

# Minutes



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## Meeting Details

### SA Power Networks' Community Reference Group

*To received feedback and advice from specialist customer representatives to assist SA Power Networks with planning and service delivery.*

Organiser	Alex Lewis
Date	21 November 2019
Time	9.30am to 12.00pm
Location	SACOSS, 47 King William Road

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## Attendance

Dusko Cuckovich	Australian Refugee Association
Heather Merran	Uniting Care Wesley Bowden
Gavin Dufty	St Vincent de Paul Society
Georgina Morris	SACOSS
Kym Mercer	Anti-poverty Network
Nadia Moffatt	Disability sector
Sarah Warren	Uniting Communities
Wendy Shirley	SA Financial Counsellors Association

### SA Power Networks (SAPN)

Sue-Ann Charlton	General Manager, Customer and Community (Chair)
Shelaye Boothey	Manager, Customer Engagement & Programs
Alex Lewis	Customer Consultation Lead
Amelia Davey	Engagement Strategy Lead ( <i>Items 1-4</i> )
Fiona Hewlett	Minute Secretary

## Apologies

Silvio Iadarola	Multicultural Communities Council of SA
Sharon Maslen	Salvation Army Australia SA
Susanne Koen	Adelaide Hills Community Representative
Vivienne Smith	Council on the Ageing (COTA) SA
Brian Attwood	Consumers SA

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## Business Arising

### 1. Welcome, Apologies and Introductions

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and introduced Shelaye Boothey, recently appointed Manager, Customer Engagement and Programs. Apologies were noted.

### 2. Minutes and Action items

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 30 July 2019 were confirmed and accepted.

Actions from the previous meeting were reviewed and updated:

Previous Meeting Actions				
No.	Action Description	Status	Due Date	Responsible person
18-50	A Lewis to investigate householder messaging options for Meter Readers, specifically to facilitate a more specific time for the read. A Lewis to discuss with David Stobbe / Andrew Marker.	Action: Future agenda item to the CRG on Meter Installs and Reading.	Ongoing	Alex Lewis
18-67	Paul Erwin will follow up with Susanne Koen to discuss communication methods for Adelaide Hills vulnerable customers and the metrics used when deciding when to turn off the supply.	<i>Paul Erwin has spoken to S Koen.</i>	CLOSE	
18-69	With regard to prioritising life-support customers, Paul Erwin to consider options and raise with State Government as part of their solar/battery program.	To be considered as part of the Vulnerable Customers Strategy	Ongoing	Alex Lewis
19-07	F Hewlett to distribute CRG member contact list and share with the group.	Provided at meeting 21/11/19	CLOSE	
19-08	Provide an update on the Snap Send Solve initiative.	iApply is now being tested as an alternative for this purpose and will be rolled out to customers in the next two weeks	CLOSE	Shelaye Boothey
19-10	A Davey to contact Kym Mercer re customers classified as 'vulnerable' to assist with the VCS consultation	K Mercer attended the VCS Workshops to contribute.	CLOSE	Amelia Davey

### 3. Reference Group Review (A Lewis)

As advised at the July meeting, a thorough review of the existing CCP and Reference Groups has been carried out. A Lewis provided an update:

- Chair, CCP: Andrew Nance, The Energy Project, has been appointed Chair of the CCP.
- Expressions of interest for the CCP received following a 2-month application period. Selection and appointment will be finalised next week. First meeting is in January 2020, commencing a 2 year term. There will be a program of regional engagement developed for this CCP term.
- Community Reference Group to continue, 2 year term from July 2019 to June 2021. Members were given a formal letter of appointment, including Terms of Reference, at the meeting.

### 4. Vulnerable Customers Strategy (A Davey and A Lewis)

Amelia Davey, Engagement Strategy Lead, and Alex Lewis provided the group with an overview of the key outcomes from the recent Vulnerable Customer Strategy (VCS) , Current and Future State workshops.

The VCS Vision was identified as: *To partner with key stakeholders to deliver assistance and a responsive customer environment to those most vulnerable in our community.*

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G Dufty suggested the statement could say '*customer experience*', rather than '*customer environment*'. A Davey to consider this change.

Characteristics of vulnerability – there is always additional areas of vulnerability, so a flexible approach is required. The ongoing health issues needs to be expanded to include mental health, disability, aged.

Regarding Life Support customers, there was discussion around considering methods of delivery of information to those customers, each with specific needs and preferences. People will continue to have preferences and be offered choices on delivery methods. It would be useful to have a Vulnerable Persons Register as well as a Life Support Register.

Members discussed how some families will not self-identify their needs and in these cases there is a benefit in education sessions for school aged children who would then be in a position to inform their families.

In regards to initiatives, both AusGrid and Essential Energy are doing some interesting work in this space – line of sight for life support customers and the importance of enhancing capability and resilience, and seasonality of vulnerability eg. elderly in winter, young families Dec to Jan.

Yarra Valley have developed a kit for distribution to children in schools. SAPN could develop games and a kit for schools' education.

The data available would allow SAPN to target communities/ feeders/ community groups based on individual NMI's.

Food relief could be linked to local businesses to provide support to communities following events. One option would be the provision of refrigerated trucks to provide storage during a disconnection eg. Port Lincoln.

In relation to disconnections and the SAPN trial, 57% paid the bill following a field visit from SAPN staff. The question as raised as to how many of the 43% who were disconnected were offered assistance? It was also noted that the installation of smart meters speeds up the disconnection process and there is a need to extend the cycle to cover the lag.

Further discussion was had throughout the presentation and comments were captured to inform the draft VCS with an aim to distribute the final version prior to the year end. The group highlighted the importance of partnering with other organisations vs reinventing the wheel. Energy as an essential service, like water, was also highlighted.

## **5. Business Initiatives update (S Charlton)**

S Charlton asked S Boothey to provide an overview of her background. S Boothey spoke about her years as a journalist, both here and abroad. Shelaye's role at SAPOL was closely aligned to her current role at SA Power Networks.

S Charlton provided an update on the following:

### CRM & Billing Program

There is a requirement to replace the current, ageing billing and CRM software. This will provide substantial cost savings and jobs for more South Australians in carrying out the billing in-house, a function that is currently outsourced. A better CRM will enable SA Power Networks to consolidate better customer data and information tracking. It will be a foundational CRM system, with expansion following the initial roll-out. The target 'go-live' date is March 2021.

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### Planned notifications

The aim is to move the majority of customers from posted planned notifications (orange cards send by post) to digital methods of notification (SMS and email). This will be an opt-in approach, so customers without access to digital methods will not be disadvantaged and can remain with the current postal system.

### Chatbots

A 6 month trial of using a Chatbot to answer customers FAQs will launch in January. The Chatbot is a self-learning artificial intelligence which will answer a few basic questions to start with, then expands its knowledge over time.

### Review of written communication to customers

Undertaking an audit of all correspondence sent to customers, looking to simplify the technical language used in communications (where possible) and move them to a digital platform.

### Remote camera access software

Investigating the use of software which allows us to access a caller's phone camera. We would send a link to the caller asking them to click on the link to allow us to access their camera, this will enable our Customer Service representative to see what the caller can see and be able to determine what the problem might be and provide better advice. This will help enormously to efficiently determine the type of help required, the urgency of the work etc. The use of this system would extend to faults, emergencies, meter reads and trees.

Contact centre staff will need to be trained on how to work with customers using this new technology.

### Reset 2020-2025

Wendy Shirley provided an update on the 2020 – 2025 Reset Process:

- The Customer Consultative Panel was invited to participate in a number of deep-dive workshops throughout the process.
- Wendy commented that there has been good consultation with the community, much improved from the previous reset period.
- The Australian Energy Regulator (AER) responded on 8 October, requesting a revised proposal by 10 December. There will then be a one month consultation period to finalise the proposal, in anticipation of a final decision by the AER in April 2020. The new reset period will commence 1 July 2020.

## **6. Around the table (All)**

- **G Dufty;** Gavin referred to a research project which analysed and mapped electricity disconnections across SA, Victoria, NSW and SE Queensland.  
*ACTION: F Hewlett to forward to CRG members for their information.*
- **K Mercer:** Kym would be attending a conference 29-30 November, *One Big Raise - Dignity for All*. SAPN should be advocating for a raise to the Newstart rate.  
*ACTION: K Mercer to send information to F Hewlett for distribution to the group.*
- **H Merran:** State government's retail energy efficiency scheme is being reviewed. It is possible that funding for energy audits may be cut from the scheme. UCWB would like a commitment from the government for the audits to be continued in some capacity. This helps to improve the quality of living for vulnerable people, protecting against the issue of



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climate change and rising temperatures. It also addresses some issues for those people in low quality housing.

- **G Morris:** Georgina spoke about the release of the 'Working Poor' report, customers who are working but their earnings are still below the poverty line. These people are ten times less likely to ask for community support than those who are not working and living on benefits. There is also a push for renters to be included in the REES as a priority group.
- **S Warren:** Sarah's focus has recently been around how they can provide longer term practical support to people. Typically, Uniting Communities provide crisis once-off support, however a longer term approach is their goal.
- **N Moffatt:** Nadia has been lobbying the state government regarding the Disability Employment Act. Nadia is advocating that a clear target is set for this Act.
- **W Shirley:** Wendy noted that Energy Australia has commenced enforcement actions for breaches to hardship program during 2016-18 and customer disconnections.

The meeting finished at 12.00noon.

*Next meeting: 3 February 2020*