Future Technology Platforms

Online Consultation – summary of meeting notes

8 November 2022

AUSTRALIAN
ENERGY
REGULATOR

Future Technology Platforms: Online Consultation

Date of Workshop: 8 November 2022, 2-3pm (AEDT)

Attendees

Attendees included representatives from: AER, AEMO, AGIG, APA, Ausgrid, AusNet Services, Energy Networks Australia, Energy Queensland, Energy Security Board, Essential Energy, Evoenergy, iPART, Jemena, Power and Water Corporation, Powerlink, Rosetta Analytics, South Australian Power Networks, TasNetworks, Transgrid and other interested parties.

1.   Welcome, introductions, acknowledgement of country

Hrishi Desai (AER Chief Data Strategist) thanked everyone for attending the workshop and gave an acknowledgement of country. He presented and spoke to prepared slides which are available on the AER website: https://www.aer.gov.au/networks-pipelines/guidelines-schemes-models-reviews/future-technology-platforms

2.   AER Data Strategy 2022

The AER's Data Strategy addresses:

- Key data principles (Accountability and Governance, Data access and management, Data quality, Data warehouse and business intelligence
- Horizons (1, 2 and 3)

3.   AER Data Strategy key priorities

The AER's key priorities are:

- Data access & management streamline data collections enable by technology and data sharing externally
- Data quality - proactively manage at the source
- Data warehouse & business intelligence - centralise data storage in the cloud environment

These priorities have implications for all the AER's stakeholders.

Discussion on AER Data Strategy and priorities

Energy Qld (EQ): Where do the value propositions for stakeholders and consumers fit in with the AER approach? The AER seems to be technology focused and has a adopted a "waterfall" approach (i.e. would build a platform and roll it out as the solution).

AER: The AER's Data Strategy is looking at outcomes for the AER but in line with our core principle of ensuring consumers are better off now and in the future. The AER wants to be able to access insights from the data it keeps to achieve the best outcome for consumers.

The AER wants stakeholders to see how and why the AER makes the decisions it does. The AER's approach was not necessarily technology focused as it was also looking internally at people and processes. When looking at use cases and data sets – the AER will be doing it agilely and moving use cases to a new platform rather than the data. The AER wants to document how it can share data in the future.

EQ: The focus on stakeholders and consumers needed to be incorporated into the documentation provided, so these aspects come through.

APA: Does the strategy included both electricity and gas? The AER confirmed it covers both sectors.

4.   Outcomes from the Network information requirements review – March 2022 submission analysis

AER noted the preference of stakeholders was to streamline data submissions and have the AER facilitate this: some stakeholders wanted an API or portal solution. There was also a need to ensure that the AER, as a custodian of data, manage sensitive data properly.

5.   AER's Proposal

The AER proposes to decrease the level of manual work for itself and regulated businesses, associated with reporting obligations, while still ensuring data is of high quality. Ingested data would be held in the cloud in a central platform (will maintain historical data). Dashboards would be available and security protocols applied.

Discussion on AER proposed technological change

SAPN: How will governance fit into this proposal, noting a number of people will need access to the systems?

> AER: The AER has established data governance. But an information sharing framework will need to be developed and shared/consulted on with stakeholders.

EQ: Has any consideration had been given to data ownership?

> AER: The AER is considering this but it is likely the AER would be data custodians, NSPs the data owners.

EQ: Would data analytics be offered as a product?

> AER: The AER has not looked at this directly, but the Energy Security Board (ESB) is currently exploring this issue. Some consultation is coming up on the data services model.

6.   Tentative timelines

AER noted timelines from now out to the end of 2024, with transitional arrangement to extend beyond 2024. He noted the timelines were dependent on the AER's funding and resource commitments.

7.   Discussion starters

What are some of the key issues the AER should consider to streamline web-based information exchange?

Are you already using web-based information exchange platform for any other purpose in your business?

Do you have a preference for technologies for web-based information exchange between your business and the AER?

General comments and questions in response to the presentation

APA: APA recommends:

- Following common web standards to ensure accessibility by standard IT tools.
- Creating a service catalogue and a common data model so it is easy to determine what services are available and how to use them.
- Authentication standards should be modern and highly secure.
- Making user experience and responsiveness the key consideration for the development program.

EQ: CDR legislation provides guidance around some aspects such as two factor authentication. Some of the CDR work can be leveraged by the AER.

Transgrid: Transgrid are currently using Rosetta It is a significant improvement as you can find everything in one place. It works well and is a significant improvement on previous processes. Also security of APIs is an issue (Optus case hacker went through an API). If we designed APIs then we would need a common ingestion model. There would be a need to contact systems across agencies, so they work with each other. Transgrid has found it is very expensive to build APIs and it takes much longer and is much more expensive (3 times) than anticipated. Each business would need to work with the AER.

CPU: Rosetta has helped the efficiency of all 3 networks and reduced the level of manual work. APIs were explored last year but CPU found it challenging to get everyone across it.

Rosetta Analytics: APIs are challenging and would need updating to accommodate RIN changes (data model changes). If API are part of solution, the AER would need to be clear on data models, etc.

CPU: Use existing platforms as much as possible. Different businesses will have different capacities to adopt technologies. Whatever you end up should be accessible to all. Further, everyone needs time to consider any proposal and how it will work for them.

EQ: The proposed technology development program appears to be a waterfall-based approach. He asked if any thought had been given to looking at just a couple of data sets in the first instance and then transitioning the others later.

> AER: The AER intends to test the methodology first.

Rosetta Analytics: The timing takes everyone into the new RIO cycle. Is the AER looking for the technology solution to match up with the RIO timing?

> AER: The development of new orders ("RIOs") would require reporting for 2024 FY. But the AER is developing technology neutral orders and not assuming a new technology solution has been completed or accepted by all businesses. The AER will still be able to accept Excel Workbooks. If submissions can be done via a more sophisticated means the AER will also accept that. The current timelines provide flexibility and allows businesses to adopt new technologies at their own pace.

Rosetta Analytics: Does the solution the AER is contemplating include how data is presented to customers and how accessible it is? (This process appears fairly network focused at the moment).

> AER: The AER is working with the ESB on this aspect. He noted the AER is re-developing the AER's website and exploring best ways to present information. He said the AER will work iteratively over time on various datasets valued by stakeholders.

CPU: RINs are very data heavy, and web-based exchange supports a speedy upload process. Consideration must be given to technology that can handle a huge amount of data.

SAPN: How will the project align with regulatory proposals for each jurisdiction?

> AER: The project is not aligned with specific regulatory cycles but allows for all businesses to transition.

AER: How can the AER best engage beyond formal consultation processes? What is the best mechanism?

> EQ: A working group, collaboration tool, team's channels all provide better ways to allow for active engagement beyond email.

> EQ: The engagement solution depends on data requirements and the AER's approach. Hard to provide an answer until the AER's use cases are clear.

EQ: The scope of information exchange was relevant. Currently EQ businesses submit both data files and other files (such as audit reports) and all types of information must be catered for.

> AER: There is a lot of structured and unstructured data. As the project progresses the AER will look at this and the RIO requirements. The AER understands that there will continue to be multiple file types.

EQ: Scraping some of the PDF content could occur.

> AER: Agreed and the AER will be able to leverage the ACCC's work in that area.

Rosetta Analytics: Is the AER willing to do proof of concept for the technology?

AER: Yes, but the AER needs to pick the right blend of network participants and information requirements. He said he cannot put a timeframe on it but will look at working on this over the next few months.

AER: Participants may send through email with any further questions or comments (networksinformation@aer.gov.au).