

 FINAL DECISION

AusNet Services distribution determination

 2016 to 2020

Attachment 8 – Corporate income tax

May 2016

© Commonwealth of Australia 2016

This work is copyright. In addition to any use permitted under the Copyright Act 1968, all material contained within this work is provided under a Creative Commons Attributions 3.0 Australia licence, with the exception of:

* the Commonwealth Coat of Arms
* the ACCC and AER logos
* any illustration, diagram, photograph or graphic over which the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission does not hold copyright, but which may be part of or contained within this publication. The details of the relevant licence conditions are available on the Creative Commons website, as is the full legal code for the CC BY 3.0 AU licence.

Requests and inquiries concerning reproduction and rights should be addressed to the:

Director, Corporate Communications
Australian Competition and Consumer Commission
GPO Box 4141, Canberra ACT 2601

or publishing.unit@accc.gov.au.

Inquiries about this publication should be addressed to:

Australian Energy Regulator
GPO Box 520
Melbourne Vic 3001

Tel: (03) 9290 1444
Fax: (03) 9290 1457

Email: AERInquiry@aer.gov.au

1. Note
2. This attachment forms part of the AER's final decision on AusNet Services' distribution determination for 2016–20. It should be read with all other parts of the final decision.
3. The final decision includes the following documents:
4. Overview
5. Attachment 1 – Annual revenue requirement
6. Attachment 2 – Regulatory asset base
7. Attachment 3 – Rate of return
8. Attachment 4 – Value of imputation credits
9. Attachment 5 – Regulatory depreciation
10. Attachment 6 – Capital expenditure
11. Attachment 7 – Operating expenditure
12. Attachment 8 – Corporate income tax
13. Attachment 9 – Efficiency benefit sharing scheme
14. Attachment 10 – Capital expenditure sharing scheme
15. Attachment 11 – Service target performance incentive scheme
16. Attachment 12 – Demand management incentive scheme
17. Attachment 13 – Classification of services
18. Attachment 14 – Control mechanisms
19. Attachment 15 – Pass through events
20. Attachment 16 – Alternative control services
21. Attachment 17 – Negotiated services framework and criteria
22. Attachment 18 – f-factor scheme

1. Contents

[Note 8-2](#_Toc451286375)

[Contents 8-3](#_Toc451286376)

[Shortened forms 8-4](#_Toc451286377)

[8 Corporate income tax 8-6](#_Toc451286378)

[8.1 Final decision 8-6](#_Toc451286379)

[8.2 AusNet Services' revised proposal 8-7](#_Toc451286380)

[8.3 Assessment approach 8-7](#_Toc451286381)

[8.4 Reasons for final decision 8-7](#_Toc451286382)

[8.4.1 Opening tax asset base 8-8](#_Toc451286383)

[8.4.2 Remaining tax asset lives 8-9](#_Toc451286384)

[8.4.3 Standard tax asset lives 8-10](#_Toc451286385)

[8.4.4 Tax treatment of other revenue adjustments 8-11](#_Toc451286386)

1. Shortened forms

| Shortened form | Extended form |
| --- | --- |
| AEMC | Australian Energy Market Commission |
| AEMO | Australian Energy Market Operator |
| AER | Australian Energy Regulator |
| AMI | Advanced metering infrastructure |
| Augex | augmentation expenditure |
| Capex | capital expenditure |
| CCP | Consumer Challenge Panel |
| CESS | capital expenditure sharing scheme |
| CPI | consumer price index |
| DRP | debt risk premium |
| DMIA | demand management innovation allowance |
| DMIS | demand management incentive scheme |
| Distributor | distribution network service provider |
| DUoS | distribution use of system |
| EBSS | efficiency benefit sharing scheme |
| ERP | equity risk premium |
| Expenditure Assessment Guideline | Expenditure Forecast Assessment Guideline for Electricity Distribution |
| F&A | framework and approach |
| MRP | market risk premium |
| NEL | national electricity law |
| NEM | national electricity market |
| NEO | national electricity objective |
| NER | national electricity rules |
| NSP | network service provider |
| Opex | operating expenditure |
| PPI | partial performance indicators |
| PTRM | post-tax revenue model |
| RAB | regulatory asset base |
| RBA | Reserve Bank of Australia |
| Repex | replacement expenditure |
| RFM | roll forward model |
| RIN | regulatory information notice |
| RPP | revenue and pricing principles |
| SAIDI | system average interruption duration index |
| SAIFI | system average interruption frequency index |
| SLCAPM | Sharpe-Lintner capital asset pricing model |
| STPIS | service target performance incentive scheme |
| WACC | weighted average cost of capital |

# Corporate income tax

We are required to make a decision on the estimated cost of corporate income tax for AusNet Services' 2016–20 regulatory control period.[[1]](#footnote-1) Under the post-tax framework, a corporate income tax allowance is calculated as part of the building block assessment using our post-tax revenue model (PTRM). This amount enables AusNet Services to recover the costs associated with the estimated corporate income tax payable during the 2016–20 regulatory control period.

This attachment presents our final decision on AusNet Services' revised proposed corporate income tax allowance for the 2016–20 regulatory control period. It also presents our final decision on its revised proposed opening tax asset base (TAB), and the standard and remaining tax asset lives used to estimate tax depreciation for the purpose of calculating tax expenses.

## Final decision

We do not accept AusNet Services' revised proposed cost of corporate income tax allowance of $254.7 million ($ nominal).[[2]](#footnote-2) Our final decision on the estimated cost of corporate income tax is $143.7 million ($ nominal) for AusNet Services over the 2016–20 regulatory control period. This represents a reduction of $110.9 million (or 43.6 per cent) from its revised proposal.

The reduction reflects our amendments to AusNet's proposed inputs for forecasting the cost of corporate income tax such as the opening TAB (section 8.4.1) and the value of imputation credits—gamma—(attachment 4). Changes to the building block costs also affect revenues, which in turn impacts the tax calculation. The changes affecting revenues are discussed in attachment 1.

Table 8.1 sets out our final decision on the estimated cost of corporate income tax allowance for AusNet Services over the 2016–20 regulatory control period.

Table .1 AER's final decision on AusNet Services' cost of corporate income tax allowance for the 2016–20 regulatory control period ($ million, nominal)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|   | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | Total |
| Tax payable | 55.4 | 45.1 | 46.0 | 47.2 | 45.8 | 239.5 |
| Less: value of imputation credits | 22.2 | 18.0 | 18.4 | 18.9 | 18.3 | 95.8 |
| **Net corporate income tax allowance** | **33.2** | **27.1** | **27.6** | **28.3** | **27.5** | **143.7** |

Source: AER analysis.

## AusNet Services' revised proposal

AusNet Services' revised proposal forecasts a cost of corporate income tax allowance of $254.7 million ($ nominal) for the 2016–20 regulatory control period. AusNet Services' revised proposal adopted the methodology approved in the preliminary decision for determining its corporate income tax.

AusNet Services has revised its corporate income tax allowance using the AER's PTRM and included the following inputs:

* revised forecast capex
* revised forecast opex.

AusNet Services' revised proposal also used the opening TAB at 1 January 2016, standard and remaining tax asset lives consistent with those approved in the preliminary decision. However, it used a value for gamma of 0.25 consistent with its initial proposal.

Table 8.2 sets out AusNet Services' revised proposed corporate income tax allowance for the 2016–20 regulatory control period.

Table .2 AusNet Services' proposed cost of corporate income tax allowance for the 2015–20 regulatory control period ($ million, nominal)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|   | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | Total |
| Tax payable | 73.5 | 63.6 | 65.9 | 68.4 | 68.2 | 339.5 |
| Less: value of imputation credits | 18.4 | 15.9 | 16.5 | 17.1 | 17.0 | 84.9 |
| **Net corporate income tax allowance** | **55.1** | **47.7** | **49.4** | **51.3** | **51.1** | **254.7** |

Source: AusNet Services, Revised regulatory proposal, January 2016, p. 10–6.

## Assessment approach

We have not changed our assessment approach for the cost of corporate income tax from our preliminary decision. Section 8.3 of our preliminary decision details that approach.[[3]](#footnote-3)

## Reasons for final decision

We do not accept AusNet Services' revised proposed cost of corporate income tax allowance of $254.7 million ($ nominal). We instead determine a cost of corporate income tax allowance of $143.7 million for the 2016–20 regulatory control period. This represents a reduction of $110.9 million (or 43.6 per cent) from AusNet Services' revised proposal.

This is because we adjusted the following proposed inputs to the PTRM for tax purposes:

* the value of gamma (attachment 4)
* other building block components including forecast opex (attachment 7) and forecast capex (attachment 6) that affect revenues, and therefore also impact the forecast corporate income tax allowance.

We accept the revised proposed opening tax asset base (section 8.4.1), remaining tax asset lives (section 8.4.2) and the standard tax asset lives (section 8.4.3), consistent with those approved in the preliminary decision.

### Opening tax asset base

We accept AusNet Services' proposed opening TAB value at 1 January 2016 of $2218.2 million ($ nominal). This is the same amount approved in the preliminary decision.

In the preliminary decision, we accepted AusNet Services' proposed method to establish the opening TAB at 1 January 2016 as it was based on the approach approved at the 2010 determination. However, we amended AusNet Services' proposed opening TAB by removing the transfer of $47.3 million at 1 January 2016 for AMI IT and communication assets from alternative control services to standard control services. AusNet Services' revised proposal adopted our draft decision amendment.

We noted the roll forward of AusNet Services' TAB included an estimated capex value for 2015. We stated we would update the 2015 estimated capex value for the final decision. AusNet's revised proposal did not include an update for 2015 estimated capex. In response to an information request, AusNet Services advised that it has encountered a data migration issue arising from upgrades to its IT systems.[[4]](#footnote-4) For the reasons discussed in attachment 2, we accept that the estimate approved in the preliminary decision should continue to serve as the best estimate for this final decision. We will update the TAB for 2015 actual capex at the next reset.

Table 8.3 sets out our final decision on the roll forward of AusNet Services' TAB values over the 2011–15 regulatory control period.

Table .3 AER's final decision on AusNet Services' TAB roll forward ($ million, nominal)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|   | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015a |
| Opening TAB | 1278.7 | 1444.8 | 1624.3 | 1832.8 | 2041.0 |
| Capital expenditure | 290.8 | 331.1 | 386.3 | 428.2 | 387.4 |
| Less: Tax depreciation | 124.8 | 151.5 | 177.8 | 220.0 | 210.2 |
| Closing TAB | **1444.8** | **1624.3** | **1832.8** | **2041.0** | **2218.2** |

Source: AER analysis.

 (a) Based on estimated capex.

### Remaining tax asset lives

We accept AusNet Services' revised proposed remaining tax asset lives calculated based on the approach approved in our preliminary decision. The approach calculates the remaining tax asset life for each asset class at 1 January 2016 using the standard tax asset life for that asset class multiplied by the ratio of the RAB remaining asset life to the RAB standard asset life.

In the preliminary decision, we accepted AusNet Services' proposal to transition to our preferred straight-line tax depreciation approach to calculate the corporate income tax allowance for the 2016–20 regulatory control period. This required us to determine remaining tax asset lives for depreciating the opening TAB at 1 January 2016. We considered AusNet Services' proposed approach to determine remaining tax asset lives provides reasonable estimates for the majority of its asset classes.

We noted the remaining tax asset lives at 1 January 2016 may be updated using the approved approach for any revision to the RAB remaining asset lives, which in turn depends on any changes in 2015 capex. For the reasons discussed in attachment 2, we have not made any further changes to the 2015 capex estimate for this final decision. Therefore, our final decision on the remaining tax asset lives for AusNet Services remains the same as those in the preliminary decision.

We are satisfied the remaining tax asset lives in AusNet Services' revised proposal are likely to provide an appropriate estimate of the tax depreciation amount for a benchmark efficient service provider as required by the NER.[[5]](#footnote-5)

Table 8.4 sets out our final decision on the remaining tax asset lives at 1 January 2016 for AusNet Services.

### Standard tax asset lives

Consistent with our preliminary decision, we accept AusNet Services' proposed standard tax asset lives because they are:

* broadly consistent with the values prescribed by the Commissioner for taxation in tax ruling 2015/2[[6]](#footnote-6)
* the same as the approved standard tax asset lives for the 2011–15 regulatory control period.
1. In the preliminary decision, we considered that the opening TAB value for land as at 1 January 2016 should be allocated to its own asset class as land assets do not depreciate. We therefore created a new non-depreciating 'Land' asset class. AusNet Services' revised proposal adopted our preliminary decision to create a new 'Land' asset class with no standard life assigned to it.
2. We are satisfied the standard tax asset lives in AusNet Services' revised proposal are likely to provide an appropriate estimate of the tax depreciation amount for a benchmark efficient service provider as required by the NER.[[7]](#footnote-7)
3. Table 8.4 sets out our final decision on the standard tax asset lives for AusNet Services.

Table . AER's final decision on AusNet Services' standard tax asset lives (years)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Asset class | Standard tax asset life  | Remaining tax asset lifeas at 1 January 2016 |
| Subtransmission  | 43.0 | 34.0 |
| Distribution system assets | 46.0 | 31.7 |
| Standard metering  | n/a | 1.0a |
| Public lighting | n/a | n/a |
| SCADA/Network control | 10.0 | 6.9 |
| Non-network general assets - IT | 4.0 | 2.6 |
| Non-network general - Other | 12.0 | 8.3 |
| Land | n/a | n/a |
| Accelerated depreciation opening RAB adjustment - Subtransmission | n/a | n/a |
| Accelerated depreciation opening RAB adjustment - Distribution | n/a | n/a |
| Accelerated depreciation - Subtransmission (2016–20) | n/a | n/a |
| Accelerated depreciation - Distribution (2016–20) | n/a | n/a |
| Equity raising costs | 5.0 | n/a |

Source: AER analysis.

n/a not applicable.

a: The remaining tax asset life as at 1 January 2016 for the ‘Standard metering’ asset class is set to 1 year in order to fully depreciate the small residual TAB value for this asset class within the 2016–20 regulatory control period.

### Tax treatment of other revenue adjustments

We note AusNet Services' revised proposal adopted our preliminary decision on the tax treatment of the revenue adjustments arising from the operation of the EBSS over the 2011–15 regulatory control period and the close out of the ESCV's previous S‑factor scheme.[[8]](#footnote-8) Consistent with the preliminary decision, our final decision is that the EBSS and S-factor revenue adjustments should be given identical income and expense tax status in the PTRM.[[9]](#footnote-9)

1. NER, cl. 6.4.3(a)(4). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. AusNet Services, Revised regulatory proposal, January 2015, p.10–2. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. AER, Preliminary decision, AusNet Services determination 2015–16 to 2019–20: Attachment 8 – Corporate income tax, April 2015, pp. 7–10. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. AusNet Services, RE: AER information request – Jemena - #030 – 2015 estimated capex update, 8 February 2016. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. NER, cl. 6.5.3. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. ATO, Taxation Ruling Income tax: effective life of depreciating assets (applicable from 1 July 2015), July 2015, http://law.ato.gov.au/atolaw/view.htm?docid=%22TXR%2FTR20152%2FNAT%2FATO%2F00001%22, accessed on 9 March 2016. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. NER, cl. 6.5.3. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. AusNet Services, Revised regulatory proposal, January 2016, p. 2-11. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. That is, the revenue adjustments are either both tax income and tax expense (EBSS, shared assets); or neither tax income nor tax expense (S-factor). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)