

Agenda & Minutes

Innovation Advisory Committee | Meeting #3

Tuesday 11 October

10.00am - 12.00 noon

AusNet Services, Southbank / Microsoft Teams

Attendees:

Andy Dickinson, Jemena

David Bryant, Brotherhood of Saint Laurence

Emma Chessell, Climate Works

Emily Perrin, Clean Energy Council

Heather Smith, Coalition for Community Energy

Greg Hannan, Citipower, Powercor & United Energy

Scott McKenry, EAGA (TBC)

Emma Chessell, Climate Works (TBC)

Tom Bakker, Aurecon

Charlotte Eddy, AusNet (Chair)

John Theunissen, AusNet

Rod Jones, AusNet

Fran Duiker, AusNet

Gaurav Sharma, Ausnet

Ana Erceg, AusNet

Champi Elwela, AusNet

Lucy Holder, AusNet

Michaela Jackson, AusNet

Apologies/ Declined:

Dean Lombard, Independent panellist

Greg Camm, EDPR 2021-26 Customer Forum

Prof. Luis (Nando) Ochoa Pizzali, University of Melbourne

Item	Time	Topic	For	Presenter
	10.00am	Welcome, background customer moment	Context Information	Charlotte Eddy
1	10.15am	Innovation pipeline	Information & Discussion	Ana Erceg
2	10.20am	Operationalising the flexible exports trial	Information & Discussion	Ana Erceg
3	10.40am	Project Edge	Information & Discussion	John Theunissen
	11.10am	Break		

4	11.15am	Whiteboard exercise (from Meeting #2)	Information & Discussion	Lucy Holder
5	11.25am	Community energy a) information provision to community groups b) community energy resilience projects	Information & Discussion	Champi Elwela
6	11.35am	Innovation in the EDPR	Information & Discussion	Charlotte Eddy/ Lucy Holder
	11.40am	Any other business and close		Charlotte Eddy

Welcome, background and customer moment

Charlotte Eddy, IAC Chair, opened the meeting with an overview of the agenda for the meeting. Charlotte welcomed Emily Perrin who has replaced Darren Gladman from Clean Energy Council. Charlotte also acknowledged Dean Lombard, who has left Renew but is staying on as an independent panellist, and Professor Nando Pizzali and Greg Camm as apologies for this meeting.

Charlotte reviewed actions from our Meeting #2 (Thursday 9 June, 2022) noting that most were either completed or would be discussed in today's meeting. One action is being carried over to the next meeting.

Charlotte then presented a customer moment on the topic of resilience and the recent 'willingness to pay' research. It was noted that these findings will be discussed as part of upcoming EDPR engagement and additional research will be conducted around willingness to pay.

Discussion

A member suggested AusNet and they discuss work happening in Venus Bay on community energy resilience as there would likely be relevant insights they could share, such as around critical loads. AusNet agreed to discuss out-of-session.

Another member asked how the 'willingness to pay' research dovetails with the resilience grants program ([NPA Risk and Resilience Grants Program](#)) and if there are any findings that point to areas or communities that would benefit or add value in coming forward to contribute. AusNet confirmed that, yes, this research is aligned. As AusNet gets into next stage of analysis we can start to draw our specific dimensions of each community and solutions. That agenda item 5 also relates to this topic was noted.

A member emphasised how important telecommunications is during outages, and asked if communities will receive regulated service delivery from telecommunications providers. AusNet said it has been speaking with telecommunications companies following these outages in terms of event preparation, and offered follow-up conversations on this to any interested member/s.

Item 1 | Innovation pipeline

Ana Erceg provided an update on the pipeline of proposed innovation fund projects, including that the project to develop an open network data platform to improve customer service (large DER customers) has been brought forward to FY24-25 from FY26.

This presentation continued to a more detailed look at operationalising flexible exports trial (Item 2).

Item 2 | Operationalising the flexible exports trial

Ana Erceg provided an update on operationalising the flexible exports trial, including background to the business case, project goals and objectives, as well as a summary of the customer journey. Lessons learned as a result of the trial were also shared.

Members raised the following topics, which were discussed during this session:

- A member commended AusNet on their work and asked how many customers are involved in the trial. AusNet responded that there were approximately 100 customers involved, noting challenges in recruiting participants owing to the narrow eligibility criteria for the trial. Interactions with customers mainly occurred through selected installers who we knew were well qualified and able to present solution to customers.
- The member also asked AusNet if they could share any anecdotes or customer reactions to explaining what is involved, noting that they have seen research that suggests some people who invest in solar are hesitant to share these insights with others. AusNet responded noting the complexities and learnings, including the need to have information that a customer can understand and is eager to adopt. Attendees were advised that a separate piece of work has been conducted by a third party to uncover findings from customer experience and installers. AusNet offered to share relevant content.
- A question was asked about how AusNet is identifying network constraints, and noted the inter-relationship between identifying and communicating about networking constraints. AusNet responded that this will be discussed further in Item 5 on today's agenda. AusNet also explained that in the context of flexible exports it has an analytic tool that helps and comprises front- and backend components that determine hosting capacity for customer energy resources. There is also work underway to enable more accurate estimations using smart meter data. AusNet advised that the initial estimate can be somewhat conservative and acknowledged that this can be a point of frustration.
- A follow-up question was asked regarding what AusNet controls for and whether monitoring is put on transformers – what's the relationship between controls and dynamic hosting? AusNet responded that if customers enter a flexible export arrangement AusNet will provide a dynamic export limit and the inverter needs to stay within those boundaries. Determining that dynamic limit means operationalising an algorithm on a real-time basis across the day, and then providing a dynamic export limit signal. Additional assets do not have to be deployed across the network, but transformer monitoring is part of Project Edge (Agenda Item 3) as they improve accuracy.
- The question was asked whether AusNet is so far progressed in its solution for flexible exports that it has cut out more solutions? Is AusNet still open to other solutions for better customer value and better value for AusNet? AusNet responded the participant on asking this question and noted that this provides a good segue into work being done as part of Project Edge. AusNet commented that there are going to be different approaches from different jurisdictions across Australia but many of them are based on analytics and local measurements come into play. AusNet does not believe it has gone too far down a certain path and is investigating a range of options through project trials.
- An attendee commented that they are curious about the IEEE30.5 standard, technological requirements and comms adaptors, and what the costs were. AusNet offered to follow-up via email but noted there is a known cost for the 'box' that has to be installed with flexible exports, but noted that an aggregator is not always needed.

Item 3 | Project Edge

John Theunissen spoke to attendees about Project Edge, an ARENA-funded research project trialling a two-sided DER marketplace and which will provide insights for the NEM 2025. John's presentation outlined the project timeline, stakeholder engagement, as well as core functions and key insights gained.

During discussion it was noted that the project is not just a trial for AusNet but will feed into our DER activities including operationalising local services, EV charging, the full spectrum of two-sided dynamic operating envelopes.

A member thanked John for the presentation and advised they would like to review the information in more detail after the meeting. AusNet responded indicating they would distribute a variety of follow-up links and documents about Project Edge, including methods.

Item 4 | Whiteboard exercise

Lucy Holder presented a recap of the outputs from a brainstorming session in Meeting #2, where members helped AusNet define what customers want from the energy transition. Members were then asked to help define and prioritise network challenges posed by the energy transition. Lucy explained that these points will be used to help determine priorities and allocate remaining innovation funds for next EDPR, in the February 2023 IAC meeting.

Attendees were asked to add comments to the [Miro](#) board, noting that some members who were apologies for today's meeting had already shared their comments.

At the end of this exercise a member added further explanation to their post, remarking that tentative steps were being taken around hosting capacity and about the need for conversations about moving energy loads - at what point or in which conditions, does the network struggle because of moving too much load? Building capacity is not a cheap solution. By this point the community wants to have local solutions. In the interests of time, AusNet advised that the Miro board would stay active after the session and members were encouraged share additional contributions and notes there.

Item 5 | Community Energy

AusNet noted that the topic of community energy was raised in the last meeting, and the question asked whether networks are not incentivised to look hard at the feasibility of non-network solutions. As a result, Ausnet wanted to share some of the non-network solutions that are being investigated. Champi Elwela (Manager, Engineering and Program Management) presented on two components: a) Community Energy Feasibility Studies and b) Information Provision to Community Groups.

A member commented that community energy is not just about non-network projects as a separate investment but involves a fundamental question about when do energy companies restructure large investments to accommodate a future vision (rather than being an add on).

Regarding the Community Energy Feasibility Study, which was conducted in Gembrook, the question was asked whether guaranteed services levels (GSL) and STPIS sufficiently reflected the impact of a longer-term outage. AusNet responded that major event days are excluded from the STPIS but GSLs now includes a payment of \$90 per day for major event days but are intended to act as compensation for poor service, rather than an incentive for improving particular aspects.

. Another member commented that GSL and STPIS doesn't convey the value of customer reliability and that the way customer reliability is priced across the network is averaged, which presents challenges – for example differentiating between customers who are poorly served and those who aren't. HA member asked AusNet to confirm that there was no planned augmentation in Gembrook, which AusNet confirmed. AusNet also commented that Gembrook is an interesting case – as it highlighted how it is difficult to make a strong business case in an area that doesn't have significant network constraints.

Responding to a question about what other information AusNet can share to help members better understand the analysis, AusNet confirmed that some additional information would be available after it was shared with DELWP. AusNet offered to speak further with this member on this topic.

Regarding requests for network data, and how members of the community might get data from AusNet within a few weeks' time, AusNet advised that its website is being updated with this information in the next few days, and a brochure is also being produced.

Item 6 | Innovation in the EDPR

Lucy Holder briefly discussed engagement in next EDPR, noting that it is expected that innovation will be raised as a key priority. AusNet is keen to explore with members how to best use the IAC and whether the IAC can evolve to become the innovation sub-panel as part of the next EDPR process.

Questions were raised about whether the frequency and duration of IAC meetings would change if the IAC was to become an innovation sub-panel. AusNet advised that potentially meetings would be slightly longer, or occur quarterly rather than three times per year, but a large increase in time commitment was not expected.

Another member commented they wanted to genuinely engage in a meaningful way, but is unsure whether they can make that time commitment. It was agreed to share and discuss more detailed requirements with the group at the next meeting (after the EDPR Co-design Workshop).

Other business and close

IAC members were thanked for their time and input in the session. AusNet advised that members would be provided with more information on the EDPR and the proposed innovation sub-panel.

AusNet flagged that the next Innovation Advisory Committee Meeting will be held in February 2023. The meeting was then closed.

Actions			
Action	Assigned to	Status	Due
AusNet to contact the relevant member to discuss work underway in Venus Bay.	CEI	Complete	End of December
AusNet to contact relevant member to discuss telecommunications is during outages.	CEd, FD		End of December
AusNet to share relevant third-party research about customer experience and flexible exports.	JT, AE		Next meeting
AusNet responded indicating they would distribute a variety of follow-up links and documents about Project Edge, including methods.	JT		With minutes
AusNet to share additional information on Gembrook Community Energy Feasibility Study after it is shared with DELWP.	CEI		TBC
Share and discuss more detailed requirements about an Innovation sub-panel with the group after the EDPR Co-design Workshop.	LH		Feb 2023 meeting