

Governance Committee – Timely Electricity Connections

Purpose

This document sets out the terms of reference for the Governance Committee, which will oversee implementing a range of initiatives to achieve timely electricity connections.

Background

In May 2018, the Minister for Finance wrote to the commission's Chairperson seeking advice on electricity regulation in Victoria. The request was driven by the Government's concern that delays by electricity distribution businesses in connecting new developments to the electricity networks are costly. The delays then potentially inhibit progress in achieving the government's affordable housing objectives under its policy framework for affordable housing (*Homes for Victorians: Affordability, Access and Choice*).

In response we undertook an extensive stakeholder consultation program to understand the issues causing delays and to arrive at targeted, effective and timely solutions.

We found a wide range of issues affected the timeliness of electricity connections.

We expect that the solutions proposed will achieve the following:

- improve times taken to connect new developments to the electricity networks
- clarify roles and responsibilities, and
- improve communications and foster long term collaborative relationships between distribution businesses and developers.

All key stakeholders play a role in implementing some of the solutions that have been identified. We have allocated solutions to the party best placed to lead implementation.

The electricity distribution businesses have voluntarily agreed to a Service Improvement Commitment (the Commitment). This seeks to deliver a range of initiatives designed to improve matters related to timely connections.

On 7 September 2018, we submitted our advice on electricity regulation to the Minister for Finance. Our advice has been published on our website www.esc.vic.gov.au

Objectives

The Governance committee will oversee the completion of initiatives to achieve timely electricity connections that are documented in our advice to the Minister. The Committee's key objectives are:

- monitoring delivery of the Service Improvement Commitment and other initiatives
- giving feedback where necessary to achieve elements of the Service Improvement Commitment and other initiatives, and
- identification of issues and risks that may affect implementation of initiatives and provide options for solutions

A copy of our advice to the Minister is attached to this Terms of Reference.

Membership

The Governance Committee will consist of the following members (or their delegates):

- Adam Gellie – Powercor
- Leesa Penaluna – AusNet Services
- Andrew Davis – Jemena
- Neil O'Connor – Villawood Properties (UDIA)
- Angus Crawford – Property Council of Australia
- Dean Rochfort / Laurie Mitchell – Victorian Planning Authority
- John Hamill – Essential Services Commission (Chair)
- Sarah McDowell – Essential Services Commission

Secretariat /Technical

- Merryn Wilson – Essential Services Commission
- Aaron Yuen – Essential Services Commission

Governance

Membership of the Governance Committee will be for a 24 month period from the date of the first meeting. Note that the time may be extended with the consent of Committee members.

The Committee will have an advisory status only.

Meetings will be chaired by the Commission. The meeting agenda will be distributed to members and meeting notes will be posted on the Commission's website following each meeting.

Meetings

The Committee will meet every two months in the commission's office.

The first meeting we will consider:

- whether the draft terms of reference are adequate
- what success looks like for the Committee
- summary of actions that have been taken
- communication and reporting and next steps