

Minutes

Electricity Connections – Governance Committee Meeting #10

Time and date: 2.00-3.30 pm, 16 July 2020

Location: Through Teams channel

Committee Members Present

Name	Organisation	Name	Organisation
John Hamill	Essential Services Commission (Chair)	Sarah McDowell	Essential Services Commission
Justin Betlehem	AusNet Services	Scott Harvey	AusNet Services
Elizabeth Carlile	CitiPower/Powercor	Matt Thomas	Powercor
Roy Kinston	Powercor	Chris Masson	Jemena
Sarah Sheppard	DELWP	Paul Cassidy	Victorian Planning Authority
John Forbes	Urban Development Institute of Australia (Victoria)	Alex Harvey	Property Council of Australia
Nathan Hollow	Property Council of Australia		

Committee Support

Aaron Yuen – Essential Services Commission

Merryn Wilson – Essential Services Commission

Felix Karmel - Essential Services Commission

The chair welcomed participants to the Governance committee meeting.

Agenda items

Service Improvement Commitment and Performance Reporting Updates

Powercor/United Energy

Powercor reported on its performance data and said of the five stages of connections process that it measured four of those were meeting targets. At the last meeting Powercor that master plan reviews were taking 11 days against a target of 10 days. And that since working from had begun times for this stage had slipped out to 16 days. However, times were trending back down as Powercor had put in place processes to improve timeliness.

Powercor questioned whether a one size fits all approach (for reporting) could apply across all distribution businesses, they used the design review target as an example. Powercor year to date had done 413 reviews that took on average 16 days. Whereas United Energy did 4 reviews, and these took on average 7 days.

Powercor added that they were still updating their contestable works agreement by simplifying it as much as possible.

AusNet Services

AusNet Services reported that the notable change over the past three months was the completion of the energy connect portal. The portal provides further visibility of jobs, service providers have greater access to contestability and there has been positive reviews from people working on the network. In terms of metrics, AusNet has met all. This includes the 2-day NMI allocation.

Commission staff asked what the biggest benefit of the portal had been. AusNet Services reported the biggest benefits were the timing of jobs and fast-tracking applications. AusNet Services have been able to turn the activities around quite quickly. They have moved away from a person managing a drop box to a portal. This has enabled AusNet Services to automate a large number of jobs and get back to customers with information about their jobs in real time. AusNet Services do this by putting information into the portal which in turn forwards an email to the customer. Since May about 600 jobs have been processed through the portal. The portal also allows staff to pick up where a job is at particularly if other staff who have involved in the job go on leave. This is because all records and transactions are kept in the system.

The Urban Development Institute of Australia asked whether developers would have access to the portal. AusNet Services responded that developers could view information in the portal. People can act on behalf of other people, those who sign contracts can give access to others. And if a contractor received an update from AusNet Services the same email could be sent to the developer. AusNet Services reported that they had also given training to developers about the portal.

Jemena

Jemena reported that it had experienced resourcing challenges early this year. And that this had affected its performance. While 100 percent of offers are made within 65 days (this is the statutory timeframe), Jemena had not met its target of 40 days 100 per cent of the time until June. In relation to other measures, Jemena had not met its target of 12 weeks to deliver works 100 per cent of the time until June. Similarly, Jemena had not met its target of reviewing designs within 15 days also until June. Jemena reported that resourcing issues seemed in hand now and that it should begin to see improvements in performance.

Technical standards committee – Powercor

Powercor reported that the last time we had met the committee had released a draft amongst committee members for comment. Since then the working group had been meeting weekly to work through the commentary. Once this is complete the working group will circulate the next draft by September. Comments on the draft will be considered. The aim then is to trial the draft on projects in October. Powercor commented that it had been challenging to turn work around quickly when working remotely. Powercor reiterated the purpose of the technical standards work was harmonise URD specific standards so as contractors know how to build an estate whether they are in AusNet or Powercor or Jemena's jurisdictions.

The chair asked for general feedback about the progress of the technical standards committee. And staff added where contractors and the civil constructors federation able to provide feedback on the technical standards draft? Powercor responded by saying that these groups were involved. The Urban Development Institute of Australia commented that they would touch base with the Australian Land Development Engineers to get their views. The Urban Development Institute of Australia added the work seemed to be progressing in good spirits and there were improvements. Noting that working remotely had caused things to drag on a bit.

Overview of issues paper

Commission staff presented an overview of the issues paper. The presentation is attached to these minutes. At the end of the presentation participants were given an opportunity to ask questions. Powercor noted that they undertook a large number of negotiated connections and whether the issues paper was only referring to negotiated connections in greenfields developments. Commission staff responded that this work was established to address issues with greenfields connections but could be extended to other negotiated connections. The chair added there may not be material differences between negotiated connections, but the targets could be different to reflect perhaps more complexity associated with some connections for example complex infill developments. Jemena added that the definition of negotiated was important because they covered things like pole to pit, URD developments and industrial developments and the timeframes for each are different. Commission staff noted that not all stages of the negotiated connections may be subject to timeframes, rather it was important for distribution businesses to work with stakeholders to establish which stages in the process were important to measure.

The Urban Development Institute of Australia and Property Council of Australia noted that they were working through the issues paper and would respond by early August.

Other business

The chair confirmed that while we are scheduled to have one more Governance committee meeting, depending on the option decided upon there may be further sessions.

Next meeting

To be advised. But there will be at least one more Governance committee meeting in September/October 2020.