

# 2026 Integrated System Plan System Plan Timetable

September 2024

A report for the National Electricity Market





**We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land, seas and waters across Australia. We honour the wisdom of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders past and present and embrace future generations.**

**We acknowledge that, wherever we work, we do so on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lands. We pay respect to the world's oldest continuing culture and First Nations peoples' deep and continuing connection to Country; and hope that our work can benefit both people and Country.**

'Journey of unity: AEMO's Reconciliation Path' by Lani Balzan

AEMO Group is proud to have launched its first [Reconciliation Action Plan](#) in May 2024. 'Journey of unity: AEMO's Reconciliation Path' was created by Wiradjuri artist Lani Balzan to visually narrate our ongoing journey towards reconciliation - a collaborative endeavour that honours First Nations cultures, fosters mutual understanding, and paves the way for a brighter, more inclusive future.

## Important notice

### Purpose

The purpose of this publication is to set out the timing for matters relating to the preparation and publication of the 2026 *Integrated System Plan*.

AEMO publishes this *2026 Integrated System Plan Timetable* in accordance with clause 5.22.4 of the National Electricity Rules. This publication is generally based on information available to AEMO as at 20 September 2024 unless otherwise indicated.

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### Version control

Version	Release date	Changes
1.0	26/9/2024	Initial release



# Contents

1	Introduction	4
2	2026 ISP Timetable	6
3	ISP Consumer Panel, and AEMO’s Consumer and Community Reference Group	9
4	Inputs, Assumptions and Scenarios Report (IASR)	10
5	ISP Methodology	12
6	Preparatory activities	13
7	Draft and final ISP	14

## Tables

Table 1	Timetable milestones	7
Table 2	IASR timetable	11
Table 3	ISP Methodology timetable	12
Table 4	Draft and final ISP timetable	15

## Figures

Figure 1	Timetable milestones	6
Figure 2	Milestone dependencies	8

# 1 Introduction

The *Integrated System Plan* (ISP) is a whole-of-system plan that provides an integrated roadmap for the efficient development of the National Electricity Market (NEM) for at least the next 20 years.

Leveraging expertise from across the industry will be pivotal in developing a robust plan that achieves power system needs and supports the long-term interests of energy consumers. AEMO is committed to facilitating a stakeholder engagement process that ensures a collaborative approach to developing the 2026 ISP. The 2026 ISP Timetable provides a high-level overview of the key milestones related to the 2026 ISP. This allows stakeholders to understand and engage in the ISP development process.

## The ISP Timetable sets out the timing for:

- **The establishment of the ISP Consumer Panel** – AEMO established the 2026 ISP Consumer Panel in April 2024. The role of the Consumer Panel is to bring a consumer-focused perspective to the ISP development process. In particular, having regard to the long-term interests of consumers, the Consumer Panel is required to provide an assessment of the evidence and reasons supporting AEMO’s conclusions in the *Inputs, Assumptions and Scenarios Report* (IASR) and Draft ISP.
- **Draft IASR** – AEMO will publish a Draft IASR through a two-stage release on 11 December 2024 and 12 February 2025. The Draft IASR outlines, and seeks feedback on, the key inputs, assumptions and scenarios that will underpin the 2026 ISP modelling. AEMO has already begun early stakeholder engagement on scenarios through the release of a consultation paper that sought stakeholders’ feedback on how the 2023 IASR scenarios should evolve to best fit the purpose of modelling Australia’s energy future.
- **Further updates and stakeholder opportunities for inputs** – due to input dependencies and AEMO’s preference to use the latest information available, not all inputs and assumptions for use in the 2026 ISP will be updated in the Draft IASR. AEMO will consult on these as required.
- **IASR** – by 31 July 2025, the IASR will be released, considering stakeholder feedback provided on the Draft IASR and any subsequent updates, outlining the final scenarios, inputs and assumptions that will be used in the 2026 ISP.
- **ISP Methodology** – on 23 October 2024, AEMO will release an issues paper to initiate a two-stage consultation process to review and update the ISP Methodology. AEMO will publish the draft of the ISP Methodology on 13 March 2025, seeking feedback on proposed revision(s) to the ISP Methodology, and on 25 June 2025 AEMO will publish the revised ISP Methodology for use in the 2026 ISP.
- **Draft ISP** – On 11 December 2025, the Draft ISP will set out, and seek feedback on, an optimal development path for the NEM. This draft will include preliminary information on actionable projects and will request submissions for non-network solutions to any new actionable ISP projects.
- **ISP** – the final ISP report will be published on 25 June 2026. It will incorporate feedback from the Draft ISP and finalise an optimal development path for the NEM.

At a minimum, for the 2026 ISP, AEMO will follow the consultation process described by the National Electricity Rules (NER) and the Australian Energy Regulator's (AER's) Forecasting Best Practice Guidelines (FBPG) and Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) Guidelines<sup>1</sup>. AEMO has prepared the *2026 ISP Stakeholder Engagement Plan*<sup>2</sup> to guide and underpin engagement throughout the development of the ISP.

Consultation and dialogue with all NEM stakeholders is critical to AEMO's role as the National Transmission Planner for the NEM, helping improve and refine scenario development, forecasting, decision-making and assessment processes. The overall consultation process will provide a series of opportunities for stakeholder engagement. Throughout the development of the 2026 ISP, AEMO will monitor material change across the energy sector, and will consider whether there is a need to modify the ISP timeline in response. If there are any changes to the timing of key milestones, AEMO will update this ISP Timetable and explain the changes.

For more information on AEMO's ISP consultation process, or to be informed of upcoming ISP workshops, please contact [ISP@aemo.com.au](mailto:ISP@aemo.com.au).

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<sup>1</sup> AER. Guidelines to make the integrated system plan actionable, at <https://www.aer.gov.au/networks-pipelines/guidelines-schemes-models-reviews/guidelines-to-make-the-integrated-system-plan-actionable/final-decision>.

<sup>2</sup> See <https://aemo.com.au/energy-systems/major-publications/integrated-system-plan-isp/2026-integrated-system-plan-isp/opportunities-for-engagement>.

## 2 2026 ISP Timetable

The ISP Timetable provides information to stakeholders about the publication dates and timing of key milestones in the 2026 ISP development process. This Timetable outlines a series of engagement opportunities and consultative stages over a two-year period before the 2026 ISP is published on 25 June 2026.

AEMO is responsible for the development of the ISP. The purpose of the ISP is to:

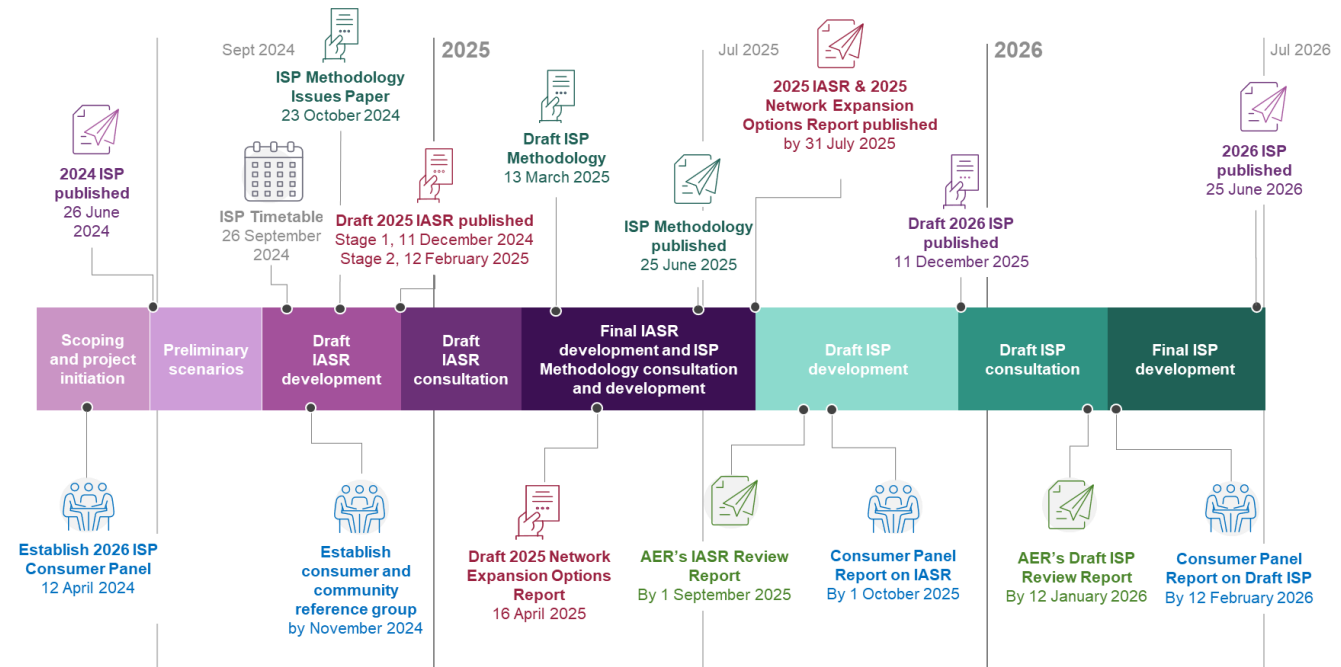
*“establish a whole of system plan for the efficient development of the power system that achieves power system needs for a planning horizon of at least 20 years for the long-term interests of the consumers of electricity.”<sup>3</sup>*

AEMO has prepared the *2026 ISP Stakeholder Engagement Plan*<sup>4</sup> to provide information about engagement opportunities through the ISP, and to guide and underpin engagement throughout the development of the ISP. AEMO publishes an ISP at least every two years. The current 2024 ISP was published on 26 June 2024 and is available on AEMO’s website<sup>5</sup>.

### Timetable overview

Figure 1 and Table 1 outline the key milestones for the 2026 ISP. All milestones captured are NER requirements, except for the establishment of the Consumer and Community Reference Group (CCRG), which is an AEMO initiative. Throughout the development of the 2026 ISP, AEMO will monitor material change across the energy sector, and will consider whether there is a need to modify the ISP timeline.

**Figure 1 Timetable milestones**



<sup>3</sup> NER 5.22.2

<sup>4</sup> See <https://aemo.com.au/energy-systems/major-publications/integrated-system-plan-isp/2026-integrated-system-plan-isp/opportunities-for-engagement>.

<sup>5</sup> At <https://aemo.com.au/en/energy-systems/major-publications/integrated-system-plan-isp/2022-integrated-system-plan-isp>.

Table 1 Timetable milestones

Milestone	Timing	Responsibility
Establish ISP Consumer Panel	12 April 2024	AEMO
ISP Timetable	26 September 2024	AEMO
Issues paper for ISP Methodology (Consultation)	23 October 2024	AEMO
Establish AEMO Consumer and Community Reference Group <sup>A</sup>	By November 2024	AEMO
Draft IASR, first stage (Consultation)	11 December 2024	AEMO
Draft IASR, second stage (Consultation)	12 February 2025	AEMO
Draft ISP Methodology (Consultation)	13 March 2025	AEMO
ISP Methodology	25 June 2025	AEMO
Preparatory Activity Reports <sup>B</sup>	Not required	Not required
IASR	By 31 July 2025	AEMO
AER's IASR Transparency Review Report	By 1 September 2025 <sup>C</sup>	AER
Consumer Panel Report on IASR	By 1 October 2025 <sup>D</sup>	ISP Consumer Panel
Draft 2026 ISP	11 December 2025	AEMO
AER's ISP Review Report	By 12 January 2026 <sup>E</sup>	AER
Consumer Panel Report on Draft ISP	By 12 February 2026 <sup>D</sup>	ISP Consumer Panel
2026 ISP	25 June 2026	AEMO

- A. The establishment of the Consumer and Community Reference Group is an initiative undertaken by AEMO to improve consideration of consumer and community sentiment for the 2026 ISP as well as for other AEMO responsibilities, and is not an NER requirement – see Section 3.
- B. AEMO did not request any preparatory activities from transmission network service providers (TNSPs) in the 2024 ISP.
- C. The AER must publish the IASR Review Report within one month of AEMO publishing the IASR.
- D. The ISP Consumer Panel must give a consumer panel report to AEMO within two months of AEMO publishing the IASR and the Draft ISP. AEMO will publish these reports on its website.
- E. The AER must publish the ISP Review Report within one month of AEMO publishing the Draft ISP.

This report will be updated if the timing of milestones required by the NER changes. Further information about the purpose of these milestones and their role in the wider ISP development process is presented in the following sections of this report.

## Milestone dependencies

The ISP milestones are inter-related, and some later milestones are dependent on the successful completion of early milestones. Figure 2 shows how the milestones relate to each other, as well as the activities and engagements surrounding them<sup>6</sup>. Notably, the following are pre-conditions for AEMO to finalise the IASR:

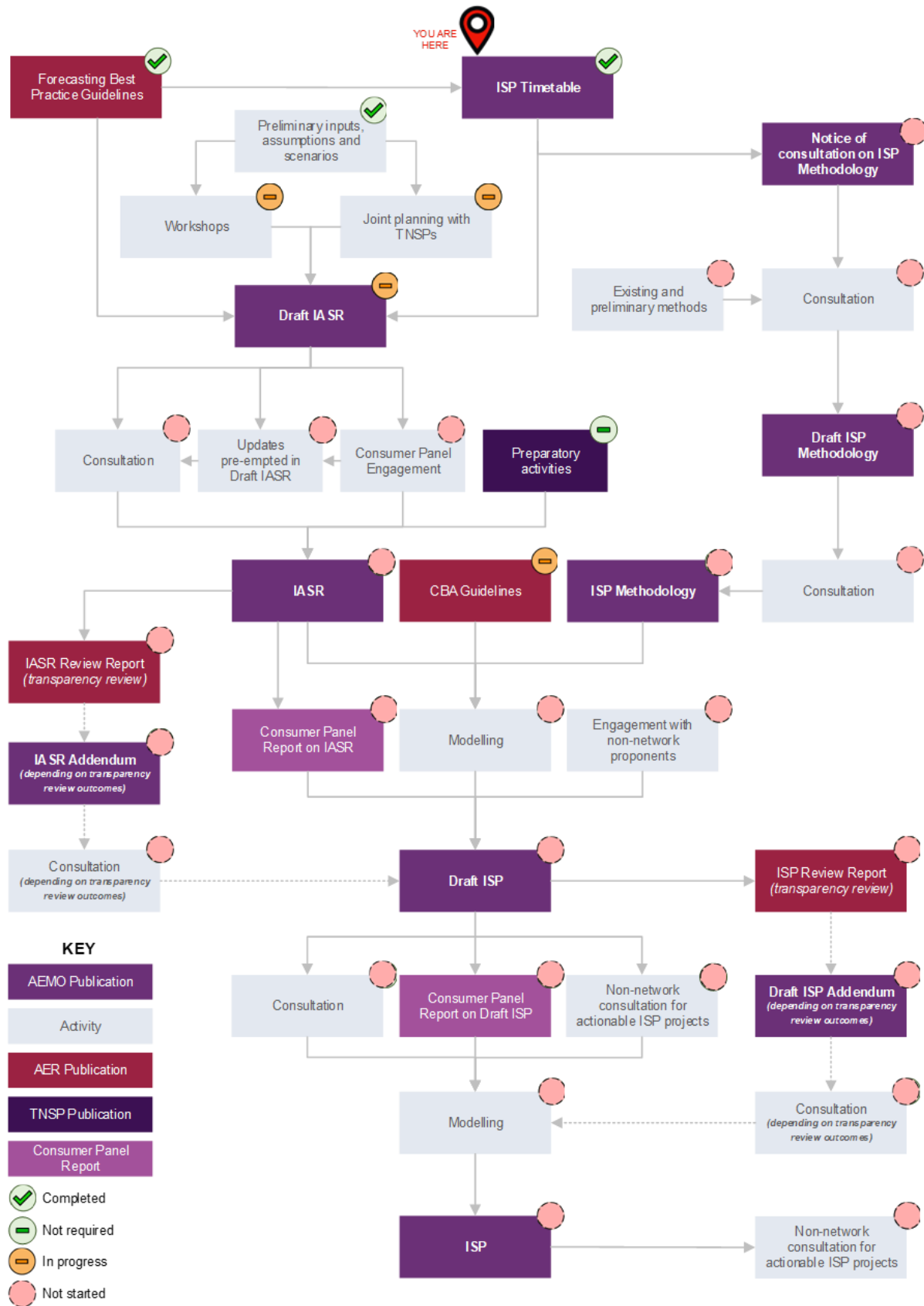
- The Draft IASR has been published.
- Stakeholder feedback to the Draft IASR has been received and incorporated (where appropriate)<sup>7</sup>.
- Any required preparatory activities reports have been completed (see Section 6).

Similarly, the Draft ISP requires successful completion of an ISP Methodology and IASR.

<sup>6</sup> AEMO will be consulting with the AER and the Consumer Panel throughout the ISP processes.

<sup>7</sup> In some instances, Draft IASR inputs must be finalised before determining other variables for the IASR. In these instances, AEMO will engage appropriately on new information once it is available. For example, the scenarios and economic drivers resulting from the Draft IASR will influence demand projections in the Final IASR. Draft demand forecasts will be consulted on via the Forecasting Reference Group.

Figure 2 Milestone dependencies



TNSP: transmission network service provider.



## 3 ISP Consumer Panel, and AEMO's Consumer and Community Reference Group

### ISP Consumer Panel

The role of the ISP Consumer Panel is to bring a consumer-focused perspective to the ISP development process. AEMO will engage with the ISP Consumer Panel on a continuous and ongoing basis, seeking advice and input on matters of both substance and process. As part of its work, the ISP Consumer Panel will provide two reports to AEMO in respect of the IASR and Draft ISP, as required by the NER. These reports will provide an assessment of the evidence and reasons supporting AEMO's conclusions in the IASR and Draft ISP, having regard to the long-term interests of consumers.

Feedback from the ISP Consumer Panel will be taken into account in the development of the IASR and the ISP. To promote the effective production of the consumer panel reports, AEMO intends to engage with the Panel throughout the ISP development process. Such engagement supports the Panel's timely consideration and communication, and allows for AEMO's approach to be adjusted where appropriate. AEMO considers this process to be particularly important because the ISP Consumer Panel is not required to produce its first report until two months after the IASR is finalised, with the second report coming two months after the Draft ISP is published.

AEMO published a call for expressions of interest (EOI), including Terms of Reference (ToR), on 20 February 2024 and received 31 EOIs. The ISP Consumer Panel was established on 12 April 2024, consistent with the NER, to inform the development of the 2026 ISP<sup>8</sup>. The ISP Consumer Panel consists of four members who have qualifications and experience in fields AEMO considers relevant to the assessment of the ISP and experience representing consumer interests

### AEMO's Consumer and Community Reference Group (CCRG)

As part of its commitment to engaging its stakeholders and putting people at the centre of the energy transition, AEMO is establishing a CCRG. The CCRG will build on the work of AEMO's former Advisory Council on Social Licence and will provide advice to AEMO on a range of topics related to AEMO's system planning, reforms, and operations. For the purposes of the ISP, this could include advice on Consumer Energy Resources (CER), First Nations perspectives, or community sentiment towards the energy transition and new infrastructure.

AEMO published a call for EOIs to join the CCRG on 26 July 2024, including ToR<sup>9</sup>. AEMO will establish the CCRG by November 2024.

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<sup>8</sup> Details about the 2026 ISP Consumer Panel and its establishment are available at <https://aemo.com.au/energy-systems/major-publications/integrated-system-plan-isp/2026-integrated-system-plan-isp/2026-isp-consumer-panel>.

<sup>9</sup> Details about AEMO's Consumer and Community Reference Group (CCRG) are available at <https://aemo.com.au/en/consultations/industry-forums-and-working-groups/list-of-industry-forums-and-working-groups/social-licence-advisory-council>.

## 4 Inputs, Assumptions and Scenarios Report (IASR)

AEMO develops, consults and publishes an IASR to be used for the ISP (as well as for a range of AEMO's other planning and forecasting publications). AEMO is committed to consulting with all interested stakeholders on inputs, assumptions and scenarios to ensure a plausible range of internally consistent futures are considered when planning the power system needs of the future NEM. By following the consultation requirements in the NER and in the FBPG<sup>10</sup>, the ISP will be transparent, follow well-understood methodologies, and provide opportunities for quality engagement.

The engagement process for the 2026 ISP will consider inputs and assumptions including, but not limited to:

- Policy, technical and economic settings affecting energy supplies and demand.
- Components that influence energy consumption (and peak demands), including the influence of demand side participation (DSP) and uptake of CER.
- Existing generation technical and economic assumptions, including fuel costs, and new generation and storage technology costs and improvements over time.
- Network development options and non-network alternatives, including renewable energy zone (REZ) augmentation options, flow path augmentation options and network losses and marginal loss factors, through joint planning with transmission network service providers (TNSPs) and distribution network service providers (DNSPs).
- Outcomes from Energy Ministers' response to the Federal Government's review of the ISP<sup>11</sup>, including:
  - Integrating gas in to the ISP.
  - Enhancing energy demand forecasting, including assumptions underpinning CER and distributed resources projections, and related DNSP investments and planning.
  - Jurisdictional policy transparency and clarifying policy inclusions.
  - Incorporating community sentiment.
  - Additional planning inputs.
- Other sectoral influences, such as hydrogen developments and gas modelling assumptions

Consultation on AEMO's IASR will proceed from December 2024. Following subsequent stakeholder engagement and development of forecast components, the IASR will be published by 31 July 2025. AEMO will use the scenarios and their inputs and assumptions to assess potential development paths for the ISP. AEMO will also take into account the feedback from the ISP Consumer Panel report on the IASR and the AER transparency review on the IASR when preparing the Draft ISP.

<sup>10</sup> AER, Forecasting Best Practice Guidelines (section 2.2), at <https://www.aer.gov.au/system/files/AER%20-%20Forecasting%20best%20practice%20guidelines%20-%202025%20August%202220.pdf>.

<sup>11</sup> Energy and Climate Change Ministerial Council. *Response to the Review of the Integrated System Plan*, March 2024, at <https://www.energy.gov.au/energy-and-climate-change-ministerial-council/energy-ministers-publications/energy-ministers-response-review-integrated-system-plan>.



**Table 2 IASR timetable**

Milestones	Timing
Draft IASR, first stage	11 December 2024
Draft IASR, second stage	12 February 2025
IASR	31 July 2025

## 5 ISP Methodology

One of the key documents for the ISP is the ISP Methodology, which must contain the cost benefit analysis and modelling methodologies used in developing the ISP<sup>12</sup>.

In 2021, AEMO prepared the ISP Methodology according to the requirements of the AER's FBPG and CBA Guidelines<sup>13</sup>, and in 2023 consulted on an update to this ISP Methodology. This included providing transparent processes, supporting and working with stakeholders in their understanding of AEMO's analysis, methodologies and data, and providing additional information to complement the formal documentation.

AEMO is required to run a two-stage consultation process set out in the FBPG<sup>14</sup> to review its ISP methodology at least every four years. This was last undertaken in mid-2021<sup>15</sup>, and so is due to be undertaken again by mid-2025. AEMO will run a two-stage consultation in accordance with the FBPG on updates to the existing cost benefit analysis approach and modelling methodologies, as well as proposed changes incorporating the relevant outcomes from the Energy Ministers' response to the ISP Review<sup>16</sup>.

Stakeholder engagement on the ISP Methodology will begin on 23 October 2024 with the release of an issues paper for consultation, followed by the Draft ISP Methodology on 13 March 2025. AEMO may use a range of engagements – such as briefings, webinars, workshops and one-on-one meetings – to allow a broad range of stakeholders to take part in this process.

Following consideration of stakeholder feedback through the earlier consultations, the final ISP Methodology for use in the 2026 ISP will be published on 25 June 2025.

**Table 3** ISP Methodology timetable

Milestone	Date
Notice of Consultation on ISP Methodology – Issues Paper	23 October 2024
Draft ISP Methodology	13 March 2025
ISP Methodology	25 June 2025

<sup>13</sup> AER. Guidelines to make the integrated system plan actionable, at <https://www.aer.gov.au/networks-pipelines/guidelines-schemes-models-reviews/guidelines-to-make-the-integrated-system-plan-actionable/final-decision>.

<sup>14</sup> FBPG, Appendix A, Forecasting best practice consultation procedures.

<sup>15</sup> If AEMO considers a material change in circumstances justifies an earlier review, AEMO is required to run a single-stage consultation process. This was the case for the update completed in March 2023.

<sup>16</sup> Energy and Climate Change Ministerial Council. *Response to the Review of the Integrated System Plan*, March 2024. At <https://www.energy.gov.au/energy-and-climate-change-ministerial-council/energy-ministers-publications/energy-ministers-response-review-integrated-system-plan>.



## 6 Preparatory activities

Preparatory activities are defined in the NER as activities to design and investigate the costs and benefits of actionable ISP projects, future ISP projects, and REZ stages (as applicable). In an ISP, AEMO may specify activities, which must be carried out by a TNSP. AEMO did not identify any new preparatory activities in the 2024 ISP, and so no milestones associated with preparatory activities are noted in this Timetable.

## 7 Draft and final ISP

### Draft 2026 ISP

The Draft 2026 ISP will set out a preliminary optimal development path for Australia's energy future. During the development of the ISP, the Draft ISP is published to enable consultation and ensure that the data and information in the final ISP is of high quality.

AEMO will undertake extensive engagement on the Draft ISP through stakeholder events such as workshops, webinars and briefings. The AER's FBPG provide AEMO with best practice principles for its consultation processes and engagement, which AEMO must have regard to when developing the ISP. Feedback from the Draft 2024 ISP made the 2024 ISP more robust and fit for purpose.

AEMO will issue a consultation on non-network options<sup>17</sup> for any new potentially actionable ISP projects at the same time it issues the Draft ISP consultation. This process aims to encourage submissions from proponents about how a non-network option might address the identified need of the Draft ISP's actionable ISP projects. The proponents will have 12 weeks to submit non-network proposals following the publication of the Draft ISP.

At the conclusion of the non-network options consultation, AEMO will conduct a preliminary review of the proposals together with the relevant TNSPs, where appropriate, as part of the joint planning process<sup>18</sup>. If the relevant project identified in the Draft ISP remains an actionable ISP project in the final ISP, AEMO will make an assessment as part of the final ISP on whether any non-network proposals meet, or are reasonably likely to meet, or will not meet, the identified need. Proposals that are assessed to meet, or are reasonably likely to meet, the identified need must be assessed by the relevant TNSP in its Project Assessment Draft Report (PADR).

AEMO plans to release the Draft ISP on 11 December 2025 and will invite written submissions for non-network options proposals if the Draft ISP identifies new potentially actionable ISP projects. Proposals will need to be submitted by 20 March 2026.

### Final 2026 ISP

The 2026 ISP will identify the optimal development path for the NEM, including actionable ISP projects, future ISP projects and development opportunities. If the 2026 ISP identifies an additional actionable ISP project not included in the Draft ISP, AEMO will publish a notice alongside the ISP requesting submissions for non-network options by 17 September 2026. The results of the consultation process will be reviewed by AEMO and the relevant TNSP and incorporated into a PADR where appropriate.

Stakeholder engagement is pivotal in developing a robust ISP that will be an effective resource for industry on the future development of the NEM. After the consultation process is completed, the 2026 ISP will be published on 25 June 2026. Throughout the development of the 2026 ISP, AEMO will monitor material change across the energy sector, and will consider whether there is a need to modify the ISP timeline.

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<sup>17</sup> AEMO will also undertake early engagement with non-network proponents as part of the IASR to gather information in relation to non-network options.

<sup>18</sup> The joint planning process is carried out under NER 5.14.4.



**Table 4** Draft and final ISP timetable

Milestone	Date
Draft ISP	11 December 2025
Final ISP	25 June 2026