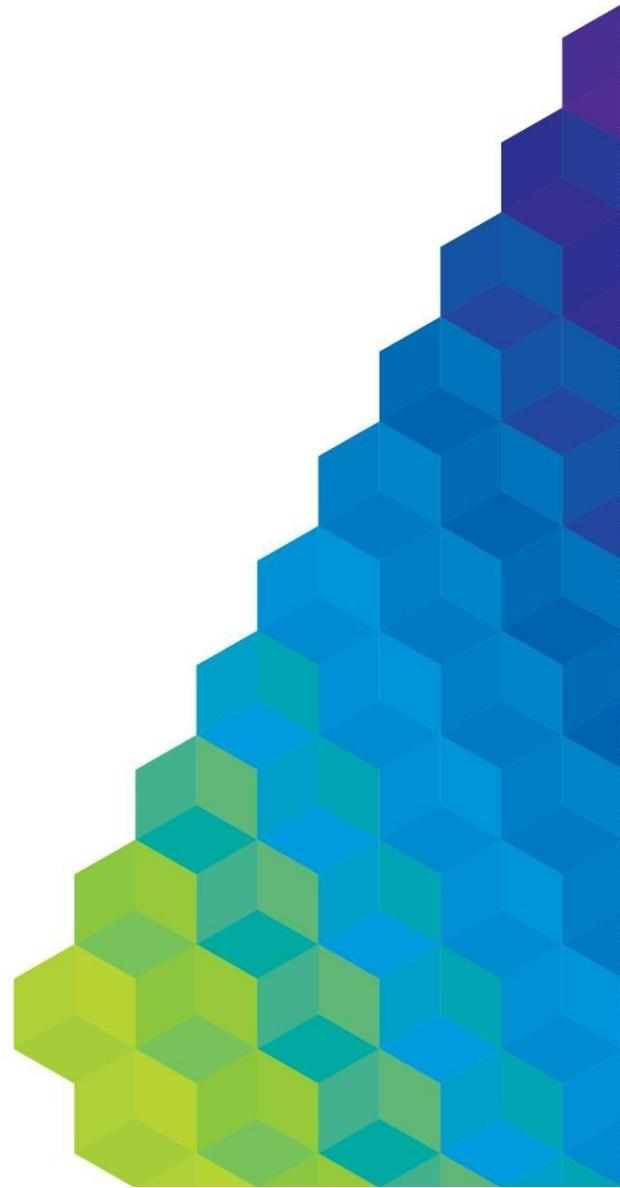




---

# **AusNet Services Greenfields Negotiated Electricity Connections**

**Customer Service Standard**



## **Disclaimer**

This template is for generating internal and external document belonging to AusNet Services and may or may not contain all available information on the subject matter this document purports to address.

The information contained in this document is subject to review and AusNet Services may amend this document at any time. Amendments will be indicated in the Amendment Table, but AusNet Services does not undertake to keep this document up to date.

To the maximum extent permitted by law, AusNet Services makes no representation or warranty (express or implied) as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of the information contained in this document, or its suitability for any intended purpose. AusNet Services (which, for the purposes of this disclaimer, includes all of its related bodies corporate, its officers, employees, contractors, agents and consultants, and those of its related bodies corporate) shall have no liability for any loss or damage (be it direct or indirect, including liability by reason of negligence or negligent misstatement) for any statements, opinions, information or matter (expressed or implied) arising out of, contained in, or derived from, or for any omissions from, the information in this document.

## **Contact**

This document is the responsibility of AusNet Services.

Please contact the indicated owner of the document with any inquiries.

AusNet Services  
Level 31, 2 Southbank Boulevard  
Melbourne Victoria 3006  
Ph: (03) 9695 6000

## Table of Contents

<b>Executive Summary .....</b>	<b>4</b>
Engagement approach .....	4
What we learned .....	4
Engagement outcomes - core focus areas .....	5
<b>1 Introduction .....</b>	<b>6</b>
1.1 Customer Service Standard .....	6
1.2 Research and engagement process.....	6
<b>2 Project Approach .....</b>	<b>8</b>
2.1 Project objective .....	8
2.2 Content of the Standard.....	8
2.3 Engagement principles .....	8
<b>3 Engagement Approach.....</b>	<b>9</b>
3.1 Property developer and stakeholder identification .....	9
3.2 One-on-one interviews.....	11
3.3 What we heard .....	12
3.4 What we learned .....	13
3.5 Core focus areas.....	13
3.6 Customer focus group .....	14
3.7 Core team workshops.....	14
3.8 Customer Consultative Committee Briefing .....	14
<b>4 Customer Outcomes Statement .....</b>	<b>15</b>
4.1 Feedback at the centre .....	15
4.2 Translating feedback into the Customer Service Statement .....	15
4.3 Customer Outcomes Statement.....	16
<b>5 Developer Consultative Committee .....</b>	<b>17</b>
5.1 Purpose .....	17
5.2 Link to Customer Consultative Committee .....	17
5.3 Considerations for the DCC.....	17
<b>6 Performance Framework.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Appendix A - Stakeholder interview questions .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Appendix B – Interview feedback .....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Appendix C – Customer Focus Group slides .....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Appendix D – Developer Consultative Committee Terms of Reference .....</b>	<b>34</b>

## Executive Summary

Earlier this year, the Essential Services Commission (ESC) undertook a review into improving the timeliness of electricity connections. As a result of this review, the ESC requires all electricity distribution network service providers (DNSPs) to engage with property developers and their contractors to create a Customer Service Standard (the Standard) for Greenfields Negotiated Electricity Connections.

The key objectives of the Standard are to resolve issues that cause delays in the connections process and to provide performance reporting, so that there are greater levels of accountability and transparency around the time it takes networks to complete certain steps in the connections process.

In developing the Standard, AusNet Services undertook a series of engagement activities with a diverse range of customers and stakeholders including property developers, their consultants, contractors and industry groups.

This AusNet Services Standard communicates benchmarks, as identified in consultation with customers and stakeholders for continuous improvement, timely issues resolution, accountability, and transparency in timeframes in the negotiated electricity connections process.

AusNet Services will continue to engage with property developers and industry groups as part of our commitment to deliver improvements to the connections process.

We will publish our performance against this Standard on our website.

## Engagement approach

To demonstrate our commitment to genuine and inclusive engagement, we adopted an engagement approach that ensured that the Standard was built on the feedback gained from engagement activities. This approach ensured that the principles and commitments in the Customer Service Standard have been developed from the bottom up and directly reflect what we heard from property developers and stakeholders (not business-led).

The engagement process that we undertook to develop the Customer Service Standard had three broad stages:

1. Data capture.
2. Engagement.
3. Reporting.

The internal and external engagement activities included:

- Property developer and stakeholder identification.
- One-on-one interviews.
- Customer Focus Group.
- Core team workshops.
- Customer Consultative Committee briefing.

## What we learned

Overall, property developers and stakeholder who participated in engagement activities were favourable of the process that we had developed to gather feedback and develop the Customer Outcomes Statement. Many noted that it was a positive change to engagement with them directly and deliver transparency by reporting back on the links between 'what we heard' and the development of the core focus areas which informed the Customer Outcomes Statement.

Feedback from property developers and stakeholders highlighted opportunities for further improvement as well as areas of recent improvement. Specifically, some property developers acknowledged the work that we had undertaken to improve our services and compliance approvals. Positive feedback was also noted in the following areas:

- Decreasing bottlenecks by allowing external design work.
- Contestability of tie-ins.
- Better engagement with customers.

We also gathered valuable insights from property developers and the wider housing development industry around issues that they face in getting electricity connected to their developments in a timely fashion. The issues identified include:

## Customer Service Standard

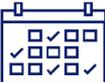
- Tie-in delays and cancellations.
- Confusion and frustration around the auditing process.
- Understanding of the standards.
- Frustration with the way AusNet Services engages with developers and their consultants.

The feedback has resulted in a renewed focus from AusNet Services on customer service and improving relationships in the property development industry, with the ultimate goal of improving the timeliness of electricity connections. This has therefore been an effective way to meet the objectives of the ESC's review.

### Engagement outcomes - core focus areas

The direct outputs from the engagement with property developers and stakeholders provided us with the Principles for the Customer Service Standard. We then developed responses to these issues and needs, which became the commitments, success statements and metrics.

The Customer Service Statement clearly outlines the key focus areas and how AusNet Services will deliver on their objectives. This is provided below.

Considerations		Outcomes
Principles	What this means for our customers	Our commitments
 <p><b>Be accountable to our timeframes</b></p>	Guarantee agreed timeframes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase transparency with published timeframes for the end-to-end process.</li> <li>• Meet the average agreed timeframes for AusNet Services design reviews.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Proactively engage with industry</b></p>	Ensure that the industry is across technical changes and expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage with Developer Consultative Committee (DCC) to seek feedback on major AusNet Services technical standard changes before implementation.</li> <li>• Host industry briefings to proactively communicate changes.</li> <li>• Regularly communicate minor technical standard updates and changes on the AusNet Services website.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Making it easier to connect</b></p>	Streamline the lines of communication with developers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a point-of-contact for each project.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Demystify the auditing process</b></p>	Ensure that timely development is not held up by the auditing process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet the KPI timeframes for AusNet Services' network auditing process.</li> <li>• Communicate AusNet Services auditing expectations with Victorian Electricity Distribution Network (VEDN) auditors.</li> <li>• Define which audits can be conducted by certified third parties.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Transparency in reporting</b></p>	Provide timely and transparent monthly reporting on the AusNet Services website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proactive issue identification with top audit failures published quarterly.</li> <li>• Timeframes for end-to-end process (application to supply).</li> </ul>

## 1 Introduction

AusNet Services owns and operates one of five electricity distribution networks in Victoria. We serve Melbourne's north and eastern fringe (which has some fast-growing suburbs), regional communities throughout eastern Victorian and remote customers in the alpine areas of Victoria.

Our electricity distribution network covers 80,000 square kilometres and consists of around 46,000 kilometres of power lines and 400,000 power poles. These assets deliver energy safely and reliably to around 737,000 customers across Victoria. Our network and connection assets are designed, built, maintained, and operated by our 1,700 employees across our regulated networks and our commercial energy services business.

AusNet Services is focused on ensuring all our customers can rely on our networks to deliver energy, while we work to adapt and evolve the networks to support the shift to more renewable generation and the spectrum of customer needs.

AusNet Services is continually working to improve our customers' lives by delivering the best experiences. Customer centricity is a key pillar of our Energising Futures strategy. By ensuring our services meet our customers' needs, we are striving to increase customer satisfaction. This includes how we deliver for our new connections to support property developers with large greenfield negotiated electricity connections.

### 1.1 Customer Service Standard

The Essential Services Commission (ESC) requires all electricity distribution network service providers (DNSPs) to engage with property developers and their contractors to create a Customer Service Standard (the Standard) for Greenfields Negotiated Electricity Connections.

The key objectives of the Standard are to resolve issues that cause delays in the connections process and to provide performance reporting, so that there are greater levels of accountability and transparency around the time it takes networks to complete certain steps in the connections process.

In developing the Standard, AusNet Services undertook a series of engagement activities with a diverse range of customers and stakeholders including property developers, their consultants, contractors and industry groups.

The AusNet Services Standard communicates benchmarks, as identified in consultation with property developers and stakeholders for continuous improvement, timely issues resolution, accountability, and transparency in timeframes in the negotiated electricity connections process.

AusNet Services will continue to engage with property developers and stakeholders as part of our commitment to deliver improvements to the connections process.

We will publish our performance against this Standard on our website.

### 1.2 Research and engagement process

The process for developing the Standard covered three broad stages: data capture, engagement, and reporting. These stages are outlined in the table below.

Stage	AusNet Services tasks	Engagement activity
<b>Data capture</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assign core project team to focus on the development of the Customer Service Standard.</li> <li>Identify, understand and document property developer pain-points when working with AusNet Services.</li> <li>Self-reflection and identification of AusNet Services process issues.</li> <li>Agree on research strategy and plan - qualitative through personalised interviews.</li> <li>Identify property developers, their consultants, contractors and industry groups to interview.</li> <li>Identify common issues and trends to inform the engagement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Core team issues identification workshops.</li> </ul>

**Customer Service Standard**

Stage	AusNet Services tasks	Engagement activity
<b>Engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invite property developers and stakeholders to an interview</li> <li>• Develop and agree on interview questions and interview format.</li> <li>• Undertake all interviews and record issues and input.</li> <li>• Undertake a thematic analysis to identify comment themes and issues.</li> <li>• De-identify responses and report on themes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One-on-one interviews.</li> <li>• Core team workshops.</li> </ul>
<b>Reporting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use themes to develop and agree on a number of core focus areas.</li> <li>• Further develop these core focus areas into Customer Outcomes Principles.</li> <li>• Report back to developers and stakeholders through a Customer Focus Group on 'what we heard' and seeking final input to the <i>Customer Service Statement</i>.</li> <li>• Brief AusNet Services Customer Consultative Committee, which is comprised of customer representative bodies, including the Energy Users Association of Australia (EUAA), on the process and outcomes.</li> <li>• Finalise the Customer Service Statement and Standard.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Core team workshops.</li> <li>• Customer Focus Group.</li> <li>• Customer Consultative Committee briefing.</li> </ul>

## 2 Project Approach

To demonstrate our commitment to genuine and inclusive engagement, we adopted an engagement approach that ensured that the Standard was built on the feedback gained from engagement activities. This ensured that the principles and commitments in the Customer Service Standard were derived from property developer and stakeholder needs, rather than from the needs of AusNet Services.

To ensure independence, we engaged an external consultant, RPS, to conduct the interviews, undertake qualitative research methods, including thematic analysis, and engage broadly within AusNet Services to inform inputs into the Standard.

### 2.1 Project objective

As required by the ESC, AusNet Services applied the following two objectives when developing the Standard. The objectives of the Standard are:

- **Resolve issues that cause delays in connection process:** Continuous improvement and building effective business relationships between distribution businesses and developers to resolve issues
- **Performance reporting:** accountability and transparency about the time it takes distribution businesses to complete certain steps of the connections process.

### 2.2 Content of the Standard

As per the ESC requirement, the Greenfields Negotiated Electricity Connection Customer Service Standard comprises the following elements:

- **Customer outcomes statement and principles:** this will set the outcomes the DNSP expects to deliver over the next two years in relation to negotiated connections, and the principles that they will adopt when undertaking underground negotiated connections.
- **Consultative committee:** establishment of a consultative committee that meets quarterly to resolve issues causing delays in relation to connections.
- **Performance reporting framework:** DNSPs will be required to report their performance to the ESC every six months on key metrics agreed with developers.
- Any other additional elements that DNSP would like to include.

### 2.3 Engagement principles

The ESC required that the Standard be co-designed with property developers and their contractors through a clear engagement plan. This will ensure developer needs are effectively and accurately incorporated into the new Standard.

Our engagement plan was guided by the ESC's five core principles:

- We will **inform those we have engaged with of the outcomes of the engagement** and how they have influenced the customer service standard.
- We will **prioritise areas identified as significant** and important to our developers and their contractors.
- Engagement will be ongoing and **tailored to the developers' and their contractors' needs** in a format preferred by developers and their contractors.
- We will **receive and consider feedback from developers** and their contractors in a timely manner.
- We will include **clear, accessible and comprehensive** information.

### 3 Engagement Approach

The engagement program that we undertook for this project placed emphasis on direct engagement with property developers, consultants, contractors and industry groups. Our approach comprised of the following activities which are outlined in detail below:

- Property developer and stakeholder identification.
- One-on-one interviews.
- Core team project workshops.
- Customer Focus Group.
- Customer Consultative Committee briefing.

#### 3.1 Property developer and stakeholder identification

As a first step, a number of property developers, consultants, contractors and industry groups were identified as critical stakeholders to be involved in the development of Customer Service Standard. They were chosen because of the recent dealings with AusNet Services in connecting power to new developments. Throughout the process with these stakeholders, a number of additional parties were identified and also included in the process.

The property developer organisations involved in each activity and the engagement details are outlined in the tables below.

##### Details of meetings conducted

Developer / Consultant / Contractor	Engagement Details
DFC Pty Ltd	Thursday 19 November 2020
Moremac Property Group	Wednesday 18 November 2020
Mirvac Victoria Pty Ltd	Tuesday 17 November 2020
National Pacific Properties	Thursday 19 November 2020
Satterley Property Group Pty Ltd	Tuesday 17 November 2020
Peet Estates (VIC) Pty Ltd	Thursday 19 November 2020
AV Jennings Properties Pty Ltd	Wednesday 18 November 2020
Association of Land Development Engineers (ALDE)	Tuesday 17 November 2020 Monday 23 November 2020
Urban Development Institute of Australia (UDIA)	Thursday 19 November 2020
Plan B (consultant)	Friday 20 November 2020
Civil Contractors Federation (CCF)	Monday 23 November 2020
GRM Consulting (technical consultant to CCF)	Monday 23 November 2020
Winslow Constructors (civil contractors)	Monday 23 November 2020

---

**Customer Service Standard**

---

**Details of individuals unable to be reached.**

<b>Developer / Consultant / Contractor</b>	<b>Details</b>
Greenridge Properties Pty Ltd	Emailed, phoned – no reply
Parklea Pty Ltd	Emailed, phoned – no reply
Stockland Development Pty Ltd	Emailed, phoned – no reply
Villa World Properties Pty Ltd	Emailed, phoned – contact no longer at company

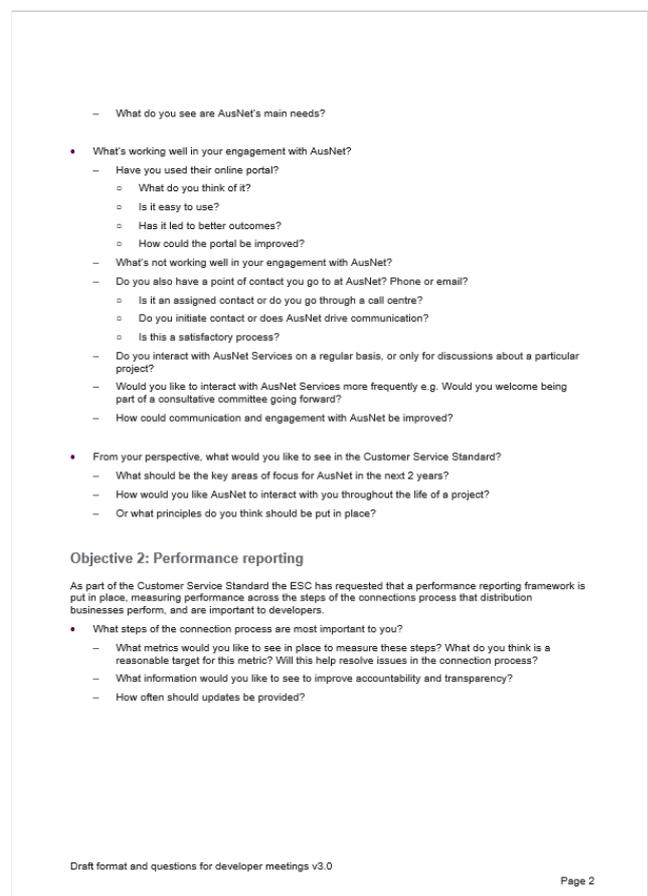
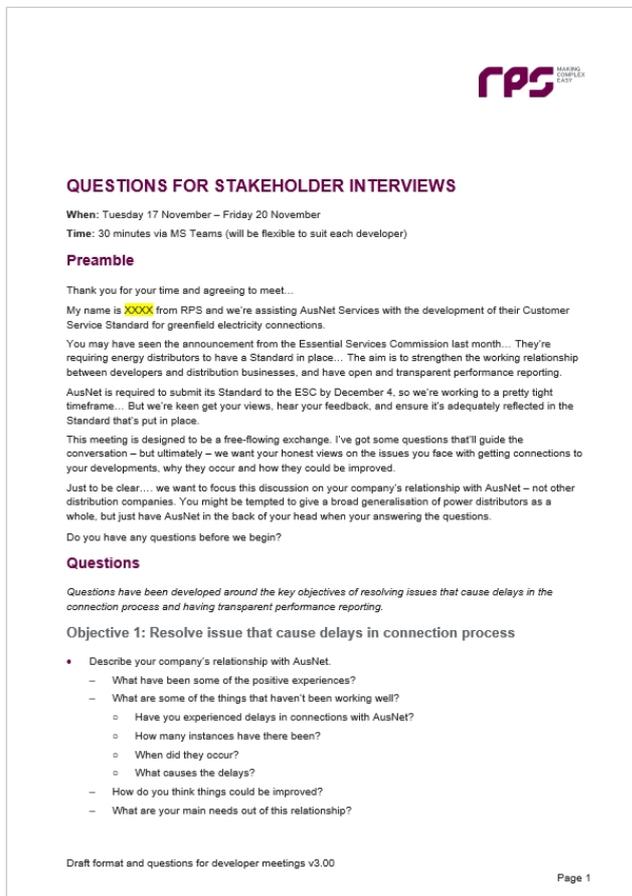
3.2 One-on-one interviews

In total, 10 interviews were conducted with 16 individuals from 13 organisations. The interviews took place between Tuesday, 17 November 2020 and Monday, 23 November 2020. Interview questions revolved around the two key objectives of the Standard:

- **Resolve issues that cause delays in connection process:** Continuous improvement and building effective business relationships between distribution businesses and developers to resolve issues.
- **Performance reporting:** accountability and transparency about the time it takes distribution businesses to complete certain steps of the connections process.

Property developers and stakeholders were recruited for interviews via an email from an AusNet Services representative. The email explained the project, its purpose and invited them to a 30-minute interview. Interviews were undertaken while much of Victoria remained under Covid-19 restrictions and were therefore run in a virtual format via Microsoft Teams. Those who did not respond to the first email were followed up with phone calls and further reminder invite emails.

Interview questions were developed based on the two project objectives set out above. The questions aimed to extract honest views on the issues that property developers and stakeholders faced with getting timely connections to developments, why they occur and how they could be improved. All questions are provided in Appendix A.



## Customer Service Standard

The interview responses were captured in a template which summarised each companies relationship with AusNet Services, how they engage with the business, what they would like to see in the Customer Service Standard and what they would like to see in performance reporting.

An example of an interview response sheet is provided.

**INTERVIEW RESPONSE SHEET**

Interviewee: [REDACTED]

Time and date: [REDACTED]

**Objective 1: Resolve issue that cause delays in connection process**

Questions	Responses
Describe your company's relationship with AusNet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I'm a Development Manager for [REDACTED]</li> <li>Have a long history in the South East. Is a long standing company, operating Australia-wide.</li> <li>Projects in the South East are in the wrapping up stage, but looking at more opportunities in the area.</li> <li>Work with AusNet at various stages of their projects, including civil through to statement of compliance. Also interact with maintenance and follow up enquiries.</li> <li>Also deliver projects that have minor cross over with AusNet, like wetlands. There's some coordination with common property/council roads. Will have discussions with AusNet on these projects in the coming months.</li> </ul>
How do you engage with AusNet?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We use Powerplant to engage with AusNet. Similar sized to Plan B. They deal directly with AusNet.</li> <li>Would only get in contact with AusNet when issues occur and when we need to escalate things. Those occasions are few and far between. We use the consultants as the middleman to manage those things.</li> <li>Had an issue in June 2020 around a statement of compliance. It was end of financial year when there's added financial pressures. Got a non-conformance over a pit lid which was related to a new council standard. The next pre-compliance date was a week and a half after that. Adds to timeframes. Escalated the issue through consultants. Also reached out to AusNet, but our contact in the distribution business had left. Ended up speaking to their replacement.</li> <li>Appears to be a disconnect from authority to authority (council and distribution business) regarding new rules and standards that are put in place.</li> <li>Did not have a good experience with Compliance Plus. Our consultant Powerplant went for a tender for auditing works. There was a butting of egos that we were caught in the middle of.</li> <li>Good thing that there's another consultant on board, but could there be issues in the cross over of compliance contractors and projects they've worked on? Potential conflict of interest.</li> <li>Believe Powerplant uses AusNet's online portal. I don't have much involvement in it.</li> <li>Having a case manager from AusNet would be incredibly helpful. Would be good to have someone to take us through the life cycle of the project.</li> <li>We deal with Harry when dealing with AusNet.</li> </ul>
What would you like to see in the Customer Service Standard?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Big issue is timeframes. If an authority says they'll get something back to you in x amount of days, it's easy for them to come in just before it's due and stop the clock.</li> <li>Would like to see a clear requirement around dates and times. Understand it may result in accountability issues.</li> <li>Baffling how reapprovals can take so long. Would be good to get insights from AusNet on what's wrong with the items they submit.</li> </ul>

**Objective 2: Performance reporting**

Questions	Responses
What would you like to see in performance reporting?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Like it when authorities delegate tasks down to consultants. They have better resourcing and are more financially driven to complete tasks quicker than distribution businesses.</li> <li>Would like a better explanation of the various types of audits and the steps that need to be followed in the process. Probably more of a client/auditor issue.</li> </ul>

### 3.3 What we heard

Thematic analysis was undertaken across all interview responses to identify the common and salient themes emerging from the interviews. The themes were categorised based on the key objectives of the Standard. A copy of the comprehensive and de-identified output of all interviews is provided in Appendix B. We have also provided a summary below.

#### Engagement key quotes – Objective 1: Resolve issues that cause delays in connection process

Relationship with AusNet Services	Current engagement with AusNet Services	Input into the customer service standard
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“To their credit, AusNet has improved compliance approvals”</li> <li>“Don’t feel that AusNet considers developers as customers”</li> <li>“Positive for AusNet is that they allow external people to do some of the design work”</li> <li>“What AusNet does well is the contestability of tie-ins”</li> <li>“Auditing is a dirty word... the way they go about it is frustrating”</li> <li>“Shut down periods make us nervous...there’s enormous ramifications for first home buyers if tie-ins are cancelled”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“The vast majority of my interactions with AusNet have been positive”</li> <li>“[REDACTED] is fantastic to deal with. He’s a god send”</li> <li>“Having someone in a case manager role would be a big help”</li> <li>“Relationship with AusNet is at arms length, but it’s a good relationship”</li> <li>“Biggest issue is having blanket changes sprung on us. You don’t discuss it with us”</li> <li>“We want to have the ability to negotiate and resolve issues as they arise”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Meet your shut down dates”</li> <li>“Put timeframes on the table”</li> <li>“Biggest gripe is the stop-start-stop-start process”</li> <li>“We don’t know the process until we’re in it”</li> </ul>

## Customer Service Standard

- “General perception is developers have all the money, so it doesn’t matter”
- “Can take 5-6 weeks to have any contact after submitting through the online portal”

### Engagement key quotes - Objective 2: Performance reporting

Timeframes	Contractor/consultant performance	Three strikes policy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Would be good to see timeframes in performance reporting”</li> <li>• “At least by reporting we will be able to see if there’s an issue improving or worsening trend”</li> <li>• “Can plan ahead when there’s certainty”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “AusNet should hold their consultants to account. You contract and engage auditors – you should be managing them in a better way”</li> <li>• “There needs to be more players in the field”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Seems to be an extraordinarily unfair system”</li> <li>• “It’s easy for larger developers to get three strikes, because they’ve got huge projects”</li> </ul>

### 3.4 What we learned

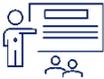
Through consultations with property developers and stakeholders on the key objectives of this process, we also developed some learnings. We understand that property developers and stakeholders face a range of issues and concerns when seeking to get electricity connected to their developments, including:

- Tie-in delays and cancellations.
- Confusion and frustration around the auditing process.
- Understanding of the standards.
- Frustration with the way AusNet Services engages with developers and their consultants.

It is important to note that property developer and stakeholder feedback resonated with members of AusNet Services and has resulted in a continued focus from the business on customer service and improving relationships in the property development industry, with the ultimate goal of improving the timeliness of electricity connections. This has therefore been an effective way to meet the objectives of the ESC’s review.

### 3.5 Core focus areas

The salient themes and issues that emanated from the interviews were then used to identify five core focus areas. These core focus areas were then translated into Principles which will be used to guide the key inputs into the considerations and outcomes of the Customer Outcomes Statement.

Principles	What this means for our customers
 <p><b>Be accountable to our timeframes</b></p>	Guarantee agreed timeframes
 <p><b>Proactively engage with industry</b></p>	Ensure that the industry is across technical changes and expectations
 <p><b>Making it easier to connect</b></p>	Streamline the lines of communication with developers
 <p><b>Demystify the auditing process</b></p>	Ensure that timely development is not held up by the auditing process

## Customer Service Standard



### Monitoring our performance

Provide timely and transparent monthly reporting on the AusNet Services website

## 3.6 Customer focus group

All property developers and stakeholders who participated in the interviews were also invited to a Customer Focus Group Session. The 90-minute Focus Group was held via Microsoft Teams on Thursday, 26 November 2020. Senior AusNet Services management were also in attendance.

The purpose of this Focus Group was to play-back and validate the themes and issues derived from the interviews. We also demonstrated how insights from the interviews were used to underpin the Principles and outcomes included in the Customer Outcomes Statement. This session also allowed property developers, consultants, contractors and industry groups to add additional feedback that may not have been raised in their first interview.

The main issue that emerged during the session was the reporting of audit failures. Property developers and stakeholders expressed that AusNet Services should have a stronger focus on resolving repeat audit issues. We intend to delve into this in more detail with the Developer Consultative Committee.

Overall, property developers and stakeholders were comfortable that we had accurately captured their feedback and were supportive of what was proposed for inclusion in the Customer Outcomes Statement provided. The slides for the Focus Group session are provided in Appendix C.

## 3.7 Core team workshops

We recognise the importance of ensuring that key internal stakeholders understand and are able to action the insights that we learn from property developers and stakeholders. It is ultimately these internal stakeholders that will implement the Customer Service Standard. As such, we established a core working group comprising of a cross-section of the AusNet Services team responsible for the connection of electricity to developer sites at the outset of the project. The core-team met multiple times throughout the process.

Set out below is a summary of core-team meetings that occurred.

Timing	Workshop	Details and content	Outputs
6 November 2020	Core team workshop 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish the core-team</li> <li>Initial ideation on property developer and stakeholder issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agreement on core-team members</li> </ul>
16 November 2020	Core team workshop 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outline engagement process</li> <li>Discuss and agree research questions</li> <li>Identify issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agreement on interview questions</li> <li>Identify pre-existing issues from property developers and stakeholders</li> </ul>
23 November 2020	Core team workshop 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Present feedback to date</li> <li>Co-design thematic inquiry</li> <li>Agreement on themes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agreement on themes to inform the content of the Standard</li> </ul>
30 November 2020	Core team workshop 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Present draft standard</li> <li>Discuss and refine draft</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review and discussion of the Standard content</li> </ul>

## 3.8 Customer Consultative Committee Briefing

In 2016 AusNet Services established its Customer Consultative Committee (CCC). The CCC comprises of representatives from AusNet Services and external representatives from a range of customer interests and community groups. The CCC meets monthly to consult on key topics facing customers and the business.

In the 1 December 2020 CCC meeting, we presented the core themes and draft Standard to the Committee for discussion. The Committee was supportive of this project and what was proposed in the Standard.

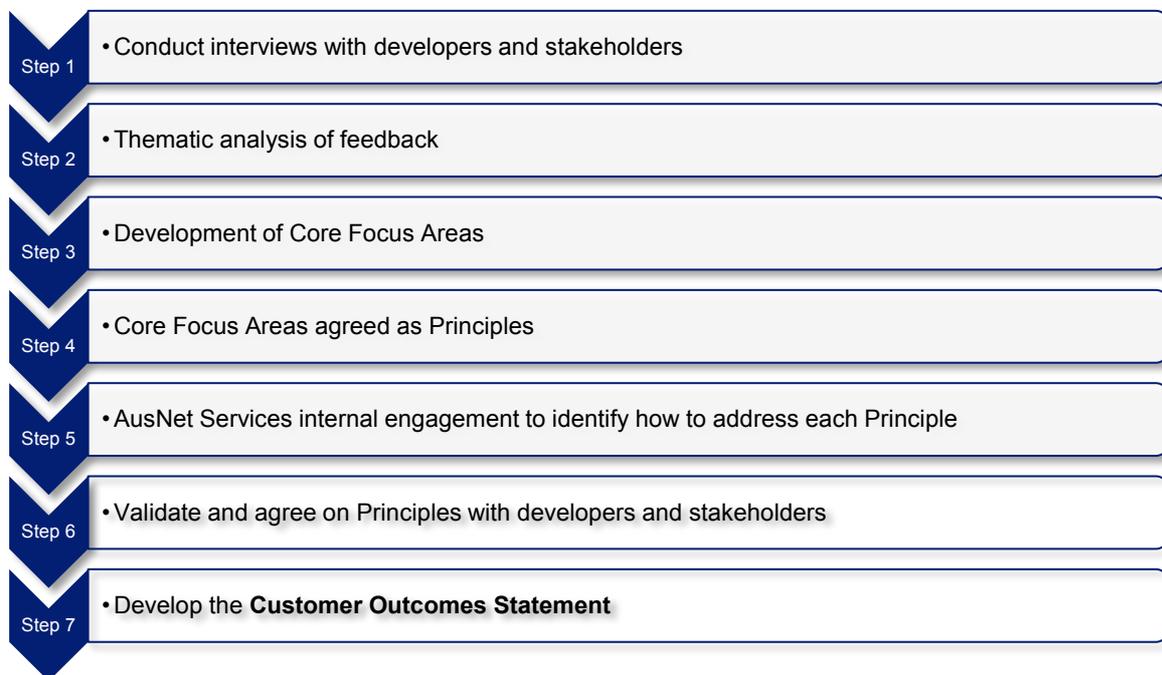
## 4 Customer Outcomes Statement

As a part of the Greenfields Negotiated Electricity Connection Customer Service Standard, AusNet Services has developed a Customer Outcomes Statement. This Customer Outcomes Statement comprises two parts, as required by the ESC:

- The principles or considerations each distribution business will commit to use when interacting with developers and their contractors.
- The outcomes each distribution businesses will achieve over the next two years in relation to negotiated connections.

### 4.1 Feedback at the centre

The Customer Outcomes Statement was developed using the direct feedback provided as a result of all engagement activities undertaken with property developers and stakeholders. This feedback is at the core of the Statement which was built to respond to the pain points and reoccurring issues raised. The steps in this process are outlined below.



### 4.2 Translating feedback into the Customer Service Statement

The engagement process provided valuable insights from property developers and the wider housing development industry about the issues they face in getting electricity connected to their developments in a timely fashion. The issues identified include:

1. Tie-in delays and cancellations.
2. Confusion and frustration around the auditing process.
3. Understanding of the standards.
4. Frustration with the way AusNet Services engages with developers and their consultants.

Each of these issues are broadly identified and addressed in the **Customer Outcomes Statement** below. However, there are two areas that have not been able to be included in the Statement, as they require further consultation with property developers and stakeholders to understand the constraints and opportunities to allow for mutually beneficial solutions. These are explained in detail in Section 5.3 below.

**Customer Service Standard**

**4.3 Customer Outcomes Statement**

The ESC Guidance notes that the Customer Service Statement should comprise two parts: considerations and outcomes.

**Considerations:** in developing the key considerations, the thematic analysis of the feedback assisted with the development of principles. The AusNet Services team reflected and agreed to *what that means for our customers and our commitments*.

**Outcomes:** outcomes were developed to support each principle, including *what success looks like* and the *performance measures* to be included in the performance framework.

This is detailed in the AusNet Services *Customer Outcomes Statement* below.

This AusNet Services Customer Outcomes Statement communicates the benchmarks, as identified in consultation with industry, for continuous improvement, timely issues resolution and accountability and transparency in timeframes in the negotiated electricity connections process..

Considerations			Outcomes		
Principles	What this means for our customers	Our commitments	What success looks like	Performance measures	
 <p><b>Be accountable to our timeframes</b></p>	Guarantee agreed timeframes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase transparency with published timeframes for the end-to-end process.</li> <li>Meet the average agreed timeframes for AusNet Services design reviews.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developers can make business decisions with certainty.</li> <li>Developers have confidence in the connections process with AusNet Services.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Agreed timeframes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clear process – publish flow chart</li> <li>Design review cycle time</li> <li>Target average: &lt;15 business days</li> </ul>	
 <p><b>Proactively engage with industry</b></p>	Ensure that the industry is across technical changes and expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with DCC to seek feedback on major AusNet Services technical standard changes before implementation.</li> <li>Host industry briefings to proactively communicate changes.</li> <li>Regularly communicate minor technical standard updates and changes on the AusNet Services website.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All technical standard changes are communicated through the DCC, made public on the AusNet Services website and proactively pushed out through industry newsletters and publications.</li> <li>A database of developer and industry group contacts is established and regularly updated.</li> <li>Communication channels are in place.</li> <li>DCC is informed and provides input into major AusNet Services technical standards changes before they are implemented.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Ongoing industry engagement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quarterly DCC meetings</li> <li>Biannual industry briefings</li> <li>Publish technical standards updates monthly</li> </ul>	
 <p><b>Making it easier to connect</b></p>	Streamline the lines of communication with developers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide a point-of-contact for each project.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Effective two-way communication between developers/consultants and the appointed AusNet Services Electricity Project Coordinator.</li> <li>Developers have confidence in how their projects are tracking through the connections process.</li> <li>Developers are informed of AusNet Services Standards and are kept up to date on any changes.</li> </ul>	<p><b>AusNet Services Electricity Coordinator assigned</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All projects are assigned an AusNet Services Electricity Coordinator following payment of fees.</li> </ul>	
 <p><b>Demystify the auditing process</b></p>	Ensure that timely development is not held up by the auditing process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meet the KPI timeframes for AusNet Services' network auditing process.</li> <li>Communicate AusNet Services auditing expectations with Victorian Electricity Distribution Network (VEDN) auditors.</li> <li>Define which audits can be conducted by certified third parties.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developers have confidence and clearly understand auditing requirements.</li> <li>AusNet Services auditors come onsite for compliance checks within 10 working days.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Auditing metrics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Network auditor site audit attendance</li> <li>Target: 95% within 10 days of request</li> <li>Audits passed and failed - Number</li> <li>Re-audits - Number</li> <li>Audits requested and completed - Number</li> </ul>	
 <p><b>Transparency in reporting</b></p>	Provide timely and transparent reporting on the AusNet Services website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proactive issue identification with top audit failures published quarterly.</li> <li>Timeframes for end-to-end process (application to supply).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developers have clear timeframes and certainty in the end-to-end connections process.</li> <li>Developers have a better understanding of auditing issues.</li> </ul>	<p><b>End to end process timeframe</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Self-publish reporting                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Period 1 July to 31 December - report by 28 February the following year; and</li> <li>Period 1 January to 30 June- report by 31 August same year</li> </ul> </li> <li>DCC provided trends in audit fails - quarterly</li> </ul>	

## 5 Developer Consultative Committee

AusNet Services is establishing a Developer Consultative Committee (DCC) as part of its Customer Service Standard for Greenfields Electricity Connections.

The DCC is designed to be a forum for property developers, their consultants, contractors and industry group members to raise and discuss matters relating to AusNet Services that will ultimately improve the experience of negotiated electricity connections.

The DCC will meet on a quarterly basis and the membership will be reviewed annually.

The full terms of references are provided in Appendix D.

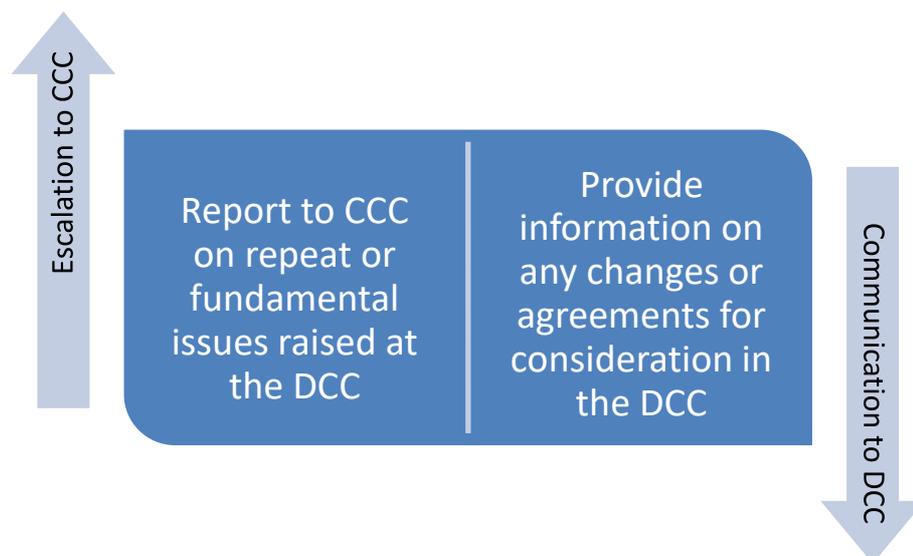
### 5.1 Purpose

The purpose of the DCC is to:

- **Share performance reporting results** - AusNet Services will provide the DCC with performance reporting for all metrics outlined in the Standard for Greenfields Electricity Connections. This will include, but not be limited to, top audit failures for each quarter and performance against agreed timeframes.
- **Discuss auditing requirements, processes and potential efficiencies** - this will provide property developers greater clarity on what is required as part of the auditing process.
- **Seek feedback on new technical standards or changes to existing AusNet Services technical standards** - this will allow for feedback on changes to standards and allow property developers to make decisions around their developments with greater certainty.
- **Provide issues for escalation to the AusNet Services Customer Consultative Committee** - to ensure any repeat or fundamental issues being raised at the DCC are escalated for input.
- **Review outcomes and progress of the Harmonisation Group** - to evaluate the proposed changes and ensure these are aligned with industry needs.

### 5.2 Link to Customer Consultative Committee

To ensure a mechanism for the escalation of issues, the DCC will provide a summary of repeat or fundamental issues identified on a quarterly basis. Each year, the DCC will also provide a summary report of outcomes and achievements to the CCC for review.



### 5.3 Considerations for the DCC

#### Joint DCC

During our engagement activities, property developers and stakeholders indicated that the DCC would work best if it is organised jointly with other Victorian DNSPs. This would reduce the burden on property developers

## Customer Service Standard

---

and stakeholder having to attend multiple committees with similar objectives. It is understood water authorities have taken this approach with their property developer committees.

AusNet Services therefore intends to advocate for a Victorian DCC and will engage the other Victorian DNSPs in a discussion on the feasibility of this.

### **Connecting to the network (Tie ins)**

During our initial conversations with property developers, we heard them talk to frustrations around the final connection to the network (tie-in stage) of the process. Developers expressed that when tie-ins are cancelled last minute it causes issues to them as delays to reschedule the tie in. In addition, developers expressed the need to have greater communication around this stage of the process when things go wrong. They want the ability to talk to someone from AusNet Services to identify a resolution.

AusNet Services fully understand the cancellation of tie-ins as a pain-point for property developers. We explored this feedback internally with our core team and the impacts on property developers, and their customers in the settlement process.

At this stage, we are constrained in our ability to prevent tie-in cancellations because cancellations typically occur because of events that are outside of our control, such as severe weather. However, we would like to leverage the creation of the DCC to collaborate with the Developer Consultative Committee (DCC) to set guidelines on how to better manage and communicate these cancellations in the future.

### **End to end process timeframe**

As part of the interviews with property developers, they expressed a desire to understand end to end connection timeframes more fully. Measuring this today is seemingly difficult as the end-to-end process includes tasks that are also to be undertaken by the property developer.

We are keen to work closely with property developers to understand if an end to end timeframe measure can be developed. We would also like to work with property developers, through the DCC, to discuss the parts of the connection process that they are responsible for. To protect the safety of the network, it is critical that quality work is undertaken by both AusNet Services and property developers. We believe that improvement opportunities could be identified.

## 6 Performance Framework

Principles	Performance Measure	Performance measure	
 <b>Be accountable to our timeframes</b>	Agreed timeframes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide a clear process flow chart with agreed timeframes for AusNet Services processes</li> </ul>	
	Design review cycle time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Target average: &lt;15 business days</li> </ul>	
 <b>Proactively engage with industry</b>	Ongoing industry engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quarterly DCC meetings</li> <li>Biannual industry briefings</li> <li>Publish technical standards updates monthly</li> </ul>	
	AusNet Services Electricity Coordinator assigned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All projects are assigned an AusNet Services Electricity Coordinator following payment of fees.</li> </ul>	
 <b>Making it easier to connect</b>	Network auditor site audit attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Target: 95% within 10 days of request</li> </ul>	
	 <b>Demystify the auditing process</b>	Audits passed and failed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Publish total</li> </ul>
		Re-audits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Publish total</li> </ul>
		Audits requested and completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Publish total</li> </ul>
 <b>Transparency in reporting</b>	Self-publish reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Self-publish reporting :                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Period 1 July to 31 December - report by 28 February the following year; and</li> <li>Period 1 January to 30 June- report by 31 August same year</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
	End to end process timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DCC provided trends in audit fails - quarterly</li> </ul>	

## Appendix A - Stakeholder interview questions

### Questions

Questions have been developed around the key objectives of resolving issues that cause delays in the connection process and having transparent performance reporting.

#### Objective 1: Resolve issue that cause delays in connection process

- Describe your company's relationship with AusNet Services.
  - What have been some of the positive experiences?
  - What are some of the things that haven't been working well?
    - Have you experienced delays in connections with AusNet Services?
    - How many instances have there been?
    - When did they occur?
    - What causes the delays?
  - How do you think things could be improved?
  - What are your main needs out of this relationship?
  - What do you see are AusNet Services main needs?
- What's working well in your engagement with AusNet Services?
  - Have you used their online portal?
    - What do you think of it?
    - Is it easy to use?
    - Has it led to better outcomes?
    - How could the portal be improved?
  - What's not working well in your engagement with AusNet Services?
  - Do you also have a point of contact you go to at AusNet Services? Phone or email?
    - Is it an assigned contact or do you go through a call centre?
    - Do you initiate contact or does AusNet Services drive communication?
    - Is this a satisfactory process?
  - Do you interact with AusNet Services on a regular basis, or only for discussions about a particular project?
  - Would you like to interact with AusNet Services more frequently e.g. Would you welcome being part of a consultative committee going forward?
  - How could communication and engagement with AusNet Services be improved?
- From your perspective, what would you like to see in the Customer Service Standard?
  - What should be the key areas of focus for AusNet Services in the next 2 years?
  - How would you like AusNet Services to interact with you throughout the life of a project?
  - Or what principles do you think should be put in place?

#### Objective 2: Performance reporting

As part of the Customer Service Standard the ESC has requested that a performance reporting framework is put in place, measuring performance across the steps of the connections process that distribution businesses perform, and are important to developers.

- What steps of the connection process are most important to you?
  - What metrics would you like to see in place to measure these steps? What do you think is a reasonable target for this metric? Will this help resolve issues in the connection process?
  - What information would you like to see to improve accountability and transparency?
  - How often should updates be provided?

## Appendix B – Interview feedback

Consolidated interview responses

Objective 1: Resolve issue that cause delays in connection process

Relationship with AusNet Services

All feedback	Key notes, key quotes
<p><b>Company perception</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The most common thing people say about AusNet is that “at least it’s not Powercor”</li><li>• Sometimes we despair if we know we are going to have to deal with a power distributor because they are responsible for the region, we are working in. We know we are going to have problems down the track.</li><li>• The issue with power authorities is that you do not know the process until you are in it, in terms of lead times, approvals and shut down periods.</li><li>• We want to feel more like a customer. We are putting a lot of assets in the ground for you, but I do not think that message gets across. We are viewed as a problem, not a solution. There is a customer at the end of this – someone who is purchased land and want to move into their new home. We are an enabler for bringing new customers to AusNet.</li><li>• We take the approach that there are rules there for a reason, and we just live with it and try to adapt. There is no point trying to fight AusNet.</li><li>• Do not feel like a customer when I am talking to AusNet. I am more begging and pleading. They are an authority and that is how they act.</li><li>• Communication is very poor across the whole industry.</li><li>• Faceless organisation.</li><li>• Biggest thing is that, talking from AusNet point of view, a lot of staff need to realise they are there to serve customers. If they do not improve, they will lose customers.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The most common thing people say about AusNet is that “<b>at least it’s not Powercor</b>”</li><li>• You do not know the process until you are in it,</li><li>• We want to feel more like a customer</li><li>• There is no point trying to fight AusNet</li><li>• They are an authority and that is how they act</li><li>• Faceless organisation</li><li>• They are there to serve customers. If they do not improve, they will lose customers</li><li>• “<b>don’t feel that AusNet considers developers are customers</b>”</li></ul>
<p><b>Auditing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Auditing is a dirty word. I would be encouraging AusNet to have a team or pool of auditors that we can go to. It has been Compliance Plus for the past four years. Would be good to add more to the mix. The timeframes for them to come do a job is fine, but the way they go about it is frustrating. As soon as they find a problem on site, they disappear until its fixed. Would be good if they just fixed all the issues as they go through. They have gone too far past being strict.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Auditing is a dirty word</li><li>• The way they go about it is frustrating</li><li>• Here are many times where little items are found and the auditors will walk off the job, three strikes and you are out</li></ul>

---

## Customer Service Standard

---

### All feedback

- You assume you never get past the first audit. Takes two or three goes. If auditors worked better with us on non-conformance, it would help everyone.
- Why are there only two external auditors? There are certain pressure points in the year when it becomes an issue to get auditors.
- Booking an audit, depending on where and why it might take a day or two. The problem is you can always find something wrong. I have done auditing, there is always something wrong. There are items that are minor or major. There are many times where little items are found and the auditors will walk off the job, three strikes and you are out. And they will not come back until they are booked again, can take up to 10 days to get another audit.

### Key notes, key quotes

- They have gone too far past being strict
- If auditors worked better with us on non-conformance, it would help everyone.

### Tie ins and shutdowns

- There are enormous ramifications for first home buyers if tie ins are cancelled. Means first home buyers are not able to settle on their land and move into their homes. Customers hassle us and seek compensation, but we are not obliged to pay. It is a really poor experience for customers.
- Have had 4 tie ins cancelled since June. Every time a tie in is booked, there is a 6-week notification period. The clock starts again when a tie in is cancelled.
- Disappointing that shutdowns happen. There is no consultation, or courtesy call to explain why. Causes major issues and delays for project delivery.
- Shut down periods make us nervous. They are never guaranteed. We have no confidence in AusNet meeting the shutdown tie in date. It causes financial hardship. Is a nightmare to coordinate.

- There are enormous ramifications for first home buyers if tie ins are cancelled
- There is no consultation, or courtesy call to explain why
- Shut down periods make us nervous. They are never guaranteed. We have no confidence in AusNet meeting the shutdown tie in date.

### Commercial ramifications

- General perception is that developers have all the money so it does not matter. It is a stigma in the industry.
- Issues with the timing of payments. You can end up delaying a multimillion-dollar project because you cannot get a \$3,000 payment sorted in 14 days.

- General perception is that developers have all the money so it does not matter
- You can end up delaying a multimillion-dollar project because you cannot get a \$3,000 payment sorted in 14 days.

## Customer Service Standard

### Current engagement with AusNet Services

#### All feedback

##### AusNet Services staff relationships

- **Andrew Webber** is fantastic to deal with. He is a godsend. Everyone picks up the phone to him. He is competent and gets the job done. Would be good for people who work with **Andrew** to introduce themselves to us. **Andrew** understands the commerciality.
- Having someone in a case manager role would be a big help.
- Our consultants engage with AusNet. The feedback we get is that there is no room to negotiate. Take it or leave it.
- Deal with **Andrew Webber** and **Steve Flynn**. Work with them on compliance and ensuring land is titled. Always had an excellent working relationship with **Andrew**. I find **Steve** has too much on his plate, but can sympathise with him, because he would have a lot of other developers on his back. We are experiencing incredible growth in the industry, and we need more than one **Steve**.
- There would be benefits to having a case manager to assist us.
- Would only get in contact with AusNet when issues occur and when we need to escalate things. Those occasions are few and far between. We use the consultants as the middleman to manage those things.
- Appears to be a disconnect from authority to authority (council and distribution business) regarding new rules and standards that are put in place.
- Having a case manager from AusNet would be incredibly helpful. Would be good to have someone to take us through the life cycle of the project.
- We deal with **██████** when dealing with AusNet.
- Everyone seems to have their own specific little function and that is where their function finishes. **Andrew Webber** is about the only one who can find why the process has stopped or point you to who to ask for next step.

##### General communications

- Biggest issue is having blanket changes sprung on us. You do not discuss it with us. We need to know six months in advance if something like is going to change.
- No dialogue between AusNet and Council. Lack of communication.
- We have millions of dollars tied up because two authorities cannot agree on something.

##### Consultative committee

- Will consider taking part in a consultative committee, but we want to have the ability to negotiate and resolve issues as they arise. We are working to tight delivery timeframes. Taking part in a quarterly consultative committee could be too late.

#### Key notes, key quotes

- **██████** is fantastic to deal with. He is a godsend
  - **██████** is about the only one who can find why the process has stopped or point you to who to ask for next step.
  - Would be good to have someone to take us through the life cycle of the project.
  - Appears to be a disconnect from authority to authority (council and distribution business)
  - There would be benefits to having a case manager
  - Always had an excellent working relationship with **██████**
  - The feedback we get is that there is no room to negotiate. Take it or leave it.
  - Having someone in a case manager role would be a big help
- 
- Biggest issue is having blanket changes sprung on us. You do not discuss it with us.
  - No dialogue between AusNet and Council.
  - Lack of communication.
  - We have millions of dollars tied up because two authorities cannot agree on something.
- 
- We want to have the ability to negotiate and resolve issues as they arise.

---

## Customer Service Standard

---

### All feedback

- UDIA would be good to have on a consultative committee. They collate a lot of thoughts from property developers.
- Would like continuing engagement on a monthly basis to work through any project issues.

### Key notes, key quotes

- Taking part in a quarterly consultative committee could be too late.
- Would like continuing engagement on a monthly basis to work through any project issues.

### Online portal

- Our consultants use AusNet's online portal.
- We do most of the developers stuff on AusNet's portal because they have given up. We load stuff into it and you get no response for 3-4 weeks. We have admin staff, team has grown ridiculously, just to manage the application process. The girls try to follow up, put in emails with read receipt on, they do not get read. Make calls, get told to email. No response. Can take 5-6 weeks to have any contact after submitting.

- Our team has grown ridiculously, just to manage the application process.
- No response. Can take 5-6 weeks to have any contact after submitting.

---

## Customer Service Standard

---

### Input into the Customer Service Standard

#### All feedback

#### Key notes, key quotes

##### Timeframes

- Agreed turnaround timeframes in terms of initial applications and responses.
- Key message to AusNet is meet your shut down dates, and if you cannot, then we should get the first spot available and not wait another six weeks.
- If we call for an auditor, get them out by a certain time.
- Put timeframes on the table. Would like the opportunity to provide feedback.
- Big issue is timeframes. If an authority says they will get something back to you in x amount of days, it is easy for them to come in just before it is due and stop the clock.
- Would like to see a clear requirement around dates and times. Understand it may result in accountability issues.

- Meet your shut down dates.
- If we call for an auditor, get them out by a certain time.
- Put timeframes on the table.
- If an authority says they will get something back to you in x amount of days, it is easy for them to come in just before it is due and stop the clock.

##### Process improvements

- Should look at eradicating or automating touchpoints and processes.
- Would be helpful for AusNet to map out their processes and where the touchpoints are. How long should there be for masterplan approval, how long for detailed design. How long should it take for an audit to be placed and happen, then turn around times for approval.
- Baffling how reapprovals can take so long. Would be good to get insights from AusNet on what is wrong with the items they submit.
- Because there are many facets to AusNet's purpose – my biggest gripe is the “stop start stop start” service. You get one process, it gets done, then you need to push it on yourself.
- If you got to the local coffee shop, you get the coffee, the mug, the milk, the sweetener, all with a smile. At AusNet, you apply for a cup. Then you might get a cup. Have to ask someone else for the coffee. And someone else for the milk. Not a seamless process. And there is no smile at the end of it.
- If it were a seamless process it would be good.
- Changes to standards are really important to communicate.

- **“we don't know the process until we are in it”**
- Should look at eradicating or automating touchpoints and processes
- Map out their processes and where the touchpoints are
- Would be good to get insights from AusNet on what is wrong with the items they submit
- Biggest gripe is the “stop start stop start” service
- If you got to the local coffee shop, you get the coffee, the mug, the milk, the sweetener, all with a smile. At AusNet, you apply for a cup. Then you might get a cup. Have to ask someone else for the coffee. And someone else for the milk. Not a seamless process. And there is no smile at the end of it

---

## Customer Service Standard

---

### Objective 2: Performance reporting

#### Possible framework inputs

All feedback	Key notes, key quotes
<p><b>Timeframes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Would be good to see timeframes in performance reporting.</li><li>• Turnaround times for service applications and design reviews. At least by reporting we will be able to see if there is an improving or worsening trend. You can see what is causing the problem.</li><li>• More certainty around those timeframes. Can plan ahead when there's certainty. When it disappears into the aether, you have to ring and chase there must be a lot of mirrors in AusNet.</li><li>• We would like to see numbers and how you have done on each of the metrics that have target dates.</li><li>• Would like to see the time taken to review/approve designs. It has been pretty good with recent design approvals, but in the past, civil construction would have commenced, and you are betting on design approvals to come through by a certain time.</li><li>• Good timely warning of notifications.</li><li>• As a developer, we are only interested in our own projects and how they are tracking.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Would be good to see timeframes in performance reporting</li><li>• At least by reporting we will be able to see if there is an improving or worsening trend</li><li>• Can plan ahead when there's certainty</li></ul>
<p><b>Contractor/consultant performance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Would like to see performance reporting of electrical and civil contractors.</li><li>• AusNet should hold their consultants to account. You contract and engage auditors – you should be managing them in a better way.</li><li>• For some reason, there is only one capable contractor (UCS). It is a monopoly. Do not understand how they can do it all. They do a good job, but there needs to be more players in the field.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• AusNet should hold their consultants to account. You contract and engage auditors – you should be managing them in a better way.</li><li>• There needs to be more players in the field.</li></ul>
<p><b>Three strikes policy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Would like to see information on three strikes policy.</li><li>• Seems to be an extraordinarily unfair system. It is easy for larger developers to get three strikes, because they have got huge projects. We got a strike because an approved contractor is not coming back to complete the work. These are AusNet approved contractors. Needs to be a better way.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Seems to be an extraordinarily unfair system.</li><li>• It is easy for larger developers to get three strikes, because they have got huge projects</li></ul>

Appendix C – Customer Focus Group slides



26 November 2020

## AusNet Customer Service Standard

Developer and industry group feedback



## Agenda

1. Background
2. Who we spoke to
3. What we heard
4. Core focus areas
5. Next steps

## Background



The Essential Services Commission has requested all electricity distribution businesses create a Customer Service Standard for all Greenfields Negotiated Electricity Connections by **4 December 2020**.

### Objectives of the Standard

- **Resolve issues that cause delays in connection process:** Continuous improvement and building effective business relationships between distribution businesses and developers to resolve issues
- **Performance reporting:** accountability and transparency about the time it takes distribution businesses to complete certain steps of the connection process

### Standard to include

- **Customer outcomes statement and principles:** this will set the outcomes the DB expect to deliver over the next two years in relation to negotiated connections and the principles that they will adopt when undertaking underground negotiated connections
- **Developer Consultative Committee (DCC):** establishment of a customer committee that meets quarterly to resolve issues causing delays in relation to connections
- **Performance reporting framework:** DBs will be required to report on their performance to the commission every six months on key metrics agreed with developers
- Any other additional elements that DBs would like to include

## Who we spoke to

10 interviews 16 individuals



Developers	Industry groups, consultants, contractors
DFC Property	Association of Land Development Engineers
Moremac Property Group	Urban Development Institute of Australia
Mirvac Victoria	Plan B
National Pacific Properties	Civil Contractors Federation
Peet Limited	GRM Consulting
AV Jennings	Winslow Constructors
Satterley Property Group	

## What we heard



**Objective 1:** Resolve issues that cause delays in connection process

### Relationship with AusNet

*"Don't feel that AusNet considers developers as customers"*

*"Auditing is a dirty word... the way they go about it is frustrating"*

*"Shut down periods make us nervous...there's enormous ramifications for first home buyers if tie-ins are cancelled"*

*"General perception is developers have all the money, so it doesn't matter"*

### Current engagement with AusNet

*"Andrew Webber is fantastic to deal with. He's a god send."*

*"Having someone in a case manager role would be a big help"*

*"Biggest issue is having blanket changes sprung on us. You don't discuss it with us"*

*"We want to have the ability to negotiate and resolve issues as they arise"*

*"Can take 5-6 weeks to have any contact after submitting through the online portal"*

### Input into the customer service standard

*"Meet your shut down dates"*

*"Put timeframes on the table"*

*"Biggest gripe is the stop-start-stop-start process"*

*"We don't know the process until we're in it"*

## What we heard



**Objective 2:** Performance reporting

### Timeframes

*"Would be good to see timeframes in performance reporting"*

*"Atleast by reporting we will be able to see if there's an improving or worsening trend"*

*"Can plan ahead when there's certainty"*

### Contractor/consultant performance

*"AusNet should hold their consultants to account. You contract and engage auditors – you should be managing them in a better way"*

*"There needs to be more players in the field"*

### Three strikes policy

*"Seems to be an extraordinarily unfair system"*

*"It's easy for larger developers to get three strikes, because they've got huge projects"*

## Core focus areas

The AusNet Customer Service Standard will communicate the benchmarks, as identified in consultation with industry, for continuous improvement, timely issues resolution and accountability and transparency in timeframes in the negotiated electricity connections process.



### Core focus areas



**Be accountable to our timeframes**

Guarantee agreed timeframes



**Proactively engage with industry**

Ensure that the industry is across technical changes and expectations



**Making it easier to connect**

Streamline the lines of communication with developers



**Demystify the auditing process**

Ensure that timely development is not held up by the auditing process



**Transparency in reporting**

Provide timely and transparent monthly reporting on the AusNet website

**Customer Service Standard**



**Be accountable to our timeframes**

Guarantee agreed timeframes



Our commitments	What success looks like	Metrics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase transparency with published timeframes for the end-to-end process</li> <li>• Meet the agreed timeframes for all AusNet design reviews</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developers can make business decisions with certainty</li> <li>• Developers have confidence in the connections process with AusNet</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design review cycle timeframe</li> </ul>



**Proactively engage with industry**

Ensure that the industry is across technical changes and expectations



Our commitments	What success looks like	Metrics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage with DCC to seek feedback on major AusNet technical standard changes before implementation.</li> <li>• Host industry briefings to proactively communicate changes.</li> <li>• Regularly communicate minor technical standard updates and changes on the AusNet website.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All technical standard changes are communicated through the DCC, made public on the AusNet website and proactively pushed out through industry newsletters and publications.</li> <li>• A database of developer and industry group contacts is established and regularly updated.</li> <li>• Communication channels are in place.</li> <li>• DCC is informed and provides input into major AusNet technical standards changes, before they are implemented.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertaken DCC meetings</li> <li>• Host industry briefings</li> <li>• Publish technical standards</li> </ul>

**Customer Service Standard**



**Making it easier to connect**

Streamline the lines of communication with developers



Our commitments	What success looks like	Metrics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide one-point-of-contact for each project.</li> <li>• Assign point-of-contact and owner for AusNet Standards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective two-way communication between developers/consultants and the appointed AusNet Electricity Project Coordinator</li> <li>• Developers have confidence in how their projects are tracking through the connections process</li> <li>• Developers are informed of AusNet's Standards and are kept up to date on any changes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AusNet Electricity Coordinator assigned within committed timeframes</li> </ul>



**Demystify the auditing process**

Ensure that timely development is not held up by the auditing process



Our commitments	What success looks like	Metrics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet the KPI timeframes for AusNet's network auditing process.</li> <li>• Communicate AusNet's auditing expectations with VEDN auditors.</li> <li>• Define which audits can be conducted by certified third parties.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developers have confidence and clearly understand auditing requirements</li> <li>• AusNet auditors come onsite for compliance checks within committed timeframes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Network auditor site attendance within committed timeframes</li> </ul>



## Transparency in reporting

Provide timely and transparent monthly reporting on the AusNet website



Our commitments	What success looks like	Metrics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Proactive issue identification with top audit failures for the month</li><li>• Timeframes for end-to-end process (application to supply )</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Developers have clear timeframes and certainty in the end-to-end connections process</li><li>• Developers have a better understanding of auditing issues</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• End to end process timeframe</li></ul>

Next steps



## Appendix D – Developer Consultative Committee Terms of Reference

### Introduction

AusNet Services is establishing a Developer Consultative Committee (DCC) as part of its Customer Service Standard for Greenfields Electricity Connections.

The DCC is designed to be a forum for property developers, their contractors and industry group members to raise and discuss matters relating to AusNet Services that will ultimately improve the experience of negotiated electricity connections.

The DCC will meet on a quarterly basis and the membership will be reviewed annually.

### Purpose

The purpose of the DCC is to:

- **Share performance reporting results** - AusNet Services will provide the DCC with performance reporting for all metrics outlined in the Standard for Greenfields Electricity Connections. This will include, but not be limited to, top audit failures for each quarter and performance against agreed timeframes.
- **Discuss auditing requirements, processes and potential efficiencies** - this will provide property developers greater clarity on what is required as part of the auditing process.
- **Seek feedback on new technical standards or changes to existing AusNet Services technical standards** - this will allow for feedback on changes to standards and allow property developers to make decisions around their developments with greater certainty.
- **Provide issues for escalation to the AusNet Services Customer Consultative Committee** - to ensure any repeat or fundamental issues being raised at the DCC are escalated for input.
- **Review outcomes and progress of the Harmonisation Group** - to evaluate the proposed changes and ensure these are aligned with industry needs.

### Membership

Membership of the DCC will generally comprise 4 AusNet Services representatives and up to 10 external representatives from a diverse group of property developers, industry representatives, consultants and contractors.

Membership of the committee will be reviewed annually, to ensure both AusNet Services representatives and external representatives are satisfied with the make-up of the committee and to allow for other interested parties to be involved.

Prospective members will be required to agree to these Terms of Reference before their membership is confirmed.

Membership of the DCC comprises the following individuals:

Property developer	Industry group	Consultant / contractor

### Roles

#### Chair

The role of the Chair is to run the meetings and facilitate discussion and participation by all members.

The Chair is the sole determinant of issues to be dealt with in accordance with the Terms of Reference. The Chair is responsible for ensuring the appropriate and professional conduct of the group.

---

## Customer Service Standard

---

### Members

The membership of the DCC includes property developers who are currently engaged with AusNet Services to connect electricity to their new greenfields developments, along with the industry groups who represent them and the consultants/contractors they engage. AusNet Services representatives will also be included as members.

The DCC is not a forum for property developers to raise specific issues related to their own developments. Discussions should focus on common themes and issues affecting the industry and how they relate to AusNet Services, including standards and auditing requirements. Property developers and their consultants should raise specific issues related to their projects through their assigned AusNet Electricity Project Coordinator.

Members are required to:

- Attend all DCC meetings where practicable
- Provide a perspective that is representative of the organisation they represent
- Disseminate relevant information fully and accurately within their organisations
- Contribute to the discussions as they relate to common themes in the industry and AusNet Services.
- Membership of the DCC is voluntary and will be reviewed annually.

If a member does not attend two meetings without sending an apology, their membership will be rescinded.

A member may, at the discretion of the Chair, ask a proxy to attend in their place. The proxy will need to agree to these Terms of Reference before attending the meeting.

Members are able to cease membership at any time by notifying their intention to the Chair in writing.

### Operation

The DCC will convene quarterly with the first meeting to be held [insert when]. Subsequent meetings will be held [insert when]. A forward meeting schedule will be distributed to the membership when it is confirmed.

Issues and ideas that arise during meetings which fall outside the Terms of Reference may be referred to an alternative AusNet Services committee for further discussion and/or consideration.

[Insert who] will be responsible for the administration of the DCC, including organising meetings and support activities such as the distribution of agendas, minutes and presentations.

### Reporting requirements

Some items presented at the DCC, including agendas, briefing papers, presentations, and performance reporting results may be published on the AusNet Services website the after each meeting.

Meeting minutes will be made publicly available online within 20 business days.

The DCC will be engaged on changes to AusNet Services technical standards before they are implemented. The technical standards will also be published on the AusNet Services website.

The Chair is responsible for reporting back to the DCC on items that required follow up action from AusNet Services at the next Committee meeting.

### Media

To encourage open discussion at meetings, members are required to adhere to the following media protocols:

- Members of the DCC are not authorised to provide written or verbal statements to the media about matters discussed at the DCC unless written approval is received in advance from the Chair.
- All media enquiries received by a DCC member that are about the DCC or a matter discussed by the DCC are to be referred as soon as possible to [AusNet Services media contact].

### Breaches of the Terms of Reference

If there is a breach of trust in relation to the Terms of Reference, the DCC (and/or the Chair) will discuss the matter with the member(s) involved. At the Chair's discretion, member(s) may be asked to leave the DCC.

### Review of Terms of Reference

A review of these Terms of Reference will be undertaken annually to coincide with the review of Membership.