

AER Draft Decision - AusNet Services. Submission John Mumford

Australian Energy Regulator

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I am an AusNet customer living in Bass Coast.

There are many issues in the AER Draft Decision and AusNet's response that require a response

I do not have the resources to provide comprehensive feedback.

1. The Customer service incentive scheme (CSIS)

AusNet proposed a CSIS for 4 areas:

Planned outage customer satisfaction (C-Sat)

Unplanned outage C-Sat

New connections C-Sat

% of matters resolved during the customer's first call to us.

While there is an argument that these services are basic services that all Networks should automatically be doing, these are also areas where customers suffer considerably when Networks respond poorly.

Incentivising these areas with a requirement that AusNet improves significantly to get any incentive and equally is penalised for failing to improve significantly, is worth doing.

The AER did not approve AusNet's CSIS proposal.

The AusNet draft decision page 25-26 states that the CSIS is not approved and it is replaced with a telephone answering parameter and introduce the new connections parameter of the customer service component of the STPIS.

This is a lazy decision that shows a lack of respect for customers.

A telephone answering parameter is meaningless and easily achieved by automation or AI while not actually assisting customers.

More importantly, the AER continues to abandon customers who experience outages.

The AER should be concerned about the service that customers receive on issues from basic communications through to major unplanned outages and critical events.

My recent outage experience with AusNet demonstrates the flaws in the AER decision.

On 10 January 2026 I rang AusNet to report an unplanned outage and was directed to the AusNet automated fault reporting system. During the call, AusNet advised me that my suburb was in the Powercor area and offered to transfer my call to Powercor. This was clearly wrong but AusNet gave me no opportunity to correct their mistake.

In this scenario, AusNet answered my call but did not respond to my outage.

If anything, they made my situation worse. But it appears the AER would be happy as my call was answered and would be prepared to reward AusNet.

The AER must not provide incentives to Networks to simply provide basic customer services like answering the telephone.

If the AER does not accept AusNet's CSIS proposal, then there should be No incentive scheme.

2. Reliability of electricity supply.

The AER does not value electricity reliability for All customers.

The AER seems content with most customers receiving first-class reliability but a significant number of customers receiving second-class reliability. This is unfair to customers who have second-class reliability.

The AER is not supporting Networks to improve reliability for customers who currently have unreliable electricity supply.

The AER requires Networks to consult with customers. But the AER then refuses to listen to customers.

When Networks consult and customers say they are prepared to pay to improve reliability for all customers, the AER should respect this.

It is not surprising that many customers have little confidence in Networks or Regulators

3. My observations on the EDPR process

The AER needs to listen to customer views. Perhaps if the AER was responsive to customer needs and views, more customers would share their views.

The lack of public responses to these consultations demonstrates the failure of AER consultation. As of 17 January 2026, there are 5 public submissions.

The AER needs to work harder to seek customers' views. The AER also need to provide funding to customers to assist them in providing feedback.

It is concerning that after many weeks, there is an almost total lack of submissions from customer advocacy organisations.

Where is the submission from Energy Consumers Australia who are supposed to be representing energy customers.

It is also disappointing that there are no submissions from the Brotherhood of St Laurence, St Vincent de Paul and Financial Counselling Australia who received \$2 million from AusNet in 2024 to support customers following the AusNet failures in the February 2024 storm event.

The proposed tariffs changes.

All change creates winners and losers. Sometimes, the customers that are intended to be assisted are actually further disadvantaged.

Disadvantaged customers often struggle to make the best decisions in what is generally a confusing marketplace.

The AER, Networks and Governments need to ensure all customers understand the proposed changes and that disadvantaged customers are not further disadvantaged by tariff changes.

There needs to be a trusted place where customers can get accurate and unbiased information about the best tariff for them. Currently, I do not believe this exists.

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