

Advisory Council on Social Licence

Notes and actions

Forum:	AEMO Advisory Council on Social Licence (ACSL) Meeting 5
Date:	20 November 2023, 10am-3:30pm
Location:	AEMO Sydney office & online

Attendees:

Name	Position	Location
Darren Edwards	ACSL member	Online
Gavin Dufty	ACSL member	Sydney office
Jonathan Kneebone	ACSL member (for Karrina Nolan)	Sydney office
Joy Thomas	ACSL member	Sydney office
Lucy Graham	ACSL member	Sydney office
Peta Ashworth	ACSL member	Online
Russell Dunn	ACSL member	Sydney office
Warrick Jordan	ACSL member	Online
Bev Hughson	ISP Consumer Panel	Online
Mark Grenning	ISP Consumer Panel	Online
Mark Henley	ISP Consumer Panel	Online
Nevenka Codevelle (Chair)	EGM, Government and Stakeholder	Sydney office
Merryn York	EGM, System Design, AEMO	Sydney office
Andrew Turley	GM, Forecasting, AEMO	Sydney office
Claire Elkin	GM, Victorian Network Services and Delivery	Sydney office
Eli Pack	GM, System Planning, AEMO	Sydney office
Matthew Myers	GM, Stakeholder Engagement, AEMO	Sydney office
Emily Duck	Manager, Consumer and Community, AEMO	Sydney office
Mitchell Hume	Manager, Project Community and Stakeholder Engagement, AEMO	Sydney office
Nicole Dodd	Manager, Retail & DER Reform, AEMO	Online
Samantha Christie	Manager, Strategic Planning, AEMO	Sydney office
Samantha Lloyd	Stakeholder Engagement Lead, System Design, AEMO	Online
Nick Regan	Principal Analyst Energy Market Services, AEMO	Online
Kerri Major	Senior Stakeholder Advisor, AEMO	Sydney office
Levi Rosenbaum	Stakeholder Engagement Advisor, AEMO	Online

Additional presenters and observers:

Name	Position/Organisation	Location
Adam Carlon	Assistant Secretary Communications and Engagement, Net Zero Economy Agency	Online
Kat George	Associate Director of Research, Energy Consumers Australia	Online
Nadia Rosenman	Acting Branch Head of the Rewiring the Nation Office, Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW)	Online
Megan Clement	Assistant Director, Rewiring the Nation Office, DCCEEW	Online

Apologies:

Name	Position
Andrew Richards	ACSL member
Amanda Cahill	ACSL member
Warrick Jordan	ACSL member
Andrew Dyer	Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner (observer)

Upcoming Advisory Council meetings

Date	Meeting	Location
Feb/March 2024	ACSL Meeting #6	TBC

Disclaimer

This document provides an overview of the main points of discussion at AEMO's Advisory Council on Social Licence meeting on 20 November 2023. The purpose of the meeting was to provide information and invite perspectives and feedback on matters relating to social licence. Please note:

- this document is a summary only and is not a complete record of discussion,
- for presentation purposes, some points have been grouped together by theme and do not necessarily appear in the order they were discussed, and
- the views expressed at the forum and reflected here are not necessarily those of AEMO.

Actions

#	Action	Status	Responsibility
1	ACSL members invited to share feedback (by email) on social licence considerations to inform the Draft 2024 ISP, released 15 December 2023	Complete	ACSL members

Discussion notes

1 What has happened since the last meeting

- AEMO acknowledged and thanked ACSL members for their contributions to AEMO's Draft ISP 2024 and involvement of several members in related social licence sensitivity analysis workshops.
- AEMO acknowledged and thanked ACSL member Warrick Jordan for his contributions to the group, and in his absence noted Warrick will be stepping down from the Council effective from November 2023.
- AEMO led a group reflection on a broad range of social licence related reports, consultations and activities underway or announced across government and industry since the last meeting, including:
 - Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW)'s [First Nations Clean Energy Strategy consultation paper](#)
 - NSW Government's [Draft energy policy framework](#)
 - AER's [Directions paper on social licence for electricity transmission projects](#)
 - Energy Consumers Australia's ['PowerUp' research project](#)
 - Curtin University, The University of Queensland and Powerlink [High Voltage Overhead And Underground Transmission Infrastructure summary report](#)
- AEMO also shared an update on recent community engagement for the VNI West Project in Victoria, noting five community townhall events were run during early to mid-October, with over 400 attendees.

2 Rewiring the Nation communications strategy

- Nadia Rosenman, Acting Branch Head of the *Rewiring the Nation Office* (RtN) provided an overview of the Office's work to build transmission lines that will deliver renewable energy to cities, towns and regional communities.
- Part of the Australian Government's [Powering Australia](#) plan, RtN is investing \$20 billion to upgrade and modernise Australia's electricity grids and infrastructure and help meet national emission reduction targets. Investment is primarily being delivered through low-cost finance administered by the Clean Energy Finance Corporation. AEMO also serves as a member of the RtN Advisory Committee.
- RtN sought ACSL feedback on consumer and social licence considerations to inform their communications planning, development and delivery approach. Members provided a range of valuable insights, including:
 - the importance of distributional fairness or ensuring that the development of new electricity infrastructure enhances power reliability for people living in metro, regional and rural areas.
 - the value of engaging with a wide and diverse range of groups across communities and providing specific examples of how RtN will listen and respond to their concerns.
 - the opportunity to ensure that RtN's communications align with related work being led by other Government departments to ensure consistency and clarity in approach and feedback channels.
- RtN thanked ACSL members for their contributions and invited any further suggestions by email.

3 Conservation as part of the transition

- Lucy Graham, ACSL member and Director of the Cairns and Far North Queensland Environment Centre, presented to the group on opportunities to further consider a social justice lens within the energy transition. Members discussed a range of topics, including:

- how the energy transition narrative could better address social justice issues highlighting the Energy Justice Circle, which demonstrates the intersections between the energy production life cycle, human rights and justice (Heffron, R.J. 2021),
 - the role regional communities have on the success of the transition and new infrastructure projects,
 - the opportunity to look for and share positive stories from those living in rural and regional areas to inform and support other community groups experiencing similar changes in their areas.
- ACSL members discussed the opportunity to continue the conversation in future meetings as further work is delivered by governments and industry to progress the energy transition.

4 Draft ISP: Social licence

- Released on 15 December 2023, AEMO's Draft 2024 Integrated System Plan (ISP) is a roadmap for the transition of the National Electricity Market power system for the next 20 years and beyond. As part of its development AEMO has sought to enhance its focus on social licence through:
 - development and application of a social licence sensitivity within ISP modelling, to understand the potential impact of 'reduced social licence' on AEMO's 'optimal development path', and
 - development of a dedicated [Social Licence Appendix](#) outlining how AEMO has considered social licence in the development of the Draft 2024 ISP and its broader role influencing energy transition.
- Both activities represent a first for AEMO, being introduced post 2022 ISP release, and were informed through consultation and insights provided by ACSL and ISP Consumer Panel members.
- Led by the Chair, AEMO sought ACSL feedback on the draft Appendix following their initial review in August and shared high-level sensitivity modelling results. Members provided a range of valuable feedback, including opportunities to:
 - acknowledge some of the more intangible aspects of social licence, including the social, cultural and other drivers that can 'dial' social licence up or down
 - provide more detail on how the 'reduced social licence' sensitivity analysis was developed (including what it does and doesn't account for and why) and opportunities for further refinement
 - further emphasise that social licence is an area of continued learning for AEMO, and that feedback is welcomed on how it could be better accounted for or quantified within the ISP.
- AEMO invited further member feedback by email post-meeting to help inform Draft ISP development.

5 National narrative update

- Adam Carlon, Assistant Secretary Communications and Engagement at the [Net Zero Economy Agency](#) (NZEA) shared an update on work underway to develop a communications approach for the net-zero transition. Chaired by the Hon. Greg Combet, the NZEA is responsible for promoting positive economic transformation to ensure Australia, its regions and workers realise and share the benefits of the net zero economy.
- Following the commissioning of social research to inform development of a communications strategy for Australia's net-zero transition, NZEA sought ACSL feedback on further community insights to inform this work. Members provided a range of valuable considerations, including:
 - the importance of Governments building trust and credibility within regions and ensuring a broad range of local voices, views and experiences are heard
 - the need to balance national-level messaging with more detailed, region-specific information and engagement, and explain to communities how the transition will relate to them

- the importance of developing long-term, trusting relationships with Traditional Owners.
- NZEA thanked ACSL members for their contributions and invited any further suggestions by email.

6 Update on CER initiatives

- Kat George, Associate Director of Research at Energy Consumers Australia, presented on [PowerUp: Consumer Voices in the Energy Transition](#), a year-long research program to better understand the values, expectations, and needs of households and small businesses in relation to consumer energy resources (CER). Initial research findings are expected in February 2024 with a final report due around August 2024.
- Following ECA's presentation AEMO also shared highlights from the conclusion of [Project EDGE](#); a 3.5-year pilot project which rewarded customers who voluntarily joined virtual power plants (VPPs) and were flexible with their devices when needed.
- Delivered as a collaboration between AEMO, AusNet Services and Mondo, and supported by the Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA) the project demonstrated effectively that coordination of CER could be achieved in the marketplace while also upholding customer preferences and providing financial benefits.

7 Community Engagement approach

- AEMO presented for ACSL feedback a high level overview of its FY24 consumer engagement plan, which seeks to ensure better energy outcomes for consumers. Plan objectives align to priorities outlined in [AEMO's Strategic Corporate Plan FY24](#) and include improving accessibility of key AEMO information and publications, and ensuring AEMO consumer forums are efficient, effective and deliver value.
- ACSL members provided a broad range of feedback including around the importance of applying a consumer-focused lens and language to communications, which AEMO will apply to its ongoing work.

8 Next steps

- AEMO invited ACSL members to attend AEMO's Consumer Forum on 29 November and Draft 2024 ISP Webinar on 20 December. The Chair also thanked the ACSL for their support and guidance over the year and suggested a session reflecting on the ACSL's contributions at the next meeting.
- The next ACSL meeting is expected to be held in February or March 2024.