

Minutes



SA Power Networks' Renewables Reference Group

Meeting Details

Organiser	Rebecca Bedirian
Date	9 March 2018
Time	09:30 – 12:00pm
Location	The Precinct Conference Centre

Attendance

Heather Smith	Changing Weather
Jenny Paradiso	Suntrix
John Herbst	Solar Advocate
Martin Cottrell	The Energy Project
Matthew Curnow	Conservation Council's Energy Standing Committee
Peter Scott	Royal Development Australia Whyalla & Eyre Peninsula
Wasim Saman	UniSA
Tina Maiese	Energy and Technical Regulation
Mike Swanston	AER Consumer Challenge Panel member

SA Power Networks	
David Stobbe (<i>Chair</i>)	Manager Customer Operations
Jess Vonthethoff	Manager Stakeholder Engagement
Wayne Lissner	Head of Regulation
Valli Morphett	Reset Consultant
James Bennett	Manager Regulation
Steve Jolly	Manager Customer Solutions
Andrew Haines	Network Manager – Strategic Projects
Rebecca Bedirian	Customer Consultation Lead
Jehad Ali	Manager Network Standards & Performance
Dana Rankine	Manager Customer Programs

Apologies

Dean Lombard	Alternative Technology Association
Mark Byrne	Total Environment Centre
Ben Lovell	Living Energy Solutions
Damian Edwards	CQ Partners
Quentin Roberts	EfficientSee
Richard Day	Department of the Premier and Cabinet
Simon McKay	Sol Energy

Business Arising

1. Welcome and apologies

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting of the SA Power Networks (SAPN) Renewables Reference Group (RRG) and apologies were noted.

2. Minutes and Actions

The minutes of the previous meeting dated 26 October 2017 were confirmed and accepted.

Actions from previous meetings were reviewed and updated as follows:

Meeting – 26 October				
No.	Action Description	Responsibility	Due Date	Status/update
1	SAPN Future Network Strategy – comments or feedback to M Vincent	All	Early 2018	Ongoing
2	D Stobbe to provide an update to members on the issue of embedded generation applications at the next meeting.	D Stobbe	January 2018	Closed
3	H Smith will circulate the latest Energy Lab report to members in due course and invite members to participate in this process.	H Smith	December 2017	Closed
4	J Vonthethoff to circulate to members the schedule of proposed dates for deep dive sessions on Reset, Future Network, Capex & Opex, Tariffs	J Vonthethoff	November 2017	Closed

3. Customer Projects Update

- D Rankine provided an overview of the Customer Programs team projects, in particular the Metering Contestability (MC) Project and the Website Redesign Project.
- Discussed the retailer staged approach with roll out, and it was raised that there is confusion as to who to contact regarding retailers.
- J Paradiso thanked SAPN for its efforts in facilitating the MC changes.
- It was also noted that the SAPN Customer Operations group are drafting a letter to the AEMC to highlight the issues that have arisen because of the MC changes.

Action: D Stobbe to liaise with Website Redesign Project team to get visibility of retailer contact details on the website.

4. Around the table

- The connection application process was raised by H Smith, wanting to know if there is anything that the Group can do to help streamline the process. A Haines gave some background information regarding applications, in particular that volumes have increased from 10-20 per year to approximately 50 per month, all of which are proceeding to construction phase. SAPN is doing a lot of work in the technical standards area and is developing a process document that is now at final review stage. There will be consultation with the Group when this is ready.
- H Smith asked if there is an opportunity to run a weekly “Ask me anything” session to create a forum for conversation and relationship building. J Ali explained that they are in the process of creating FAQ’s to help with understanding the changes to technical standards TS131.



Action: R Bedirian to arrange an offline group discussion around improvements to the connections process.

- There was discussion around the changes to TS131 – Inverter Management System – J Ali acknowledged that whilst they were trying to develop inverter standards due to inconsistencies, there wasn't enough consultation with the industry. Therefore, there will be a 6-month grace period during which time SAPN will run a consultation forum with those parties who wish to be involved.
- M Vincent acknowledged that during this period of change in the industry, SAPN has perhaps pushed through changes in their effort to respond quickly, acknowledging that there is an opportunity to work more closely with the industry through these changes.

Action: R Bedirian to work with J Ali to plan a consultation session on TS131 with RRG members.

Action: R Bedirian to arrange for M Vincent to present the 'future of solar' at the next RRG meeting.

- P Scott presented to the Group on his hydrogen project.
- J Herbst presented to the Group about his attendance to the Australian Energy Symposium.

5. Follow up Tariff discussion/Reset Engagement Update

Discussion Notes

- *The deep dive session on Future Networks will provide an opportunity to explore the impacts of solar.*
- *J Herbst questioned if the agreed pricing would be a different price than the other and had we considered using a smoothing plan, as this would act like a payment plan. SAPN responded that if we chose to do a smoothing option there would be no point in having agreed pricing. Additionally, a customer can choose to take that option directly with the retailer.*
- *Group expressed that tariff designs were for the end-user, however the retailer is required to pass this on. Question was raised around the uncertainty of retailers passing this on. SAPN response was that they want to pass these signals through to the retailer and they want their signal to make sense to customers. They aim to balance between the two.*
- *How can we test this theory? Retailers don't seem to be champing at the bit to pass them through. A: Our options might not do a lot, but they do a bit. We may tweak times to align network and retail a bit more. We will need to do more around VPP, and can possibly work more with 'prosumer customers'.*
- *Group question: New residential tariff will encourage people to use excess available energy, how much attention has been paid to night time wind generation? Be good to see how this captured somewhere. SAPN response: We are hoping we can align time of use signals with retailers, so low price is aligned with solar and wind times. We don't deal with wind, just the network load.*
- *Group question: We want to encourage more use around time when there is excess energy. SAPN response: Outside of what we do with tariffs, this is not really our job. Discussion needs to happen with retailers.*
- *"People want more flexibility about where they buy and sell their power."*
- *Group member comment: "I would really like to see us tracking the companion technology that tracks tariffs." This will help you offer cheaper prices that can control their use better.*



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- SAPN response: This is a good point. We focus a lot on the big technology. Tariff could be set, and you can use your tech, or the retailers tech, to manage your use within the tariff.*
- *Is this an SA Power Networks issue? It is, because it is implied when you talk about sending signals. A: Currently outside of SAPN. We need an active retailer to engage in this space. SAPN can't do it individually.*
 - *Group member questioned: How advanced are you to offer tariff solutions at the connection stage? Can this be integrated into the connection charge. SAPN response: There are two issues: rule – rule 6.1.4 and also the distribution code doesn't allow SAPN to charge augmentation costs. Can SAPN get smarter to address these issues?*
 - *I've tried this in the past for an irrigation connection. The answer was no. A: We will embrace these opportunities if they are there. SJ: We have done it with load in KI abalone farms.*
 - *Clearly trust is an issue. A: It's not so much trust, as control.*
 - *Can demand charges be separated? SAPN is blamed for costs. A: We are aware of this. We have no control of what the retailers does or says. We want customers to select this and have non discriminatory charges.*
 - *You have created this issue by changing to demand tariffs in the business tariffs.*
 - *Group member questioned: What are your thoughts on Newstead who are going to a very renewable situation? SAPN response: They are going to a very fixed tariff situation. PowerCor is working with them.*
 - *Group member questioned: Would business 2 rate be available for new solar? That is key in SA as business' are not going for solar as there is no payback. This creates a big gap in the market as we can't sell solar to them. SAPN response: We are proposing to shift arrangements. I recognise the concern. This is something that needs to be tested.*
 - *Demand terminology – Average demand is equivalent to a peak use tariff. Why not just call it peak use tariff? Too confusing.*
 - *Can we get some data on asset utilisation at a richer level? At your heart is how much we can fit on each feeder. We have a companion conversation about getting more solar onto the feeder. Can we get more info on the assets? A: Tariffs are simple blunt signals. SAPN response: We are trying to do what we can to encourage efficiency signals.*
 - *H. Smith suggested that a KPI for SA Power Networks should be kilowatt hours per megawatt hour of plant/equipment or something. Where are our measures and opportunities to do things differently. There is a different way of looking at your capital. We have an opportunity to get on the growth path. SAPN response: the DAPR provides a lot of that information. We do publish information – perhaps not enough according to your comments. We want to maximise network utilisation. We don't want to over-invest in assets. The question is are we doing all this as effectively as possible?*
 - *W. Saman suggested that once you come to agreement, you need to test this in trials. Test the value. UniSA is happy to provide information and data from Lochiel Park to help with this.*
 - *Group member questioned: Where does automation fit? You can have load control can't you? SAPN response: More and more we are happy to let the market provide those services, and focus on providing signals.*
 - *M. Swanston questioned "Where's the carrot? These options are all sticks. QLDs direct control has been effective." SAPN response: We would be delighted to do carrots. But the more carrots we buy the more money we need to recover from customers.*
 - *Group member suggested: The argument that the solar trough is a problem, but you could easily solve this by controlling people inverters. Rethink the demand management conversation into the solar management conversations. SAPN response: Small customers*



don't have smart meters. This is a block. With no data how can we calculate where they are going to go? This is still a big gap for the renewables industry in SA.

New Action Items

Item No.	Action	Responsible Person	Status
18-20	Liaise with website redesign project to get visibility of retailer contact details on the website, to help improve communications around MC changes.	David Stobbe	Open
18-21	Arrange an offline group discussion around improvements to the connections process and changes to the TS131 technical standards.	Rebecca Bedirian	Open
18-22	Arrange for M. Vincent to present the on future of solar to RRG at next meeting.	Rebecca Bedirian	Open

