



Communique

WA ACE Forum

24 October 2023 meeting

Meeting 18 of the Western Australian Advocacy for Consumers of Energy (WA ACE) Forum was held on 24 October 2023.

Australian Energy Market Operator role in the transition to 100% Renewables

Members were provided an overview of the work that the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) is undertaking to support the energy transition. AEMO outlined how it is characterising sufficiency in the main electricity grid in Western Australia (the South West Interconnected System), along with ensuring that power system security and reliability can be maintained during a period of significant change in generation fleet, network and consumer participation.

Alternative Electricity Services update

Energy Policy WA provided an update on the Alternative Electricity Services (AES) work program. This included:

- That the Minister for Energy has introduced legislation to the Western Australian Parliament that will amend the *Electricity Industry Act 2004* to allow for the introduction of the of consumer protections within embedded networks and other prescribed services.
- An overview of the feedback received on from the consultation paper on the draft Voluntary Embedded Network Code.
- That it is expected that a final version of the Voluntary Code will be released in early 2024. Embedded network sellers will then be encouraged to register with Energy Policy WA to participate under the Voluntary Code for a 6-to-12-month trial period. Following the trial period it is expected that the Code will become mandatory for embedded network sellers.

WA Electric Vehicle charging program update

Energy Policy WA provided an overview of the key findings of the WA Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Behaviour Study. This includes that Australian households have higher rates of overnight and daytime charging compared to our international counterparts, and that this may be linked to the high rates of rooftop solar within Australia. The study found that without policy intervention and with further growth in EV sales, people are likely to come home from work and immediately charge their vehicle, which may increase the peak load on the network. The study recommended a focus on education programs, using financial incentives to assist households purchasing smart chargers as part of EV trials, and that time of use tariffs that will shift the peak are promoted and refined.

Members were also advised that the first round of the Charge Up Workplace EV Charger Grant Program had closed. In the first round Energy Policy WA approved 142 grants, valued at \$2.4 million, that will result in 403 chargers being installed at 221 locations across Western Australia. Round 2 of the Charge Up Grant Program commencing from 4 November 2023 includes chargers up to 350kW being eligible for funding.

Changes to Western Australia's voltage limits

Energy Policy WA outlined that the voltage and frequency limits for Western Australian electricity networks is currently prescribed in the *Electricity Act 1945*, which means they cannot be altered without changing the legislation. The current voltage is 240 voltages, with 6% tolerance either side of this. Accordingly, the Electricity Industry Amendment (Distributed Energy Resources) Bill 2023 once passed will remove the voltage and frequency limits from the *Electricity Act 1945* and allow the limits to be set within regulations. This could allow for the Western Australian voltage limits to align with other Australian jurisdictions and Australian standards.

Expert Consumer Panel update

Expert Consumer Panel members provided an overview of recent activities, including:

- Providing a submission on the Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation *Hydrogen Strategy Refresh Consultation Paper*
- Providing a submission on the Economic Regulation Authority's Draft Decision on the *Compendium of Gas Customer Licence Obligations 2023*.

About the WA ACE Forum

The WA ACE Forum brings to together consumer representative bodies from across Western Australia to provide consumer insights to the energy sector, supporting informed, valuable contributions to the energy debate in Western Australia. The WA ACE Forum meets five times a year.

The WA ACE Forum is not a decision-making body, nor is it required to form consensus. Accordingly, this Communique does not reflect the views of Energy Policy WA or any particular member organisation, rather it seeks to share the key areas of discussion by the Forum.