

23 January 2023

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Dear Sarah

Resetting the greenfield underground negotiated electricity connection customer service standards

AusNet Electricity Services Pty Ltd (AusNet) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Essential Services Commission (ESC) 2022, Resetting the greenfield underground negotiated electricity connection customer service standards: Consultation paper, 12 December (consultation paper). In our electricity distribution network area, medium density housing development occurs in both the rapidly expanding metropolitan growth corridors in Melbourne's north and southeast and major regional centres in the Kilmore and Wodonga regions.

Since 2018, the electrical reticulation industry and distribution businesses have come a long way in working together to achieve shorter connection processing times and lower rates of quality issues. Our reported metrics have demonstrated a track record of improvements to the point where we are substantially meeting our targets, despite experiencing some issues of staff availability during the COVID-19 pandemic and, more recently, IT issues with our online connection portal.

We understand that the efficient delivery of new housing developments remains a priority for the Victorian Government. Likewise, we have an ongoing focus on maintaining efficient connection processes for new housing developments with extensive contestability options for design, construction, and the connection. More so than any other distribution business, we encourage the contestable industry to perform this work with our role being that of managing the quality and safety of delivered assets. In this capacity, we highly value our engagement with housing developers and industry associations.

We look forward to continuing our quarterly engagement with our Developer Consultative Committee (DCC). The DCC forum has become beneficial in conducting research and consulting on issues of 100% solar estates and the implications of the Victorian Energy Transition policy. The meaningful engagement with the DCC, being informed by our regular connection customer service standards reporting, provides significantly more valuable than legislated prescriptive performance targets. Maintaining the DCC forum is mutually beneficial to us, the industry, and our customers, at this time. In latter half of the service standard, we would appreciate the flexibility to vary the DCC engagement to half yearly following consultation with the ESC and the industry. Therefore, we support the proposed extension of quarterly engagement and retaining our current reporting metrics with some flexibility to vary it in 2025.

If you have any queries on our submission, please do not hesitate to contact Justin Betlehem on 03 9695 6288 or via email justin.betlehem@ausnetservices.com.au.

Sincerely,



Charlotte Eddy
Regulatory Policy Manager
AusNet Services