

Agenda & Minutes

Innovation Advisory Committee | Meeting #13

14 November 2025

Attendees:

Dean Lombard, *Energesis*
 Damian Sullivan, *BSL*
 Emma Chessell, *Independent*
 Jo Witters, *Independent*
 Lara Kruk, *Independent*
 Maxime Di Petta, *Clean Energy Council*
 Scott McKenry, *Eastern Alliance for Greenhouse Action*

Apologies:

David Bryant, *BSL*
 Isabella Powell, *Jemena*
 Nando Ochoa Pizzali, *University of Melbourne*
 Theodora Karastergiou, *Jemena*

AusNet representatives:

Charlotte Eddy, *General Manager Strategy and Regulation (Distribution)*
 Ana Erceg, *Manager, Grid Evolution*
 Lucy Holder, *Manager Customer Engagement*
 Asal Ahmadi, *Future Network Engineer*
 Vince Frandina, *Lead Electrification Engineer*
 Eliza Cochrane, *Senior Policy Advisor*
 Jo Kaptein, *Community Energy Engagement Advisor*
 Kyle Olsen, *Senior Engagement Specialist*
 Fin Crantock, *Resilience Project Engineer*
 Lachlan Webb, *LV Network Engineer*
 Lia Mavrias, *Engagement Specialist*

Item	Time	Topic	Presenter
	10:00am (5 mins)	Welcome Incl. responding to actions from meeting #12	Charlotte Eddy
1	10:05am (10 mins)	Innovation pipeline Overview and update for each project	Ana Erceg
2	10:15am (15 mins)	ElectriFAIRcation update	Asal Ahmadi & Vince Frandina
3	10:30am (30 mins)	GridView update and strategy	Vince Frandina & Jo Kaptein
4	10:55am (15 mins)	Vehicle-to-grid progress	Lachlan Webb
5	11:10am (15 mins)	EDPR 2026-31 Innovation	Eliza Cochrane
	11:25am (5 mins)	Other business and close	Charlotte Eddy

Welcome & open

AusNet's Charlotte Eddy opened the meeting with an Acknowledgement of Country, welcomed participants then outlined the meeting purpose and agenda.

Item 1 | Innovation pipeline – Overview and update of pipeline

AusNet's Ana Erceg updated members on the innovation pipeline, and projects funded by the Demand Management Innovation Allowance (DMIA).

Discussion included:

- The IAC asked whether the Australian Energy Regulator's draft decision pushing back on community support hub batteries would have implications for the telecommunications support battery project. AusNet confirmed they have picked two different sites for this project and have applied for separate telecommunication innovation funding streams, which would cover a majority of the costs for this project.

Item 2 | ElectriFAIRcation update

AusNet's Asal Ahmadlou and Vince Frandina provided an update on the ElectriFAIRcation project, including a study with homes post-electrification. Findings covered energy consumption, cost, bill impacts and general observations.

Discussion included:

- Dean declared his potential conflict of interest as an IAC member as he would be working with University of Melbourne on the voice of customer research as part of this project. AusNet confirmed they did not see a conflict with this arrangement, no other IAC members saw a conflict with this arrangement.
- This research is a partnership between University of Melbourne and the Gippsland Climate Change Network focusing on how people feel about electrification and the customer journey. There are currently interviews underway with insights due to be released in March 2026.
- Some initial insights were noted including:
 - The importance of local engagement agents in towns/regions
 - There is a gradual shift in energy literacy
 - Older people are more resistant to change as they are comfortable with the setup they already have.
- AusNet confirmed that the research interviews will include participants who declined electrification, those initially reluctant, and those who agreed immediately. This approach has been taken so a diverse range of perspectives to understand varying levels of interest and identify key barriers.
- The recent engagement strategy to set up a mobile coffee van in a local street to engage with households directly received positive results, with 10 interested households flagged.
- It was noted that it is difficult to engage with those who may have trust issues and don't want to be engaged. AusNet confirmed they work in partnership with trusted local parties such as the Morwell Community House to engage more effectively within the community.
- AusNet confirmed the bill impact analysis pre-and-post electrification was based on the Victorian Default Offer to keep an accurate baseline between periods as each customer may have different rates depending on the retailer they are with.
- An IAC member noted that peak demands would need to be managed with more electrification, so expensive upgrades to the network are not required. AusNet confirmed the project is being delivered in areas where the network is stable and demand management models can be effectively run. Now that homes have started to electrify, a longer period (at least all 4 seasons) of usage data and demand would

need to be captured to begin to understand the effects on the network and peak demands of electrification.

Item 3 | GridView update and strategy

AusNet's Vince Frandina and Jo Kaptein updated the IAC on the new strategy and roadmap for GridView – AusNet's interactive public map of the electricity distribution network, designed to help community energy groups, councils and organisations identify and explore opportunities for local energy projects.

The update included the strategic objectives for GridView, current challenges and opportunities for the platform, recent usability enhancements and engagement events. Jo also introduced the GridView Improvement Group (GIG), a new group being set up to guide the development of GridView.

Discussion included:

- AusNet confirmed the time commitment for the GIG would be roughly two online meetings a year for roughly one hour. IAC members expressed interest in joining the group and sharing communications with their networks.
- AusNet confirmed that currently the data shown through GridView is only from network metering, with data being updated roughly every 3 months.

Item 4 | Vehicle-to-grid progress

AusNet's Lachlan Webb provided an update on a vehicle-to-grid project, now known as vehicle-to-everything (V2X). The project is separated into 3 parts where AusNet will first seek to understand where there may be a higher penetration of Electric Vehicles, resulting in higher V2X adoption. Following this, a study to understand customer motivation to adopt this technology. The last stage of the project is to install bi-directional chargers and analyse impacts.

Discussion included:

- The IAC had an interest in the study findings on customer attitudes toward control and charging habits, particularly the ability to override control.
- The IAC noted a consideration of how motivation and habits are influenced by access to infrastructure (e.g., proximity to charging infrastructure or similar). Greater access may increase engagement and willingness to relinquish control, while limited access could impact trust and adoption behaviours.
- AusNet confirmed as part of the study they will seek to understand where customers are located (rural or urban), and if they would use their Electric Vehicle to charge their home during outages.
- AusNet noted that councils have shown positive interest in this project, with bi-directional chargers due to be installed by the end of the year – and findings to follow in the first half of 2026.

Item 5 | EDPR 2026-31 Innovation

AusNet's Eliza Cochrane gave an update on the innovation funding in AusNet's 2026-31 Electricity Distribution Price Review and the AER's draft decision. The current period innovation funding is \$7.5m and AusNet has proposed an uplift to \$15m for the next period.

The AER's draft decision was to approve a portion of that fund, with 2 of the 7 projects proposed considered to be appropriate to be funded through an innovation fund. AusNet confirmed it will accept this decision, with the 2 projects providing \$6.5m in funding for innovation.

Discussion included:

- AusNet confirmed that additional data and evidence is still required to be submitted for the AER's consideration for the 2 projects approved in the draft decision. The remaining 5 projects did not have enough data to warrant pushing back on the draft decision.
- AusNet confirmed there is still flexibility to use the \$6.5m to rescope the delivery of projects that are within the funding that has been approved through the draft decision.
- The IAC noted that they have been impressed with the projects that have been delivered with the \$7.5m funding in the current period, and that \$6.5m is still a good outcome for innovation projects.
- AusNet confirmed its approach will focus on delivering smaller projects within the scope of the larger projects approved in the draft decision. The team will continue working with the IAC to define priorities, scope initiatives, and capture key learnings.
- The IAC noted that there seems to be a tension within the AER process between engaging with customers and reflecting their preferences, and following regulatory processes (i.e. being rigid on projects meeting a cost-benefit analysis). An IAC member suggested that the IAC could put a submission to the AER that their approach reduces the ability for groups (such as the IAC) to effectively collaborate and provide feedback.

Other business & close

Charlotte Eddy noted this was the last IAC meeting for 2025, and that a poll will be sent to set meeting dates for 2026. Charlotte then closed the meeting.

Action items			
Agreed action	Assigned to	Status	Due date
No actions required from this meeting.			