streamlined interface between the customer and JEN. • Make new connections quicker and less resource-intensive for customers, especially high-capacity and generation connections. For example, by more efficiently gathering all required information from customers upfront.
Digital solutions for engaging with Jemena	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proactively provide advanced and/or live information and data to customers, so they can apply these insights to their reporting (e.g. to regulators) and to their decisions relating to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future-proofing and/or investment in assets • Improving their energy affordability (e.g. with clear signals to inform demand management) • Preparing for outages • Customers shared wide-ranging examples of useful data and information, including on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Power quality, and magnitude and duration of dips • Network vulnerabilities • Street level data (e.g. on affected NBN assets) • JEN’s load shedding and restoration prioritisation process • Future energy costs for developments • Estimated EV uptake • How the capital contributions model works • Network or asset constraints • Energy export options • New-generation technologies • Customers expected that some of this information would be shared as part of consultation processes before final decisions are made (e.g. before rolling out new technologies). • Access could be provided via APIs, on JEN’s website (e.g. a data dashboard) or via other channels (e.g. email or SMS notifications)
Facilitation of energy trading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide advice and/or directly support large customers with energy trading or carbon offsetting. • Explore opportunities for customers to export all of their energy at certain times, to support the network. • Make the battery connection process quicker and less costly.