

AEMO Consumer Forum

Meeting Summary: 29 July 2024

These notes summarise AEMO's presentations at the Consumer Forum and feedback and questions received at a high level and are not intended to be a detailed set of minutes.

Actions from previous meeting

- Consumer Forum meeting summaries and presentation decks are available on our [website](#).

Meeting topics

- Update on AEMO initiatives
- Final FY25 Budget & Fees update
- ISP 2026 – Meet the Consumer Panel
- AEMO Strategic Corporate Plan
- Forum feedback and next meeting

Update on AEMO initiatives

Presentation summary

AEMO shared an overview of recent and upcoming AEMO publications and activities of potential interest to consumers, including:

- Maximum demand records for winter set in [Victoria](#) (15 July) and [Queensland](#) (17 July).
- The [2024 Integrated System Plan \(ISP\)](#), published 26 June alongside a [3-page overview](#).
- Upcoming AEMO and Ausnet CER Data Exchange Industry Co-Design project workshops open to consumer advocates. [Contact the team](#) for questions.
- [2025 Inputs, Assumptions and Scenarios Report \(IASR\) scenarios](#) open for consultation until 13 August.
- Latest '[AEMO on Air](#)' podcast episodes on the 2024 ISP with CEO Daniel Westerman and the WEM Electricity Statement of Opportunities with EGM Kate Ryan.
- Daniel Westerman's Australian Clean Energy Summit 2024 speech, [available online here](#).
- Call for [EOIs for the Consumer and Community Reference Group](#), open until 16 August.
- AEMO's [FY25 Budget and Fees](#) and [FY25 Strategic Corporate Plan](#), published on 28 June.

Final FY25 Budget and Fees update

Presentation summary

As follow up to earlier Draft Budget & Fees discussions, AEMO presented a high-level overview of its final [FY25 Budget and Fees](#). Key changes from the draft budget, which was open for consultation from 5 to 26 April, included:

- An \$81M increase in topline figures from the previously shared draft budget: with NEM Core operating costs of \$210M, NEM functions operating costs of \$163M, and an east coast gas operating budget of \$60M.
- The increase from the draft budget was predominantly due to additions to the Capacity Investment Scheme and the NSW Roadmap, which are funded by discrete, contractual arrangements with federal and state governments and not participant fees.
- A full recovery is still anticipated for the \$100M accumulated deficit in NEM Core by the end of FY25, within the previously agreed 4.5% fee increase.
- AEMO also provided updates on key feedback to the Draft Budget & Fees received from stakeholders, including the Australian Energy Council and Consumer Forum attendees.

Feedback and actions

Attendees asked questions around AEMO's budgeting and consultation processes, and for greater visibility of how stakeholder feedback was addressed. One representative also requested a number of changes, including increased consumer representation on AEMO's Finance Consultation Committee (FCC) and continued posting of FCC meeting minutes online. They also suggested AEMO clarify its labour headcount and give consumers a budget status update in December, as a halfway check point to the year. AEMO took these suggestions on board and confirmed that all [FCC minutes were available online](#) and would continue to be posted regularly.

ISP 2026: Meet the ISP Consumer Panel

Presentation summary

Mark Henley, Chair of the ISP Consumer Panel, along with member Beverley Hughson, gave an overview of the 2026 ISP Consumer Panel's role and priorities.

- Established under the National Electricity Rules (NER), the ISP Consumer Panel's role is to bring a consumer-focused perspective to the two-year ISP development process.
- The 2026 Consumer Panel represents the third Panel stood up since the ISP's inception, and its four members include: Mark Henley, Beverley Hughson, Craig Memery and Dr Jarra Hicks.
- As part of its work the Panel will provide two reports to AEMO: a response to the 2025 IASR, as well as to the 2026 Draft Integrated System Plan. Other areas of work include:
 - Consumer risk preferences, or the appetites of consumers to pay a bit more now to reduce the risk of lower reliability in future.
 - Social licence, as consumers and communities are asked to host energy infrastructure.
 - Implementation of the Commonwealth's ISP review recommendations, which involves greater accessibility of materials and inclusion of community sentiment in modelling.
- Panel members also encouraged broader consumer advocate and groups engagement in various stages of the ISP to ensure their voices were reflected, including AEMO's [2025 IASR scenarios consultation paper](#) which is open until 13 August.

Feedback and actions

Consumers asked if AEMO would continue to accept verbal submissions as part of its ISP consultation process, which AEMO confirmed, and set up a consumer advocate specific IASR submission webinar on 12 August to facilitate. Questions were also raised about the broader rollout of smart meters and time-of-use tariffs, as well as the need for a more plausible and

deliverable ISP that includes inputs from a diverse range of informed consumer advocates. Acknowledging that the Panel might not represent the entirety of consumer views, Mark Henley encouraged questions, views or feedback to be sent to him at ISP@aemo.com.au.

FY25 Strategic Corporate Plan

Presentation summary

Published on 28 June, AEMO's [FY25 Strategic Corporate Plan](#) outlines the organisation's strategic priorities and initiatives to ensure safe reliable and affordable energy for all Australians and enable the energy transition to net zero. AEMO Executive General Manager WA & Strategy, Kate Ryan, presented an overview of Plan, touching on the consumer context for AEMO's key priorities:

- **Priority 1 – Operating today's systems and markets:** The continued need for AEMO to manage current operational and future challenges to ensure consumers have continued access to safe, reliable, affordable energy.
- **Priority 2 – Navigating the energy future:** Consideration of the growing role of CER in the ISP, that have the potential to lower costs for all consumers if coordinated effectively.
- **Priority 3: Engaging our stakeholders:** The importance of social licence, and in listening to the needs of consumers and communities. Consumers and communities need to be involved in how the energy transition is delivered, to enable positive outcomes for all Australians.
- **Priority 4: Evolving the way we work:** Consumers need to be assured that AEMO is focusing resources on the right things, at the right times, and to understand and care about what matters to them.

Feedback and actions

Speaking broadly, attendees emphasised the need, as part of the energy transition, to build consumer voices, confidence and trust to support CER coordination, which AEMO agreed with, and noted a variety of work being led or underway across governments and industry to support this. Advocates also asked for more information on CER data exchange workshops being held by AEMO and Transgrid, which AEMO committed to sharing post the Forum session. Finally, AEMO reiterated that with the upcoming establishment of its [new Consumer and Community Reference group](#), AEMO hoped to create further consultation opportunities for consumer representatives to gain more visibility of its CER work and help shape AEMO's thinking in this space.

Other business and next Forum

- Forum attendees were reminded of and invited to [apply for AEMO's Consumer and Community Reference Group](#), with expressions of interest closing Friday 16 August.
- Upcoming Consumer Forums in 2024 are currently proposed for 12 September, and November, with special sessions as required. Proposed agenda items for September include AEMO's Results presentation and an update on Consumer Energy Resources.
- Participants are invited to fill in a [survey](#) to provide feedback and propose future topics.

Contact

If you require more information, please email AEMO Stakeholder Engagement: StakeholderRelations@aemo.com.au.