

Minutes



SA Power Networks' Renewables Reference Group

Meeting Details

Organiser	Rebecca Bedirian
Date	21 June 2018
Time	09:30 – 12:00pm
Location	The Precinct Conference Centre

Attendance

Heather Smith	Changing Weather
Jenny Paradiso	Suntrix
John Herbst	Solar Advocate
Matthew Curnow	Conservation Council's Energy Standing Committee
Mike Swanston	AER Consumer Challenge Panel member
Dean Lombard	Alternative Technology Association
Mark Byrne	Total Environment Centre
Ben Lovell	Living Energy Solutions
Damian Edwards	CQ Partners
<u>SA Power Networks</u>	
David Stobbe (<i>Chair</i>)	Manager Customer Operations
Jess Vonthethoff	Manager Stakeholder Engagement
Richard Sibly	Head of Regulation
Rebecca Bedirian	Customer Consultation Lead
Brendon Hampton	Future Network Engineer
Andrew Haines	Network Manager – Strategic Projects
Fiona Hewlett	Minute Secretary
Apologies	
Darren Gladman	Clean Energy Council
Martin Cottrell	The Energy Project
Peter Scott	Royal Development Australia Whyalla & Eyre Peninsula
Tina Maiese	Energy and Technical Regulation
Wasim Saman	UniSA
Quentin Roberts	EfficientSee
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.

Rita McPhail introduced herself to the group as the Manager Customer Engagement, SA Power Networks.

2. Minutes and Actions

The minutes of the previous meeting dated 9 March 2018 were confirmed and accepted.

Actions from previous meetings were reviewed and updated as follows:

No.	Action Description	Responsibility	Update
18-20	Liaise with website redesign project to get visibility of retailer contact details on the website, to help improve communications around MC changes.	D Stobbe	D Stobbe advised that SAPN is working with EWOSA, AEMO, ESCOSA & retailers, forming a working party that meets fortnightly to discuss issues around MC. ESCOSA has instructed retailers to provide a dedicated phone line for customers for MC queries. D Stobbe to provide an update to RRG members on progress of this working party.
18-22	Arrange for M. Vincent to present on future of solar to RRG at next meeting.	R Bedirian	Mark Vincent advised that this was discussed in depth at the workshop. M Vincent has offered to do another session for those members who are interested. <i>Action: Members to provide talking points for the Future of Solar workshop.</i>
18-29	Draft process of NICC to be shared with the Renewables reference group members for comment.	A Haines/ R Bedirian	A Haines advised that this was covered at a deep dive workshop. The NICC is to be published soon. The intent of the document is to give a process view of connecting a generator from 30KW and above. <i>Action: R Bedirian to provide the link to the NICC as soon as it's published.</i>
18-30	SAPN to consider more effective options for 30 - <100 applications to avoid bottle necks at cut-off date. (Suggestion raised by Matthew Curnow)	A Haines	Andrew Haines confirmed that this is being reviewed. Options such as providing incentives for the 30-<100. Issues such as flagging those due a subsidy or rebate at the enquiry stage.
18-31	SAPN to provide draft of new connections policy to Renewables reference group for review and feedback.		A Haines to provide an update in his presentation

Further discussion on Action Items:

18-20 There was discussion around the need for policy change for metering. D Stobbe said that SAPN were discussing with ESCOSA the introduction of regulation to manage the metering issues. B Lovell asked about the timeframes for this policy change. D Stobbe expects to know more following the meeting next Friday 29/6. D Stobbe said that there has been some improvement in the performance of some retailers over the past 2 months. D Stobbe will feedback comments from the RRG to the ESCOSA retailer meeting.



-
- 18-29 A Haines - In addition to the NICC document, there will also be a refresh of the generation website, making it easier for customers to source information. Group members will be invited to take part in testing the new website.
- 18-30 Preliminary checking and challenging our own technical people on risk profiles. H Smith asked how much visibility consumers have to SAPN's information so they can see the issues we are dealing with. A Haines stated that a higher feed fast track service based on financial incentives was not SAPN's direction. The focus has been about getting a robust risk profiling process, giving us information we can be confident in. Finding out what the customer wants to achieve, then discussion around the constraints.

There was a lengthy discussion about the standard technical commissioning plans and the responsibility for drafting these. B Hampton said that SAPN can publish a standard technical template, to be used by contractors in their own commissioning plans. However the responsibility on the accuracy of the commissioning plan lies with the contractor – it is their generator connecting to the network. SA Power Networks is simply witnessing you commissioning your generator. M Curnow asked that SA Power Networks provide a standard technical commissioning plan template that can be used for inverter based systems. B Hampton agreed that SAPN could provide a template for a simplified set of standards for inverter based systems. B Lovell suggested that there is an accreditation process for commissioning work. J Paradiso commented that she liked the idea of training electricians on commissioning – training on the fundamentals.

Action: B Hampton and A Haines to develop these ideas and bring back to the group (or a sub-group) for further discussion.

3. Around the table

- Heather Smith – advised that she is part of an ESCOSA consumer reference group who are involved in developing a website where consumers can have better energy policy discussion. It allows everyone to add content, but not edit another individual's content. Heather will demonstrate the website to the group once it is launched. The website is 'energyfutures.net.au', however is still in the development phase. H Smith suggested it would benefit SAPN to consider involvement in these types of external groups - customer engagement that we don't initiate, but attend and participate. R McPhail agreed and confirmed that SAPN is looking to engage more broadly with the public.
- Mark Byrne - follow up on deep dive. M Byrne discussed the Open Energy Networks (ENA) paper on how to best transition to a two-way grid that allows better integration of Distributed Energy Resources.
- Dean Lombard – ATA report "Household Fuel Choice in the National Electricity Market" may be of interest to members.
- Jenny Paradiso – asked if there was any progress on Statutory Declaration issue raised. D Stobbe said they were putting a paper together about moving away from Statutory Declaration's. Completion of the paper is expected by end-July.
- M Curnow- commented on the harmonisation of connection standards policies and procedures across Australia. That it would be good to have some visibility or involvement in this. B Hampton said that it may be put out for consultation.

Action: B Hampton will find out more and let the RRG know next steps.



Action: J Paradiso said she was a member of a distributed energy group and would connect B Hampton to the group.

4. Presentation – Update on Regulatory Reset Proposal 2020- 2025 (J Vonthethoff)

J Vonthethoff provided a summary update on the Regulatory Reset Proposal 2020-2025.

Discussion Notes

- H Smith talked about productivity, that SAPN are proposing to have 0 productivity change - where does it reflect in this methodology. Where in this process do we work with networks to stop prices going up? R Sibly responded that it is generation, not demand, that is driving cost. Other factors include an ageing network and bushfires. B Hampton also responded that while demand is lower due to solar generation, the current solar generation is not good for the grid, it needs to be done in a smart way. H Smith commented that we are wrapped up in this regulatory environment, and SAPN is not trying hard enough to drive a pathway to reduce costs for the customer.

SAPN responded: if you look at historical costs, there is a decline in costs. What we are seeing is other costs in other areas. That the purpose of the deep dive workshop is to come up with the best solutions. There are many initiatives underway that are costing us. We are trying to avoid building assets to deal with generation issues. We are looking for non-network solutions to manage it to keep capex down.

- M Byrne commented that at the future network deep dive, he was not convinced that higher utilisation of, and investment in, the LV network would not eventually lead to lower repx costs in the HV network.. B Hampton responded that the deep dives goal is to explore the problems and look for ideas solutions. We want to implement the best overall solution. R Sibly commented that at that future networks deep dive, Mark Pynn (Distribution Planning Manager) attended looking at future network opportunities and incentives - encouraging people to use solar and battery, build substations and batteries. H Smith stated that this is for future networks and asked how can this influence the 2020-2025 regulatory period?

Action: J Vonthethoff and B Hampton to take further discussion about the reset proposal offline with H Smith.

- M Curnow raised the issue of tree pruning by SAPN and the lack of proactive options provided to customers to replace unsuitable trees with suitable ones. Simon used a personal example where he was never given the option of removal of trees to solve the problem permanently - SAPN is not looking at the long-term problem with vegetation. J Vonthethoff responded that SAPN is legislated to do things a certain way. A Haines also commented that one of the challenges with vegetation is local government. SAPN is working with the LGA so that they select/approve appropriate vegetation around power lines.
- J Vonthethoff summarised the progress with AUGEX and that there was an Expressions of Interest going out to the market. H Smith asked what the lead time was, commenting that communities need a long lead time to consult and respond. A Haines noted Heather's comments and provided an example in Mt Barker where developers were given several years notice. *Action: A Haines and H Smith to arrange to meet and discuss this further and learnings from Mt Barker, what we could have done differently.*
- J Vonthethoff is compiling reports from all the deep dive workshop and will distribute these soon. J Vonthethoff would also set up a private webpage for Reference Group members on 'Talking Power', as a repository for these documents.



5. Follow up discussion from TS131 session (A Haines)

Due to time restraints at the meeting Andrew Haines gave a very brief update following the TS131 workshop.

A Haines thanked those who attended the TS131 workshop and provided feedback. A Haines will provide a summary of the feedback at the next meeting in August.

New Action Items

Item Ref.	Action	Responsible Person	Status
18-40	<i>Members to provide talking points for the Future of Solar workshop.</i>	All	
18-41	<i>B Hampton will find out more about the connection standards policies and procedures across Australia. and let the RRG know next steps.</i>	B Hampton	
18-42	<i>J Paradiso said she was a member of a distributed energy group and would connect B Hampton to the group.</i>	J Paradiso	
18-43	<i>J Vonthethoff to take further discussion about the reset proposal offline with H Smith.</i>	J Vonthethoff, H Smith	
18-44	<i>A Haines and H Smith to arrange to meet and discuss this further and learnings from Mt Barker, what we could have done differently.</i>	A Haines & H Smith	
18-45	<i>R Bedirian to have meeting with A Haines and B Hampton and look at ways to bring members into discussions for commissioning report improvements.</i>	R Bedirian	
18-46	<i>R Bedirian to have meeting with A Haines and B Hampton and look at ways to bring members into discussions for 30->100kW approval improvements.</i>	R Bedirian	
18-47	<i>J Vonthethoff to have consultation paper Open Energy Networks (ENA) paper on how to best transition to a two-way grid that allows better integration of Distributed Energy Resources, uploaded to Talking Power website.</i>	J Vonthethoff	

