



Victorian Residential Developers Committee

Feedback to Essential Services Commission

Question	Response
<p>Have you experienced delays connecting new developments to electricity networks? How long are the delays you have experienced, on average across your new developments?</p>	<p>a) Project site located in inner Melbourne. Made application to abolish power in late August 2018. Power was meant to be abolished 20 days later. On or around 22 October 2018 Citipower advised they were unable to abolish the power as it was a complex abolition (this was when they arrived on site to complete the abolition).</p> <p>The "complexity" was that the subject site had distribution boards feeding 2 neighbouring properties and a street light. Developer ended up paying \$50k to design and abolish the power (as it was deemed complex). Power is due to be abolished 23 March 2019 and as such the project has been delayed (actual delay will probably be 2 months, not the full 6 months since the issue arose).</p> <p>Neither the developer, the landowner nor builder were advised of the potential delay however the electrical engineers were (they did not pass this information on to us). We only learnt they were advised of the issue when we started applying pressure on Citipower to hurry up with the abolition.</p> <p>Developer had already made application for new supply to the site. This was made in November 2016. At this time, Citipower didn't advise of any potential issues with the abolition of power. Moving forward I suggest Citipower and other power authorities confirm the lead time to abolish power (which is required if one is asking for a new supply). The notice needs to be returned to the applicant.</p> <p>b) 10-to-12-week tie-in timeframe by Powercor upon SOC request. Ausnet: Tie-in can be done before final audit which occurs as part of the Ausnet services Audit process. There is very little delay in Ausnet projects.</p>



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">c) Yes, delays have been due to failed electrical audits. When an electrical audit fails it generally causes a 3-to-4-week delay to Statement of Compliance and Title registration for each fail and some projects have multiple failures. Electrical connection is then generally occurring approximately 8 weeks after an audit pass.d) Electrical consent to Statement of Compliance is traditionally the last one received. Issues concerning resourcing and limited contractors, consultant and auditors.
<i>Have you noticed any improvements in connection times recently? Why do you think they have improved?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a) No.b) Some occasionally, Powercor time-in works brought forward if developer can sign Powercor fast track documents with additional costs.c) Powercor's final audit process has improved since Powercor stopped implementing the 'walk away' policy and are the auditors are applying a more pragmatic assessment of electrical works based on the overall quality of the stage. However, audits remain dependent on the interpretation and discretion of the auditor on the day which creates uncertainty for developers, contractors and electrical consultants.d) Yes. Ausnet.
<i>Are you aware of any new initiatives undertaken by the distribution businesses to improve connection times? If so, what actions?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a) No.b) As per above question, the fast track fee. Powercor is also going through internal project manager process changes, where dedicated contestable works PMs are allocated which hopefully will improve the tie-in process and more consistent with decisions.



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">c) Powernet are engaging with developers on a regular basis. Powernet are proposing to use a contractor rating system to benchmark contractors and reduce audit requirements in future. When a project fails multiple audits, Powernet are requesting a meeting with the developer to explain why there have been delays.d) No.
<i>What can the development industry do to improve connection times?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Insist on the service authorities having KPIs and timeframes in which they need to deliver in.b) Working closer to the distribution companies such as Powernet, along with contractors to improve the process and minimise construction issues on site.c) Lobby Powernet to change the audit system so Powernet audits occur during construction rather than at the end of construction or have an accreditation system in place for third party auditors that Powernet is happy to rely on and remove the need for Powernet audits. While the current system remains place, there will continue to be the issue of electrical audits failing causing costly delays to title lodgement, registration and connection dates.d) Open competition on alternative electrical contractors, consultants and auditors. At present there are only limited contractors for audits (e.g. UCS). The handover pre-commissioning audit process can be improved. Connecting signals at major intersections between the VicRoads, wholesale electric company and retailer is difficult. No direct consultant / person to handle enquiry (e.g. No direct numbers, no surnames, generic email addresses).