

# Minutes



---

## SA Power Networks' Community Reference Group

---

## Meeting Details

Organiser	Rebecca Reed
Date	9 August 2018
Time	9.00am to 11.30noon
Location	Adelaide Pavilion, South Terrace

---

## Attendance

<b>Dusko Cuckovich</b>	Australian Refugee Association
<b>Heather Merran</b>	Uniting Care Wesley Bowden
<b>Kym Mercer</b>	Anti-poverty Network
<b>Nadia Moffatt</b>	Disability sector
<b>Vivienne Smith</b>	Council on the Ageing (COTA) SA
<b>Heather Smith</b>	Changing Weather (Renewables Ref Group) – <i>Present. &amp; discussion Item 5 &amp; 6 only</i>

### SA Power Networks (SAPN)

Rita McPhail	Manager Customer Engagement (Chairperson)
Jess Vonthethoff	Manager Stakeholder Engagement
Richard Sibly	Head of Regulation
Rebecca Reed	Customer Consultation Lead
Bryn Williams	Future Network Engineer – <i>Item 5 &amp; 6 only</i>
Fiona Hewlett	Minute Secretary

## Apologies

<b>Jo De Silva</b>	SACOSS
<b>Gavin Dufty</b>	St Vincent de Paul Society
<b>Sarah Warren</b>	Uniting Communities
<b>Silvio Iadarola</b>	Multicultural Communities Council of SA
<b>Wendy Shirley</b>	SA Financial Counsellors Association
<b>Paul Erwin</b>	Manager Customer Services SAPN

## Not present

<b>Sharon Maslen</b>	Salvation Army Australia SA
<b>Susanne Koen</b>	Adelaide Hills Community Representative

---

## Business Arising

### 1. Welcome, Apologies and Introductions

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting of the Community Reference Group (CRG) and apologies were noted.

## 2. Minutes and Action items

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 5 July 2018 were confirmed and accepted.

Actions from the previous meeting were reviewed and updated:

Previous Meeting Actions				
No.	Action Description	Status	Due Date	Responsible person
18-10	Arrange for a retailer/s to speak with the group at a future meeting.	Include on agenda for next CRG meeting	Nov 18	R Reed
18-14	Arrange a separate information session for members on energy efficiency	R Reed has discussed with Harry Pavlou, Energy Advisory at SA Power Networks. R Reed to ask H Pavlou to do a brief presentation at the next meeting and offer a follow up, more indepth session.	Nov 18	R Reed
18-38	Look for a solution for information sharing between CCP and Reference Groups	CCP and Reference Group Members Portal now set-up – access will be available soon through TalkingPower. R Reed to provide login details to members shortly.	Aug 18	R Reed
18-39	Proactive hardship checklist to identify possible disconnect for non-payment customers earlier, to be able to provide direction to services	K Mercer to provide some details on possible points for the checklist. <i>*Discussion &amp; actions below.</i>	Nov 18	K Mercer

\*18-39 Discussion re customers on the hardship program. The group discussed situations where SAPN is instructed by the retailer to disconnect a customer. SAPN does not currently conduct an investigation into the circumstances for the disconnection. Disconnections due to non-payment are not necessarily due to hardship situations, but could be due to miscommunication, or administrative issues. Jess Vonthethoff suggested it would be worth meeting with retailers to discuss how we share information on this more readily to ensure that customers are not disconnected without exploring all avenues to assist them. R McPhail suggested that K Mercer meet with the SAPN Retailer Relations team to discuss the issues, and make recommendations to Retailers around hardship program customers.

**ACTION:** R Reed to arrange for K Mercer to meet with the SAPN Retailer Relations team to discuss hardship program customers.

**ACTION:** R Reed to discuss with Wendy Shirley who will be attending a conference with the retailers' hardship teams. SAPN could facilitate discussions with the retailers to look for a solution to stop disconnections for those with hardship reasons. R Reed to report back at the next meeting.

## 3. Around the Table

Dusko Cuckovich: expressed concern about two recent incidents where CALD customers had been approached by door knockers representing retailers and they had been switched to plans that did not suit their needs. He was hoping that this wasn't going to become a trend.



---

Nadia Moffatt: raised the issue of the 4 day date window given by meter readers attending properties, and the risks of not attending in the nominated timeframe. For example, there may be animals who are not restrained and the meter reader risks being attacked. R Reed explained that the usual timeframe is 4 days and as a general rule the meter readers do attend during that period. R McPhail agreed that it would be of benefit to be able to notify the homeowner the day when the meter will be read, and advised a future communications review will be considering this within their scope.

#### **4. Presentation: Draft Proposal 2020 – 2025 (Jess Vonthethoff)**

The Draft Proposal 2020 – 2025 was launched on 8 August 2018. J Vonthethoff thanked members for their input over the past months at the meetings and workshops, contributing to the draft plan.

J Vonthethoff presented an overview of the Plan and distributed copies to members. The plan was also available on the Talking Power website. J Vonthethoff informed members that feedback on the plan could be provided during the consultation period which runs for 6 weeks until 19 September 2018. Feedback options included email, a form in the paper version, link through Talking Power or by phone. Members of the Stakeholder Engagement team would continue to visit regional communities to inform them of the plan and invite consultation and feedback.

J Vonthethoff advised that the Customer Consultative Panel (CCP) is drafting a joint response from the CCP and its Reference Groups - Wendy Shirley is facilitating this process.

#### **5. Presentation: Bigger isn't better - when it comes to energy (Heather Smith)**

Heather Smith spoke about the key focus areas for our future energy network:

- Cheaper, More reliable, Fairer

In summary, H Smith used an example from the UK, where they have been discussing open networks for a number of years. Anyone in a local system should be able to sell their excess solar energy onto the network. Flexibility should come first – local generation, flexible assets. Is this our bright new future? H Smith identified some of the pros and cons of Local energy:

- More reliable, not reliant on a central system
- Local energy can be fairer – especially in places where the community is thriving
- In NSW community energy is popular. SA is complacent because we know we are the leaders in renewable energy.
- Community energy can mean less choice and constrain communities – e.g. Lameroo.

#### **6. Presentation: Future Networks (Bryn Williams)**

Bryn Williams presented on 'Managing the transition to the distributed network'.

B Williams spoke about the change that is being driven by customers. SA is at the forefront of this transition in the work which provides us with some unique challenges. Also the virtual power plants and the potential impact of the Government's roll-out plans for tens of thousands of batteries.

The technical challenges we are facing with customers exporting back to the grid – export limits and the options to control these. The challenge is to maintain the quality of supply for all customers. Distributed energy offers tremendous opportunities. More solar generation into



---

the grid will lower the wholesale price of energy. Customer engagement sessions have told us that customers want to enable distributed energy, but not at any cost. What is SAPN doing about it? We have an obligation to connect distributed energy resources (DERs) to our network. Strategies are being considered to include smart inverter settings, shifting controlled load into the solar trough, tariff and price signals (e.g. time based tariffs with customer incentives).

**Next meeting: 21 November 2018**