



Customer Experience Panel

Meeting #6 | Summary Notes

Details	Members	AusNet Staff	Observers
10.00am-12.00pm Wednesday 22 November 2023 Online (MS Teams) Chair: Fran Duiker Secretariat: AusNet	Emily Peel John Mumford Mark Grenning Jeff Nottle Piang Lilian Tony Robinson Apologies: Jonathan Kneebone	Fran Duiker Charlotte Eddy Lucy Holder Sonja Lekovic Jennifer Turner Rob Ball Michaela Jackson Eliza Cochrane Emma Ferrie	Rebecca Love (AusNet)

Focus Question	Objective of the meeting	Key outcomes	Next meeting objectives
Customer Experience FQ2: How might we How might we minimise the adverse impacts of outages on customers?	Collaborate on improvements to the unplanned outage customer experience, with a focus on outage communication and opportunities for improvement.	- General consensus that AusNet's current approach regarding delineation of responsibilities is appropriate and customer insights presented were accurate. - There was some support for changes to the CSIS to focus on communications, and desire to explore options in more detail in 2024. - Broad support for all ideas for further unplanned outage communication enhancements, as generated in an internal design workshop.	[As needed] Consult on proposed expenditure to improve planned and unplanned outage customer experience.

Item	Time	Topic	Lead/s
Part 1	10.00am – 10.05am	Welcome, agenda & action items	Fran Duiker
Part 2	10.05am – 10.15am	Panel member case study: Customer experience with unplanned outage	John Mumford
Part 3	10.15am – 10.45am	Unplanned outage context: Background, AusNet's approach, current experience of unplanned outages.	Eliza Cockrane & Sonja Lekovic
Part 4	10.45am – 11.15am	Communication about unplanned outages: Improvements to unplanned outage communications, demonstration of Outage Tracker improvements and CRM.	Rob Ball
	11.15am – 11.20pm	Break	
Part 5	11.20 – 11.50am	Looking ahead Options for 2026-31	Jennifer Turner
Part 6	11.50am - 12.00pm	Other matters & close	Charlotte Eddy

Part 1: Welcome, agenda and action items

Topics	Discussion points
Actions	- AusNet's General Manager Strategic Planning and Customer, Fran Duiker, welcomed panel members to the meeting and gave an Acknowledgement of Country. - Actions and the meeting agenda were taken as read and noting that two actions from past meetings were to be addressed in today's meeting.

Part 2: Panel member case study

Topics	Discussion points
Customer experience with unplanned outage	A panel member presented a case study of their experience with a 16-hour unplanned outage. He criticised AusNet for a lack of communication and delayed updates, causing distress to customers. The member suggested improvements including empathy training for call centre staff. Fran thanked the member for his honest account, even though some details were uncomfortable for AusNet to hear. Discussion - Discussion included whether repair crews work overnight, how outages are diagnosed, and electricity restored, how Estimated Times of Response (ETR) are calculated and when automated SMS notifications are sent to customers. - Responding to member questions, Fran Duiker clarified that while AusNet acknowledges the potential disruption of SMS messages to customers during the night, automated messages are sent then. She added that crews can work overnight but safety is key. Fault restoration depends on network-wide considerations, with algorithms determining and adapting Estimated Time of Response (ETR) based on circumstances. - Fran Duiker took on notice to provide more information on how AusNet responds to faults, to minimise length of unplanned outages.

Part 3: Unplanned outage context

Topics	Discussion points
Background, AusNet's approach, current experience of unplanned outages	AusNet's Fran Duiker reminded participants that the scope of today's discussion was customer experience during unplanned outages. AusNet's Customer Optimisation Manager, Jennifer Turner, recapped activities completed and underway to enhance customer experience during unplanned outages, and additional activities AusNet is considering. She outlined AusNet's progress to address known pain points for customers during unplanned outages and responsibilities of different stakeholders when it came to outages. Discussion • In response to the reflection questions (slide 34), participants indicated that AusNet's approach should focus on improving communication, accuracy, and visibility in outage management (Q1). Some sought further information on the Customer Relationship Management platform (CRM) and inclusion of both residential and commercial and industrial customer data in the customer satisfaction (C-SAT) survey results. - A panel member suggested that maintenance (or lack thereof) of private service lines may impact some network customers, particularly during storms. AusNet acknowledged the idea and the suggestion that Ausgrid could provide more information on their successful initiative to address this issue. AusNet took this on notice. - Panel members commended AusNet for improvements to customer experience during unplanned outages it had made since the last EDPR. Whether there was room for more tailored approach, considering factors such as geography or exceptional vulnerabilities like life support users, was raised. AusNet's Sonja Lekovic confirmed AusNet does vary responses for different regions but was uncertain about the extent communication is specifically targeted. Another member supported AusNet's customer research, which captured customer concerns such as food going off and refrigeration during unplanned outages. - A member stated the importance of improving the accuracy of the ETR, and perhaps considering providing a range to customers, rather than an exact number. AusNet to provide advice if this is possible within current obligations. It was also suggested more communications about updated ETRs is needed. • It was also mentioned that with more technological options in the future, customers may be able to protect themselves better from an outage, and there may be more of a role for customers to use technology to minimise impact of outages. Overall, there was consensus from panel members that AusNet's current approach regarding delineation of responsibilities is appropriate, and that customer insights presented were accurate (Q2 & 3). Discussion was wide-ranging and included: - whether there would be more opportunities for customers to mitigate outages, including especially by providing back-up power for life support equipment (as majority don't have that at present). - the need for consistent efforts with the Essential Services Commission to provide support to life support customers during extended outages was acknowledged. - AusNet's requirement to provide an ETR, pros and cons of providing a specific time or a time range, and challenges in providing an accurate ETR soon after an outage is identified.

- On the Padlet, there was feedback on how difficult it is for customers to log an outage, including having to go through a few steps to log it with AusNet (including at times having to type in the NMI) and having to do checks to see if it's not on the customer side first. It was suggested AusNet should consider allowing customers to log an outage first, and then investigating later if on customers side (as in most cases it is not on the customer side).

Part 4: Communication about unplanned outages

Topics	Discussion points
Improvements to unplanned outage communications, demonstration of Outage Tracker improvements and CRM.	AusNet's Jen Turner provided a live demonstration of enhancements to the Outage Tracker and AusNet website, and the CRM. Enhancements include functionality that enables the customer service team to see which customers are being affected, including life support customers, that will help team members to answer questions more effectively. Discussion - In response to the discussion questions, panel members indicated a preference for SMS over emails but stressed that information must be accurate to be helpful. An example SMS was shared by a panel member who felt confused about what impact there may be on supply during the 19 days. Also, via Padlet, a panel member commented that AusNet seems quite advanced in its unplanned outage communication, compared to other Distribution Businesses (DBs). - Responding to a panel member's question, Jen Turner confirmed that CRM enhancements enable more than one account holder to receive notifications, if this is their preference. - Two panel members responded to AusNet's offer of a more detailed demonstration of the platforms and recent enhancements. - On the Padlet, it was suggested AusNet's current approach to unplanned outage communications seems well advanced compared to other DBs. However, further improvements have been suggested including improving the speed of the time it takes to advise customers of an outage; providing all available information via all available channels; keeping customers updated during longer outages. days. AusNet txt. "Hi this is AusNet, your electricity distributor. Just a quick reminder that we're carrying out works at the Wonthaggi REFCL between Monday 30 October to Saturday 18 Nov. Any questions call 1300 360 795 or email customersupport@ausnetservices.com.au"

Part 4: Looking ahead | Options for 2026-31

Topics	Discussion points
Options for the next regulatory period, including potential updates to the CSIS	AusNet Regulatory Economist, Eliza Cochrane, shared further improvements AusNet could make in the next regulatory period (2026-31) through investment programs, digital upgrades or specific customer commitments. Eliza also spoke about communications enhancements that could be adopted and shared several ideas that had been generated through a design workshop. Eliza also highlighted potential options to consider for updates to the CSIS, including potentially re-focusing on the CSIS on communication experience only (versus experience of the whole outage) and potentially updating some of the service level metrics in the Customer Service Incentive Scheme (CSIS). Discussion Participants were broadly supportive of all the ideas resulting from the design workshop (slide 49). Among these, participants indicated they would prioritise

further optionality in communication, communication to culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) customers and showing customers the priority of job where hazards are flagged – but only for consideration outside of major events.

- On the Padlet, it was indicated that all the proposed improvements should be priorities but some of these should become BAU (rather than earmarked for the next regulatory period). There was also explicit support for ability to contact multiple numbers/contact at a site (e.g., not just the account holder).
- There was no clear consensus on CSIS improvements for unplanned outages in 2026-31. There was some support for the CSIS to focus on communications, and some support for further assessment of options 1, 2 and 3, but it was highlighted whichever options is progressed the metrics need to be stretch targets.
- It was highlighted in the discussion and the Padlet that in some jurisdictions there is less support for the CSIS in general, as business should be making customer experience progress without financial reward. It was also highlighted that when a metric is removed, like the speed of phone answering, the level of that service may drop off.
- Eliza advised the group that AusNet would come back next year to present plans for 2026-31 based on what we have heard today regarding CSIS and further improvements.

Part 5: Other matters & close

Topics	Discussion points
Other matters	• A panel member shared an example of outage communication they had seen from Telstra. They thought it interesting the way Telstra was reacting during severe weather e.g., more data, roaming. • Via Padlet another member indicated they would like the AusNet website to list a history of all unplanned (and planned) outages including the duration and the cause. They shared an example of a recent outage experience and highlighted a lack of information, inadequate response from the call centre, an a desire for information on the Outage Tracker to be updated more quickly.
Close	• Fran Duiker thanked panel members for their contributions and spoke about plans for early 2024, including presenting draft elements of the EDPR 2026-31 proposal and discussing potential investments, customer commitments, and CSIS design.

Action items			
Action	Assigned to	Status	Due date
AusNet to provide more information on how AusNet responds to faults, to minimise length of unplanned outages.	Jen Turner	To start	Mar '24
AusNet to provide information around rectification rates of private poles today, and to discuss with AusGrid their initiatives around the management of private poles, in relation to managing faults/outages	Reg team	To start	TBC
AusNet to consider whether including a range in the ETR, rather than an exact value, is withing regulated requirements	Reg team	To start	Mar '24

AusNet to present draft inclusions for the EDPR 2026-31 proposal based on what we have heard today regarding CSIS and further improvements.	Reg Team	In progress	Mar '24
AusNet's Jen Turner to organise and provide a more detailed demonstration of the CRM to interested panel members. Other panel members who are interested in a demo of the Outage Tracker or CRM to advise enagement@ausnetservices.com.au	Jen Turner	In progress	29 Feb '24

*SP&C Team – Strategic Planning & Customer Team

^ R&E Team – Research and Engagement Team

Reg Team – Regulation Team