

Customer Advisory Panel – Meeting Minutes

Meeting	
Date	Tuesday 11 November 2025
Time	9:00am -5:00pm
Location	40 Market St, Melbourne VIC 3000
Members	Philip Cullum (Chair), Hilary Newstead (Deputy Chair), Helen Bartley, Gavin Dufty, Dean Lombard, Natalie Collard
Consumer Challenge Panel	David Prins
Attendees	CPPALUE: Renate Vogt (General Manager Regulation), Lauren Fetherston (Head of Policy and Compliance), Jeff Anderson (Head of Regulatory Strategy), Chris Gilbert (Regulatory Manager), Angelica D'Amelio (Regulatory Engagement Lead), James Mitchell (Senior Regulatory Analyst), Winona Bonne (Customer and Corporate Graduate), Anush Ahuja (Graduate Engineer)
Apologies	N/A
Pre-reading	1. CAP pre-read materials – November 2025

Item	Topic
1	Proposal determination The CAP was presented with key components of CitiPower, Powercor and United Energy's plans for the revised proposal. <i>Final numbers</i> The final numbers the business intend to propose for the revised proposal were shared. The CAP raised a number of questions and comments to probe the reasoning for certain decisions including: - Why there was a big step change for CitiPower for vegetation management as the council currently undertakes a lot to address vegetation management. The CAP wanted to understand the driver from the AER for this step change and what the core responsibility of CitiPower is - Relating to the residential bill reductions, discussion included: - whether the reduction was due to an overall revenue decrease - if everyone would be impacted by the bill reduction - to understand the average DUOS and if this was a more accurate picture of bill impacts - to the value of reporting on the range of bill impacts across customer groups - how consumption will be affected by solar. - It was suggested that all three networks need to articulate what the reduced revenue means for customer bills. The networks need to show they are delivering more value for less - Demand response happens slowly which should be considered when incorporating customer behaviour and responsiveness into relevant projects Points raised in an overarching energy transition discussion included: - There need to be clearer signals for customers to understand when it is the best time to use electricity - There is need for more public awareness campaigns for TOU tariffs - questions were raised on whose job is it to inform customers about tariff types

Resilience proposal

- Overall, there was support and acceptance for resilience initiatives to be included in the revised proposal. Comments included:
 - how the messaging will be communicated to communities to ensure they are aware of the networks' proposals
 - how Powercor can lift its presence in communities
 - concerns raised that the AER may not support all 17 locations for the proposed 'quick connect points' initiative and the organisation should consider how to engage with customers who are missing out due to the AER's decision
 - how some community areas will change over time, which may change the identified need for resilience
 - the networks should establish a process of evaluation to show the outcomes of projects and whether they've achieved their intended purpose.

DSO vision

The business presented on the DSO vision, and the CAP raised a series of questions, concerns and suggestions about the substance and presentation of the vision.

Points made in discussion included:

- insufficiently clear about the difference between DSO versus what the networks do today
- the vision could be broader as it currently implies that that CER is the only technology being utilised
- customers should be able to choose their own path, without the networks controlling them
- worth adding customers who want CER but can't access it to the customer archetypes.
- consideration could also be given to socio-economic status.
- not clear if two EV customer archetypes are required.
- explanation wanted in non-technical terms what standard control services (SCS) and alternative control services (ASC) mean
- whether the vision should be supported by a functional segmentation or a customer needs-based segmentation, where the segments should be about appetite to engage.
- future engagement will be required to support the DSO vision
- there will be effects of tariffs and undervoltage which needs to be considered

In terms of improving the document, suggestions included:

- separate the DSO vision for the future, from what is currently being delivered
- some felt the DSO vision was missing a definition of what the vision actually is. Currently, there is a lot on what it 'does'
- consideration was raised relating to:
 - wording the vision in a way customers can understand, showing that customers are the main driver and have the potential to make the vision possible
 - bring clarity to the challenge being faced
 - show how customers are going to benefit including:
 - the benefits are universal - rephrase the strategic value statement to show that this is for every customer, not just selected customers
 - provide illustrations of how this can play out for different customers
 - explain how the networks enable more choice in the DSO
- add that success measures will be monitored and revised

Innovation program

CitiPower, Powercor and United Energy discussed the innovation program changes since the last update and regulatory proposal, including new projects. The CAP endorsed the general approach presented and the process involved.

Point made in discussion included:

- projects should be able to change, as this is the nature of innovation and the established governance framework
- not clear how the community energy fund really meets the criteria for innovation
- there were views expressed on how the innovation project addressed areas of market failure and vulnerability
- the networks should emphasise how projects satisfy the AER criteria and include what it enables the business to do in the future
- questions were raised relating to:
 - what innovation initiatives the business is involved in. There was a suggestion on how this should be bought out more
 - whether the AER considers innovation from a community perspective which allows communities shape decisions, rather than being network led
 - if the business should consider 50 percent of funding coming from the AER and 50 percent from grants for projects

Data centres

Following a presentation on data centres, comments included:

- why 15% needs to be funded by the network and how this number was chosen. The business confirmed that the AER chose this number
- what the impacts are on customers if the businesses use data from external parties, versus what the networks had in the draft determination.

Renewable energy zones

Overall, the CAP was supportive of the renewable energy zone proposal and had a few questions and comments to further understand the initiative including:

- contestable options and what competitors will offer
- what the trigger thresholds from a customer perspective are
- how the network gets customer line of sight to these projects to ensure project risks are managed
- what engagements the network is going to be doing with customers and communities to understand what they want from these DREZ projects
- understanding the impact these projects have on CER and DSO

Vulnerability strategy

Comments on the vulnerability strategy included::

- the strategy document doesn't need to include every detailed action –there should be a separate workplan
- the definition should be refined to move it away from an individual person's characteristics, and instead consider their wider circumstances. This definition then needs to be applied more consistently throughout the document
- show how the strategy builds on what the business is already doing in relation to vulnerable customers

- within the evaluation criteria, the self-evaluation section looks self-fulfilling. It was suggested the business gets independent measures
- the business was commended following the discussion in the previous meeting about the most appropriate terms to use in the strategy. An explanation was given on the approach taken, which was accepted by the CAP
- reporting on impact should include the difference made to customers' lives

Customer commitments

Following a presentation on the customer commitments, comments included:

- in terms of the wording around 'households', there was a recommendation to include benefits to 'all customers', to show that the networks are not only benefiting one group alone
- discussion with regard to the affordability commitment included whether it uses the most appropriate measure. Through discussion however it was generally understood what the networks' challenges are in defining an alternate commitment with the same level of detail
- how percentages are reported, with an example called out with the resilience commitment. It was questioned if the 5% of customers were always the same 5% of customers who are worst served, and if this is the internal baseline then this raises concerns
- the use of REFCLs on total fire ban days - clarification was sought on the areas where they are declared
- relating to harmonics, how the networks ensure they are measuring the number of customers or the degree of harmonics? As the difference might be their insurance or their liability
- questions were asked on whether the targets will remain for the regulatory period and what is the review process for amending and stretching those targets

Support and endorsement was given on the structure.

Integrated distribution system plan

The CAP received a presentation on the integrated distribution system plan.

Points made in discussion included:

- suggestions made on how the networks should show the AER the amount of available data
- questions were raised relating to:
 - where the rule change comes from and how there is a point of difference for Victoria and New South Wales
 - option 2 of the planning horizon: whether there is a middle ground where the networks could suggest 10 years and 20 years on exception, where the 20 years comes with greater risks versus 10 years
 - at what point does the forecast become meaningless and whether there is value add to do 10 years and then add another 10 years
 - if the networks have considered a middle ground for option 1 - e.g., AEMO gives a scenario and the business analyses this scenario in the context of the network and what can be provided..