

Agenda & Minutes

Innovation Advisory Committee | Meeting #5

Wednesday 14 June

10.30pm - 12.00pm

Microsoft Teams

Attendees:

Heather Smith, *Coalition for Community Energy*
Greg Hannan, *Citipower, Powercor & United Energy*
Dean Lombard, *Independent panellist*
Tom Bakker, *Aurecon*
Emily Perrin, *Clean Energy Council*
Emma Chessell, *Brotherhood of Saint Laurance*

AusNet representatives:

Sonja Lekovic, *Regulatory Policy Manager (Chair)*
Ana Erceg, *Manager, Future Networks Program*
Asal Ahmadlou, *Future Networks Engineer*
Edwin Chan, *Pricing Manager*
Michaela Jackson, *Engagement Specialist*
Jade Park, *Research Specialist*
Emma Ferrie, *Graduate*

Apologies/ Declined:

Scott McKendry, *Eastern Alliance for Greenhouse Action*
Prof. Luis (Nando) Ochoa Pizzali, *University of Melbourne*

Rod Jones, *AusNet*
Tom Hallam, *AusNet*
Fran Duiker, *AusNet*
Lucy Holder, *AusNet*
Champi Elwela, *AusNet*
Mary Masters, *AusNet*

Item	Time	Topic	For	Presenter
	10.30am	Welcome, customer moment & actions from meeting #4	Information & discussion	Sonja Lekovic
1	10.35am	Membership changes	Information & discussion	Sonja Lekovic & Michaela Jackson
2	10.45am	Innovation pipeline vision & future needs	Information & discussion	Jade Park & Ana Erceg
4	11.05am	Innovation update Update on data/connections portal	Information & discussion	Sonja Lekovic
5	11.20am	IAC co-design workshop Post-workshop & next steps	Information & discussion &	Michaela Jackson & Ana Erceg
6	11.45am	Tariff trials Update	Information	Edwin Chan
	11.52am	Other business and close	Information	Sonja Lekovic

Welcome, background and customer moment

AusNet's Sonja Lekovic welcomed participants to the meeting, gave an Acknowledgement of Country and shared a customer moment highlighting insights from the recent Customer Segmentation research. Action items resulting from IAC meeting #4 were taken as read, noting that the action for 'AusNet to share its vision and future needs with IAC, as a result of EDPR 2026-31 Engagement' would be discussed in today's meeting.

Discussion

- Some members discussed the recent online knowledge-sharing session, 'Bringing our Customer Segments to Live', with one member commenting that they have some concerns around the accuracy of the customer numbers, largely related to the issue of differences between National Meter Identifiers (NMI) and customer numbers. AusNet took on an action to provide more information around this issue.
- A member highlighted the session was good and that AusNet did well to cover as much content as they did in an hour. There is strong interest from the members to have access to the data underpinning the study and results. AusNet took on an action to provide more information on what data can be shared.

Item 1 | Membership changes

AusNet's Sonja Lekovic spoke about recent membership changes, including introducing new member Theodora Karastergiou (Jemena). AusNet's Michaela Jackson referred to the Terms of Reference and asked member whether they felt the current membership mix is right, if we need to recruit new members and if so from which stakeholder group.

Discussion

- A member raised that in addition to the IAC there is also now the Future Networks panel, as part of the Electricity Distribution Price Review (EDPR) 2026-31 Engagement Program. They noted that IAC is quite focussed on funding from the last EDPR and asked if the IAC will therefore wrap up at end of 2025 now that all the funding has been allocated. Later, in the conversation the member asked if IAC could be merge with the Future Networks Panel as they get into the detail of next EDPR, noting that there seems to be duplication. AusNet confirmed that IAC was set up as result of last EDPR and to oversee \$7.5m allocated is spent appropriately, and took on an action to consider further how the IAC fits into the current engagement program for the 2026-31 EDPR and on an ongoing basis.
- Another member commented that the IAC seems to be light on members who directly represent customers. Brotherhood of Saint Laurence and to some extent Eastern Alliance do so, but more representation from customer advocates is worth considering. AusNet agreed to consider recruiting more customer advocates. IAC members were invited to think of possible nominees who could be invited to join.

Item 2 | Innovation pipeline, vision & future needs

In response to a request at IAC Meeting #4, AusNet's Jade Park presented highlights from the Digital Energy Futures (DEF) research, which introduces 4 'future living scenarios' – 2 set in 2030 and 2 set in 2050 – that serve as a valuable resource for energy industry planning. AusNet's Ana Erceg provided an update of the innovation pipeline, briefly mentioning the project selected to replace DVMP. Ana also shared some of the key innovation projects underway, including Gippsland Battery Project, projects related to connections, as well as projects that look at machine learning to optimise asset management and risk consequence models.

Discussion

- A member asked about the method of the DEF study, in particular how much of the scenarios were based on was technical information and how much was talking to people? AusNet explained method resulted from qualitative workshops as well as quantitative methods and referred the member to the [report](#) for more detail.

Another member added more detail about the qualitative method, spoke highly of the study, and encouraged others to read the full report. A third member asked about the geographic location of the sample. AusNet indicated that they would confirm this information and report back with the answer. There was also a question around the progress on the final stage of the DEF project, which is focused on how the learnings are used in demand forecasting. AusNet took on an action to provide more context about that.

- A member asked for clarification of the Open Energy Networks project, and how it is linked to the Distribution System Operator (DSO) project discussed a few years ago by AusNet and the industry. The member asked how we find out status update on this project. AusNet responded that the member can find information online (via the Energy Networks Australia website). However, later the same member stated that the information on the ENA website was dated only up to 2020 and asked where they could find more information. AusNet took on an action to provide more information on this project to IAC.
- Another member indicated that they would like to catch up on reading about these reports and if AusNet could share the links. The member also indicated they are interested in machine learning and early fault detections and asked if these innovations are likely to lead to increased or decreased replacement, as it has led to increased replacement in gas networks. They added that it is positive to detect faults and asset replacement but it's also important to understand the outcomes as well. AusNet agreed to update the AusNet website to share more information on projects listed on slide 17.

Item 3 | Innovation update – Connections Portal

AusNet's Sonja Lekovic provided background information on the Connections Portal and advised that the portal is now available to third parties, communities, people working on a project who wish to access low voltage data to assist them in their planning and decision making. AusNet explained the Portal offers considerable improvement in terms of sharing data, which used to occur on an ad hoc basis. Interested third parties need to register for the portal and sign a contract not to redistribute the data. AusNet shared examples of how data is presented to users via the Portal.

Discussion

- Members commended AusNet on the Portal and the availability of data, stating it would be really helpful to communities. The member also expected that over time we will identify refinements. Members asked if there are criteria who can register. AusNet advised there are criteria but generally anyone with a project (community groups, developers, research groups, universities) or parties we are expecting a project with rather than anyone who is interested. Another member indicated there is a need to sign a data licencing agreement and specify the location you will be looking at. AusNet agreed to share specific criteria with IAC members and later confirmed that the Portal is not available at this stage not for an individual community member. A member confirmed that the data is provided to the distribution sub-station level (about 10 customers) and confirmed that due to privacy requirements users won't be able to identify individual customer data.
- A member asked if the portal is available to individual customers who are starting the connections process and have to consider the cost of the connection e.g., farmers. They asked if there is an opportunity for those customers to use the portal to have a better understanding of the connection cost. AusNet highlighted at present the portal is not intended for that purpose, but it may evolve that way (particularly for larger customers). AusNet also highlighted the portal is free to use.
- Another member asked if the Portal is that a vendor product and a member clarified it is the Rosetta portal. They explained that the Portal may be slow and long because it downloads so much data from Rosetta. The same member then asked which system holds the 'source of truth' and asked if AusNet will we publish constraints? Another member acknowledged that the Portal obtains data from multiple sources, to get the site live. As such it is not the 'source of truth' but is a good starting point. They suggested that AusNet could be clearer about the limitations and how to interpret the data, to prevent confusion among users. They gave examples of some inconsistencies they had found. Another member noted that they can understand the demand for this data from community groups, and that an indirect benefit is people highlighting data gaps or anomalies. They commented that making the commitment to review is better than waiting for it to be perfect. AusNet responded that the launch is an important milestone but the Portal will continue to evolve over time.

Item 4 | IAC Co-design workshop – post-workshop & next steps

AusNet's Michaela Jackson provided a brief overview of work undertaken since the IAC Co-design Workshop in May, advised that AusNet proposes proceeding with the project 'Investigating the implications of electrification on households experiencing vulnerability' but wished to gain the IAC's endorsement before proceeding. IAC members were asked if they endorsed this proposal. Several members agreed while one member initially indicated they are supportive in principle but had not yet had the chance to read the proposal or materials. This member indicated it was important that the project draws on other research happening in this space. During subsequent discussion the member gave their endorsement and expressed interest in being involved. AusNet flagged that criteria for establishing vulnerability in this context and the name of the project were to be clarified.

AusNet's Ana Erceg explained next steps (outlined on slide 25), including working through criteria from both customer and network considerations, high level thinking in terms of the project scope (outlined on slide 26), a desire to partner with other stakeholders as part of the project, and committing to a business case (slide 28). Ana referred to a second proposal that was submitted and discussed during the Co-design Workshop about low-voltage monitoring and usage cases. She added that AusNet determined they can use existing resources (smart monitors available via the Edge Project) to change modelling and implement this proposal as well (i.e., both the two projects will be pursued but will stay separate).

Discussion

- Discussions included different ways that vulnerability could be established (for the purpose of the project) and suggestions were made whether AusNet could work with DHS or retailers (using regular energy concessions rather than rates concessions). DEECA was later by another member as a potential partner. A member asked if they could see our electrification model, and with DEECA, critique each others' models, adding that reducing peak demand is key for this project. The need to determine locations for and size of the pilot were also raised.
- That there are several quality reports that would be relevant to this study was noted and members were asked to share helpful reports they were aware of with AusNet to assist with planning. Members were also advised that there is a meeting next week with the 3 IAC members who suggested the project. Other interested members should contact Michaela and advise they would like to join in. A member also suggested that AusNet should bring this project to Future Networks Panel as well.

Item 5 | Tariff trial update

AusNet's Edwin Chan provided a progress update for the tariff trials AusNet is undertaking. Milestones reached include informing the AER our intention to conduct tariff trials from 1 July 23, incorporating trial tariffs and set prices for each as part of the annual pricing proposal process; Ausnet is now starting to implement the tariff trials through its BAU systems. Communication and marketing materials to support the trials will also be published in coming weeks to raise awareness and understanding of the trials among stakeholders.

Discussion

- A member asked if the tariff structures for these tariffs are published on the AusNet? AusNet responded that these are published on Australian Energy Regulator (AER) website and on the AusNet website within its Annual Pricing Proposal. AusNet also offered to set up a link to the tariff trial notification.
- Another member asked if the EV Dynamic tariff is a solar sponge tariff. AusNet confirmed it is and noted that the intent of CPD Flex tariff is to see how customers respond to excess solar generation that we see in our network, and whether excess solar can be absorbed. The member sought confirmation that these trials are for people with EVs, which AusNet also confirmed. AusNet advised that the learnings from this trial might be expanded to customers without EVs in future.
- Another member asked how they learn more about future trials, for example community battery tariffs for next year? Edwin advised that he is happy to provide an update and suggested an agenda item at next meeting on July 2024 tariff trial ideas, including community batteries. AusNet's Ana Erceg confirmed that they were also planning to present on tariff trials at the next IAC meeting.

Other business and close

- A member indicated that they had previously spoken with Michaela Jackson about obtaining copies of slide decks associated with the EDPR Engagement panels meetings. Michaela agreed to follow-up on this request.
- Sonja Lekovic provided a summary of action items resulting from the meeting, after which members were thanked for their time and the meeting closed.

Action	Assigned to	Status	Due
AusNet to provide information on how NMs and customer numbers relate and how AusNet takes the differences into account in their modelling.	AusNet – Ana Erceg		IAC #6
AusNet to consider how IAC fits into the current EDPR engagement and recruiting more customer advocates.	AusNet Research & Engagement Team	In progress	IAC #6
IAC members to share of possible nominees who could be invited to join.	IAC members	In progress	29 Sept
AusNet to confirm the geographic location of the sample that informed the DEF research project and report back, and provide an update on the final stage of the DEF project.	AusNet – Jade Park	In progress	30 June
AusNet to provide more information on the Open Networks project to IAC and update the web links to innovation projects listed on slide 17.	AusNet – Ana Erceg		30 June
AusNet agreed to share specific criteria for accessing the Connections Portal with IAC members.	AusNet – Sonja Lekovic		30 June
AusNet to contact retailers and seek information on energy concessions to assist with new project 'Understanding impacts of electrification on households experiencing vulnerability'.	AusNet – Ana Erceg		30 July
Other interested members to contact Michaela and advise they would like to join meeting on 'Understanding impacts of electrification on households experiencing vulnerability'.	IAC members		19 June
AusNet to share information on the 'Understanding impacts of electrification on households experiencing vulnerability' project with Future Networks panel members.	AusNet Research & Engagement Team		30 June
AusNet to provide link to tariff trial information on their website.	AusNet – Edwin Chan		30 July
AusNet to follow up with member regarding slides or summaries from EDPR 2026-31 Engagement Panel meetings.	AusNet – Michaela Jackson	Complete	
Present on tariff trials at the next IAC meeting.	Ausnet – Edwin Chan		IAC #6

Addendum

‘Investigating the implications of electrification on households experiencing vulnerability’

Tuesday 20 June

1.15pm - 2.00pm

Microsoft Teams

Attendees:

Heather Smith, *Coalition for Community Energy*
Dean Lombard, *Independent panellist*
Scott McKenry, *Eastern Alliance for Greenhouse Action*
Emma Chessell, *Brotherhood of Saint Laurance*

AusNet representatives:

Charlotte Eddy,
Sonja Lekovic, *Regulatory Policy Manager (Chair)*
Ana Erceg, *Manager, Future Networks Program*
Asal Ahmadlou, *Future Networks Engineer*
Michaela Jackson, *Engagement Specialist*

The above IAC members and AusNet staff met to discuss the project ‘Investigating the implications of electrification on households experiencing vulnerability’.

IAC members were advised that the meeting would take place during IAC Meeting #5. Interested members were advised to contact Michaela and indicate they would like to join in. Agreed items and actions arising from this meeting are outlined below.

Agreed items and actions:

- AusNet to provide monthly updates on the project to IAC members, which will include requests for input, feedback and ideas via a digital platform such as Padlet. AusNet particularly welcomes feedback on areas where members have expertise, such as seeking advice from IAC members to contribute suggestions for a definition of vulnerability and partners we can work with in this and the energy efficiency space.
- AusNet agreed to provide more details on the project scope at the next IAC meeting, in October.
- In keeping with the Terms of Reference, it was agreed that IAC will be the group with which AusNet will liaise on this project i.e., a separate sub-committee (or similar) for this project will not be established.
- AusNet welcomes IAC members - including those present at the meeting - sharing ideas, relevant resources such as reports, and providing advice or suggestions. AusNet asks members to please ‘batch’ questions or suggestions into fewer emails and direct these to engagement@ausnetservices.com.au as this will help us manage email traffic across teams.
- During the meeting AusNet advised that the decision to proceed with the project ‘Understanding the implications of electrification on households experiencing vulnerability’ will be communicated in the IAC Meeting #5 minutes, which will be published via the Community Hub website. As such AusNet is happy for IAC members to share the news with their networks.
- This project will be underpinned by a lot of data and analysis, some of which will be the type of data and analysis networks may not have captured in the past. Understandably there is keen interest by the members to ensure the analysis is comprehensive, based on accurate data, and the learnings are captured appropriately. However, it may not be possible for AusNet to share all the data and modelling with IAC members, due to privacy issue or practicality around sharing of large data sets. It was agreed AusNet will share data with the members where possible and practical, and in cases where that may not be the case, AusNet will provide information to IAC, and seek feedback on, modelling approach and assumptions undertaken in the modelling.