

From:
To:
Cc:
Subject:
Date:
Attachments:

Attention Dr Kris Funston

Submission from Renew Illawarra

Background:

We, Greg Knight and Neville Lockhart, represent one of the local branches of the national grass-roots sustainability organisation Renew.

We also run a Wollongong Community Power group that seeks to advise and influence Wollongong City Council on its Climate Change Strategy. Furthermore, we are technical advisers to a developing community energy group Hey Neighbour that seeks to support local industries, such as coal mines and their workers, in the transition to renewable and distributed energy.

We made a comprehensive submission to Council towards its draft Climate Change Plan followed by submissions to strengthen that plan. These efforts are encapsulated in a 10-page article published in Renew magazine, Issue ??? July-Sept 2021 entitled Toward Zero Emissions (**attached**). It covered three project areas - Renewable Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs), Community Batteries and Voltage Management.

Personal Credentials:

Greg Knight was Technology Planning Manager for BlueScope Steel Research. Qualified as a Metallurgist and since then developed skills in Quality Management, Statistics, Process Improvement, and Scientific Method. Greg has led Renew Illawarra submission, then the PPA and community battery projects, lobbying Council and other organisations, all with the aim of helping residents of the Illawarra reduce their carbon footprint and hopefully spreading to other areas. Greg is an experienced large group facilitator skilled in decision and change process and, was often called upon to facilitate important business decisions required of the BlueScope Steel Management.

Dr Neville Lockhart was Strategy and Business Development Manager for the CSIRO's Division of Energy Technology. He established the original CSIRO Flagship R&D Program "Energy Transformed" to address efficiency and emissions issues across the electricity generation, transport and energy end-use sectors. He became an early adopter of solar panels, then batteries and the electric car. He also volunteers for a charitable organisation, proving worldwide news, research and e-books for its website.

Potential Link with Endeavour Energy:

Our regional distributor, Endeavour Energy, recently enhanced its community consultation processes. The Peak Customer and Stakeholder Committee has sub-committees Regulatory Reference Group and Future Grid Reference Group. We are seeking to participate, particularly in relation to Future Grid deliberations.

Apart from consumer-based technical input, we envisage our expertise contributing significantly to both facilitating the consumer engagement processes and measuring the quality and outcomes of these engagement processes.

Better Resets Handbook:

Our responses to the questions are highlighted in red. The attached Consumer Feedback Matrix documents form part of our response.

We are particularly interested in hearing from stakeholders on the following questions:

1. Do you consider the Handbook as set out will achieve the AER's aim of incentivising proposals that reflect consumer preferences and are capable of acceptance
 - a) If yes to 1, what do you see as the main benefits of the Handbook? **That you say Consumers have gone from being outsiders to being an integral part of the regulatory process. We want to see this continue.** Are they the same as those set out in this document or do you consider there additional benefits which are not listed?
2. Do you agree with the proposed targeted review stream and that this a positive change to how we regulate networks? Please include reasons for your views in the answer provided. **Yes, though as we have no direct experience of the alternatives, we are unable to be specific.**
3. Do you consider the Handbook will improve the level of consumer engagement undertaken by network businesses and result in consumer preferences being better reflected in proposals? Please include reasons for your views in the answer provided. **Yes, though we need more direct and up-to-date engagement ourselves in order to be specific.**
4. Are the incentives offered by the Handbook sufficient for network businesses to seek access to the targeted review stream process? If you do not consider the incentives are sufficient, then what additional incentives do you think could be provided within the current regulatory framework? **Yes in principle.**
5. The targeted review stream is a new process which we expect to refine and improve as we learn from each iterative application. Therefore our preference would be to first apply the targeted review stream process to a limited number of network businesses. This approach would allow us to better manage the risks of introducing a new process, maximise learnings and manage resourcing constraints. What approach or criteria should we use to determine which network businesses should be selected?

In addition, a common draft proposal rather than just "which network" should be considered. This is because the greater the number of network businesses and their consumer engagement processes, that can agree and prioritise a draft proposal with largely common elements, the greater and more widespread the benefits v costs are likely to be.
6. Do you agree with the approach to commence the full application of the targeted review stream process to the revenue proposals due in January 2023¹?
 - a) We would be open to considering applying of the targeted

review stream process partially to a proposal which is submitted before January 2023. This would allow us to test the process before it is fully applied. Would you be supportive of this approach? Please include reasons for your views in the answer provided. **Yes**

b) For stakeholders that answered yes to 6(a), what approach or criteria should we use to determine which network business' proposal should be considered for a partial application? **If and where a proposal is relatively simple to develop with consumer engagement in the time available, as it is unlikely that an "ideal" proposal (as per 5 above) would meet such time frame.**

7. Do you agree with the expectations for the topics set out in sections 4 to 8 of this document? **Yes for Sections 4 and 8 - notably section 4.4 Clearly evidenced impact is about how a proposal represents and is shown to represent consumer views. That is one aspect of the process described in our attachment. Also Section 8 on Tariff structures will be key elements of supply-demand balance as renewables and EV penetration increases.**

If not, what changes do you consider need to be made to the expectations? Please include your reasons for any proposed changes. **We are unable to elaborate at this stage on sections 5,6,7 but we support any mechanisms by which capex in specific areas like voltage management and/or community batteries can be shown to lead to much greater savings in capex on network augmentation.**

8. Is there any further clarification or issues which the Handbook should set out? **We believe the system would greatly benefit from comprehensive and published Community Feedback. We have attached a draft format with some examples of questions and ratings. The questions are based on the expectations outlined and the ratings facilitate standardised quantification of the response. We strongly recommend AER adopt some form of user assessment and feedback and that it be made available on the public record. This feedback sheet should be either, submitted annually or at the close of Community Engagement Programs. Also, where an "Independent Community Report" is submitted, it should be accompanied by the community feedback sheet.**

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Greg Knight, Dr Neville Lockhart

Renew Illawarra

Some new cultures keep asking, 'Why are we here?' It's easy. This is why we're here. We look after things on the earth and in the sky and the places in between.
Yunkaporta, Tyson. Sand Talk (p. 109). The Text Publishing Company. Kindle Edition.