Date:	Start time:	Finish time:	Venue:	Meeting no:
Thursday 28 March 2019	1pm	4.15pm	Whittaker Room Powerlink 33 Harold Street Virginia QLD 4014	13

Facilitator: Gerard Reilly (Powerlink)

Minutes: Nicole Maguire and Kiara Bowles (Powerlink)

Attendees:
Liam Byrnes (Aurizon)
Ian Christmas (Edify Energy)
Georgina Davis (Queensland Farmers' Federation)
John Gardner (CSIRO)
Mark Grenning (Energy Users Association of Australia)
Chris Hazzard (St Vincent de Paul Society)
David Hiette (BMA)
Robyn Robinson (Council of the Ageing)
Sam Pocock (Energy Queensland)

Powerlink panel members:
Jenny Harris
Chris Evans
Norike Ganhao
Narelle Fortescue

Powerlink observers *(part attendance)*:
Cathy Heffernan
Damian Vermey
Julian Thomas
Enrique Montiel

Apologies:
Shelley Ashe (Energy Consumers Australia)
Andrew Barger (Queensland Resources Council)
Erin Bledsoe (Shell/QGC)
Steve Straughan (Aurizon)

Powerlink presenters:
Stewart Bell
Jenny Harris
Roger Smith
Greg Hesse
Gerard Reilly

AEMO presenters:
Andrew Turley
Luke Falla

Attachments will include all documents provided to panel members at the meeting including:
PowerPoint presentation and pre-reading documents

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Item	Discussion	Action	Due date	Who
1	**Welcome to Powerlink, introductions and overview of agenda** **–** Gerard Reilly, General Manager Communications			
2	**Update on RIT-T process for expanding the NSW-QLD transmission transfer capacity** **–** Stewart Bell, Executive General Manager Delivery & Technical Solutions Summary: • Powerlink and TransGrid are continuing to progress the RIT-T process and associated stakeholder consultation • Five types of options were presented in the Project Specification Consultation Report (PSCR) published in December 2018 – 10 submissions received • Project Assessment Draft Report (PADR) expected to be released later in 2019. **Comments (C), questions (Q) and Powerlink response (R)** **Q:** Is Powerlink fast-tracking the RIT-T process for projects under both Group 1 and Group 2 investments as per AEMO's Integrated System Plan (ISP)? **R:** We considered doing two RIT-Ts – one to assess Group 1 investments, and another to examine Group 2 projects. However, given the need is the same, our current RIT-T process gives consideration to both Group 1 and 2 projects. Once we have completed this current RIT-T, we will have a clearer idea on what the preferred solution will be – for example, it may recommend a smaller network upgrade followed by a larger network upgrade. We'll wait to see the outcomes.			

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	Q: If the preferred option from this RIT-T indicates a smaller upgrade rather than the larger network upgrade may be required, does the RIT-T only apply to the smaller upgrade? **R:** This depends on timings and practicalities. If there are material changes related to future implementation of the preferred option, we would update and re-examine the market modelling and assumptions to undertake additional RIT-T work down the track. We would essentially run another RIT-T later on. **C:** Here at Powerlink we also had this question and sought advice from the Australian Energy Regulator (AER) and Energy Security Board (ESB) to better understand how these processes roll-out. We asked whether the fast tracking only applies to the first stage, not the second. We were told it only related to the first stage. **Q:** How do you complete the modelling? Is it prepared for individual business cases? There's no guarantee those projects will progress. **R:** There are many ways to prepare this modelling and a number of sensitivities to consider. We need to be mindful of the impacts from publishing this information as it may bear real market consequences. We also take into account potential impacts from wider energy policy matters. **C:** We might force a generation project come online at a certain date, and see how that plays out in the modelling. We also look at scenarios where we have different carbon targets, considering things like the Federal Government's climate change targets e.g. reducing emissions across the National Electricity Market (NEM) to 26-28 per cent by 2030. This applies to all industries. We also have other technology neutral scenarios with higher emissions reductions that are more aligned with the Federal Government's 50 per cent renewable energy target. We're also looking at two neutral scenarios, and another scenario where			

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	we're looking at a neutral but higher renewable target. We try to keep our modelling broad, to examine the stronger or weaker application of these emissions targets. **Q:** Putting my Queensland consumer hat on, is the vast majority of potential work being examined in this RIT-T actually located in NSW? **R:** We are examining a range of options, including non-network solutions. Who pays for this work depends on where the work takes place. If we're looking at the smaller upgrade (SVC and line upgrade) 95-98% spending would be in NSW. The only different option is Option D in this group that might be more of a 50/50 breakup in cost. This option involves cut ins in NSW and Queensland, so involves work on both sides. We're trying for a September 2021 timeframe for the Group 1 projects and may need to look at ways to work in parallel to meet that timeframe. But in isolation this project does not completely future-proof this transfer of electricity as we must consider the impacts of future capacity requirements and associated stabilisation. **Q:** What does the modelling show on RiverLink and Project Marinus? **R:** Consultation activities for these RIT-Ts are still ongoing. If these RIT-Ts were to be finalised (following dispute resolution processes underway for RiverLink) – and we are still completing our RIT-T process, these projects would be regarded as 'committed'. If they are still being finalised, we would regard them as 'uncommitted' in our modelling. We'll look at the preferred option in the QNI RIT-T with and without these projects. **Q:** I had some indirect association with the dispute resolution process for RiverLink – regarding the concern that the PACR does not adequately consider system security risks of transferring electricity between South Australia and NSW. It all comes back to the assumptions. NSW is aiming for 50 per cent			

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	renewables – everyone is relying on someone else to guarantee system security. I'm not sure that's the most efficient outcome, it's not going to work. **R:** We need to be mindful that we're not doing a RIT-T to check the validity and/or economics of all other RIT-Ts. **C:** That was an acceptable way of doing RIT-Ts about 5-10 years ago – not so much now with all the renewables around the place. With the change in generation spread having a RIT-T that's too locally focused doesn't work. I believe that's the shortcoming of the RIT-T process. The whole idea of the ISP is to get a firm understanding of energy requirements across the NEM. I'm not sure if RIT-Ts that focus only on local investments can adequately direct sound planning decisions. For example, I wouldn't want to see a large-scale planning commitment be finalised before Snowy 2.0 is connected. **Q:** What kind of influence does the large upgrade have on the NEM? There are so many scenarios to model. **C:** I'm pretty sure the market benefits are there but it's all how you decide to consider timings. You don't want to unnecessarily prioritise projects and put them in the RAB, then you're stuck with it. **C:** I don't envy the position you're in trying to navigate this space. There are so many economic and political uncertainties. **Q:** Are Powerlink and TransGrid linking back into AEMO to look at scenarios with interconnectors and join that together for a wider view with more holistic modelling? **R:** AEMO's 2020 ISP aims to quantify these longer-term considerations. We will explore this further in AEMO's presentation at the end of today's session.			

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	C: Assumptions change all the time. Scenarios evolve. There's not a huge appetite to go 'too big'. **C:** As you know through the Coordination of Generation and Transmission Investment (COGATI) we're looking at a co-funding options as part of that process, but we need to be wary if the benefits from these projects don't come – after they've been put into your RAB and ramped it up. I'm particularly cautious about interconnectors in this regard.			
3	**Update on RIT-T for replacement projects** **–** Roger Smith, Manager Network and Alternate Solutions Summary of presentation: • 4 RIT-T documents currently open for consultation • 8 RIT-T processes have been completed following the conclusion of the final consultation phase • 9 RIT-T documents are expected to be issued within the next three months. **Q:** How many submissions have you received so far on your RIT-Ts? **R:** We've not received any submissions on PCSRs and PADRs released to date, and we haven't had any disputes raised in response to PACRs that have been issued. **Q:** Have the majority of your RIT-Ts completed to date examined only secondary systems replacement?			

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	R: A number of them are secondary systems replacement projects but some relate to primary plant as well. **Q:** What was it about the QNI RIT-T process that prompted 10 submissions? Is it just bigger? **R:** The scale and wider market impacts from this RIT-T has prompted more interest, there's wider market impacts on that one. With scale comes the opportunity and alternative solutions. The intent of our RIT-T process is to ensure transparency, test our conclusions and ensure we are making the right decisions. As you step up the value of projects examined under a RIT-T, it generates lots of interest and opportunities from non-network providers. **Q:** Would it make sense to do some kind of scaling up relative to those that will attract bigger interest? **R:** Yes, that's a good idea but we are working within the parameters of the current RIT-T requirements and as such have to produce individual RIT-Ts for these projects. The RIT-T is tied to a need – if we don't do anything at the time we have the network need, within a set timeframe, that's when difficulty arises. **Q:** This seems counter to what the process is meant to achieve. The way the rules are set up they're designed to examine 'small patches' of the electricity network. Is there a chance for AEMO to more broadly scale their focus up or down? It's hard to be innovative on a small scale. **R:** At this point in the process, the RIT-Ts have to be prepared on a localised basis to reflect where the generation is located. **C:** There are various reasons behind the greater focus on the QNI RIT-T – it's one of the first cabs off the rank for investigating Group 1 projects in the 2018			

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	ISP. Stakeholders are mindful that AEMO wasn't able to do as much consultation as they might've liked, so they're using the RIT-T process to more closely examine these projects. **Q:** I'm conscious of the long-term viability of this expenditure. What happens, for example, if down the track a new government builds a HELE plant in North Queensland, or funds a generator at Collinsville? This investment becomes redundant? **R:** New plant at Collinsville wouldn't make a lot of difference, but it might actually improve network stabilisation. Both lines feeding into Collinsville Substation, one going north and one going south, are ageing. But we can't take all of that network down, so we need to extend the life of this infrastructure. There is certainly some work to do to augment supply. If new generation comes in, we wouldn't expect major impacts on current RIT-Ts. However, we do look at a range of scenarios to examine the impact of high risk and high impact events, and how these might influence our RIT-Ts. **Q:** Is this limited interest in the RIT-T process unique to Queensland? **R:** It seems fairly consistent that projects of a substantial scale attract significant interest. We're happy to engage with people that are happy to be engaged with, but there's just been a low level of interest. **C:** Part of the problem is there is just so much on – a lot of stakeholder groups are stretched too far, have too much on and have consultation fatigue. **C:** I think given the busyness of the consultation space right now that stakeholders need to focus on big ticket items and not concentrate on smaller scale projects that may not have many alternative options e.g. secondary systems projects.			

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	Q: What's a better way to manage this process? **R:** Consumer associations and other stakeholder groups need more resources, so we can best influence policy and regulatory rules. In relation to having no non-network options for secondary systems projects – non-network is not the only reason you use the RIT-T process. It's also about making sure we're seeking transparent and sound investment, but I'm not sure we're seeing that value for customers just at the moment. **Q:** Is it correct to think then that receiving no RIT-T submissions doesn't necessary reflect no interest in the process? **C:** From our perspective, we didn't put in a QNI submission because we think the small scale project is reasonable and justified. For the larger scale one we'd need to be convinced. But the smaller scale project didn't justify the resources that would be spent on a submission. We focus our energy where we question the investment, for instance SACOSS disputing the SA RiverLink and the dispute with AusGrid on their RIT-D. **A:** The other approach to contemplate is that we need a better framework for the AER to evaluate RIT-Ts. **C:** For example RiverLink. We had limited resources to examine this RIT-T and did the best we could to properly do a transparent review. Consumers wanted to send a shot across the bow of the networks to remind them that they need to justify their costs better. We've been clear that we intend to pull you into line and get a more transparent evaluation of proposed investment. **C:** Previously, for significant RIT-Ts, the AER wasn't actively engaged along the way and waited until the end of the process to get involved. But now,			

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	they're actively engaged in the process much earlier on and taking an active interest.			
4	**'The Year of Transmission': Update on the regulatory environment** **–** Jenny Harris, General Manager Network Regulation Summary of presentation: • There is a significant amount of activity in the regulatory environment at present and in the coming year, particularly in the planning, economic regulation, charging, and connection and access space. **Q:** Regarding the Energy Networks Australia's proposed exception to the confidentiality provisions to allow TNSPs to publish basic information regarding a connection enquiry or application – do you think our network connection customers would like this information published? For Powerlink, it's challenging to forecast what the future may hold. It's about having more information and certainty to guide better and more informed decisions. **R:** Yes, we think the rule change proposal is reasonable. **C:** We feel this rule change would deliver better outcomes for regulated projects too. It's a more efficient and streamlined way to plan ahead. **Q:** Are existing costings for non-regulated connection applications passed onto applicants? **R:** Yes, that's correct. **Q:** Is this rule change intended to apply to both loads and generators?			

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	R: Yes, that's the intention. It's really about providing visibility. There's no reason why this information shouldn't be made available – it's high-level only. **Q:** Is LNG development in the Surat a good example? Would 'Company X' be publicising a proposed connection in 'Y area'? **R:** Yes, that's what's proposed – in an effort to minimise eleventh hour decisions. It would help parties to come together earlier on and identify potential synergies. They can make better investment decisions, instead of being in a race with five other people. **C:** We support the proposed extra transparency. We would appreciate more visibility of how the market is evolving. **C:** I'm just flagging too that managing load connections is a bit different to generation. We have different drivers and different commercial sensitivities. **C:** Not sure BHP want Anglo knowing when they're looking to open a new mine and get first coal. **C:** But you could assume your planning people know when someone else is looking at a new mine? **R:** Intel and info maybe, but not publicising a clear date for when we're looking at first coal. **C:** We review information like Environmental Impact Statements and Development Applications, but it would be more beneficial to access additional timely and accurate information.			

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	C: The Energy Networks Australia proposed rule change paper is now online and they're conducting consultation during April. We encourage you to have your say. **C:** We've just finished research with Energy Queensland and Essential Energy on Chapter 5 in the Rules and it was flagged as an issue. The distribution businesses are certainly getting lots of ghost applications. **C:** One of the key challenges we've faced is regarding the generator performance standards (GPS). This is a minefield and very fluid situation – a vexed problem. Many proponents don't want to give up their IP. **Q:** Does the proposed rule change affect DNSPs? **R:** No, just TNSPs – but we suspect the AEMC would consider the flow-on effects from any rule change that may come about.			
5	**Australian Energy Regulator benchmarking** - Greg Hesse, Senior Regulatory Specialist – Technical Summary of discussion: • Recap on Powerlink's AER benchmarking results and the complexities regarding the AER benchmarking model • Possible strategies to improve benchmarking outcomes i.e. increasing outputs and decreasing inputs**.** **Q:** Why does it take so long to get benchmarking data? We saw that 30 June 2017 results were released in November 2018.			

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	R: The AER is always a year behind in its reporting cycle. They're trying to work through consistent data sets so they bring everyone into the same reporting timeframes. **Q:** Is the Regulatory Information Notice (RIN) for this different to the RIN for the reset? **R:** Yes but there are some similarities. **Q:** It seems a shift in your reliability overall has a much smaller impact on productivity? **R:** Some reliability measures are highly variable – you need to be very careful with interpreting these figures. You need to look at overall trends. Just because you go down on a graph, doesn't mean results are declining. There's more information in our pre-reading on this topic. **Q:** Do they do four econometric models as with DNSPs? **R:** No, just one because there's only five TNSPs. **Q:** Do you think you're materially inefficient in opex? That's the decision you'll have to make – what is your base year. **R:** I'm not really in a position to answer that. **C:** Are we materially inefficient, the AER's benchmarking said no. Should we be improving – yes. The AER analysis said we can improve on efficiency. We're trying to determine the consequences of trying to save dollars and balancing that with doing things more efficiently. Are we trying to save funds and do things better? Definitely.			

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	Q: Is the winter peak tighter than the summer peak? **R:** We haven't looked at winter demand in detail for a little while. The annual minimum demand was 1pm in the afternoon in September with rooftop solar PVs supporting the bulk of demand. Things are changing quite rapidly in this space. **Q:** What's the trend with your asset utilisation over time? The AER publishes figures about this. **R:** I'm not sure. We can get these figures for you and circulate them to the panel. **C:** When decommissioning transmission lines, if ones at end of life are lower rated you actually suffer. Interesting incentives with the customer model. **C:** AER benchmarking is not based on year-on-year changes in capex, but on the total capital deployed. It's a long run game and we've got work to do. **Q:** Fundamentally, you've fallen significantly for the last 10 years relative to everyone else. **R:** In relative terms, everyone has declined in this benchmarking data. The thing to remember is that where you start from impacts where you end up – there aren't necessarily common starting points. **C:** What you're saying is everyone's gotten worse, you've just gotten worse than everyone else?	Powerlink to collate asset utilisation figures. *(Update on action: Please note, AER utilisation data is only published for DNSPs.)*	April 2019	Greg Hesse

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	R: What this data indicates is that we have work to do in this area, particularly in relation to opex. **Q:** Is there an average performance for TNSPs? **R:** Not that the AER publishes. Theoretically, it exists in the analysis but it's not brought out explicitly. **C:** It's also worth noting that some fundamental decisions made 60 to 70 years ago can influence your outcomes now with benchmarking results.			
6	**Co-design workshop & Energy Charter Disclosure Report** **–** Gerard Reilly Summary of presentation: • Powerlink is seeking the panel's feedback on the draft agenda for the Co-design Workshop on 24 May 2019. • We will be seeking input from the panel to review our inaugural Energy Charter Disclosure Statement, including a statement of confirmation from the Panel they have reviewed the report.	Send the panel the electronic version of the draft agenda.	Send draft on 28 March 2019, with feedback due by 12 April 2019.	Kiara Bowles
7	**AEMO's 2020 Integrated System Plan (ISP)** Summary of presentation (by AEMO representatives): • AEMO is raising awareness of the changes to the transmission planning framework and is keen to highlight opportunities for customers to be involved.			

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	• The consultation paper will be published soon, the first of a number of milestones to guide the release of a draft ISP in December 2019 and the Final ISP in April 2020. **Q:** How do we best source the overarching perspective on planning the network for the future? **R:** The role of the ISP is to take a technology neutral approach and assess the entire market and energy system from a holistic perspective, not just on a region by region basis. **C:** Something needs to change – we must try for the least cost mix of generation plant, transmission and distributed energy resources (DER), leading to lower prices. **C:** Last year's ISP looked at a range of future scenarios. We were calculating the best combination of generation and transmission, acknowledging the role that consumers may themselves play with DER moving forward – stepping away from very centralised generation development. The challenge now is to take a more proactive approach to achieving coordinated generation and transmission. **Q:** You have to acknowledge though the ISP isn't a cost benefit analysis? **R:** The ISP does intend to address costs and provide insights into project viability and opportunities. **C:** If it was, then why does it require a RIT-T for all projects?			

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	R: The RIT-T process is designed to analyse a range of scenarios and sensitivities and their associated costs and benefits. That process proves that the costs stack up for individual projects. **C:** I think it's a misnomer to say the ISP provides a cost-benefit analysis. I would say it offers indicative analysis only. **C:** The ISP isn't intended to replace the full checks and balances on an investment like in RIT-Ts. It doesn't have the same degree of rigour as these other processes, the ISP is intended to identify needs that may be investigated further in more localised RIT-T's. **C:** If the ISP was a proper cost-benefit analysis, it would provide more prescriptive information to avoid the market acting too fast and ending up with stranded assets. **C:** Equally, you've got to take into account that generation is easy to build. Transmission is built for the next ten years but it remains in the RAB for the next 50 years. **C:** What we're trying to do with the ISP is understand whether a transmission build should be left alone, should be built or generation of different types should be utilised. **Q:** What would you suggest AEMO does to promote greater clarity on the ISP's role? What should they be doing differently? **C:** There's a huge financial risk in getting it wrong that hasn't been acknowledged. Consumers don't want to be saddled with these costs for the long term. I'm also interested in understanding how much visibility does the ISP have with stranded assets.			

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	R: AEMO's role is about trying to understand the right mix of generation and network investment required to deliver lower costs for customer. We're not saying the market will follow that path but we're trying to provide signposts regarding future investment and provide clarity for government policy directions. **C:** The purpose of the ISP seems to be identifying what are the least regrets and least costs to deliver more market certainty. **C:** My big concern with the whole approach is that if a generator makes a poor investment decision, equity investors pay the price. If a TNSP makes a poor investment decision, consumers pay the price. This is why consumers are pushing back on the ISP. Fundamentally, we don't have confidence that the information AEMO is sharing with us is correct or in the consumers' best interests. We don't believe the lights are going to go out like you say they will. We just don't believe you. **R:** What we're trying to do with the next ISP is provide more consistent, accurate information to the market. We're trying to put as much information out as possible so that investors, consumers and the market can see where the sign posts are. **Q:** But you wanted to take control of RIT-T processes in the COGATI options 5 and 6. **R:** I can't comment on that. Those were decisions made at a different level to me. **C:** The other thing to note from a TNSP perspective is that we want to ensure the consultation is genuine and technical data is rich. We're also mindful that			

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	we have obligations under the RIT-T that we need to pursue. We don't want to pre-empt any outcomes, or say 'here's the best option'. We want to consult on all options under consideration. And I want to emphasise that the option of "do nothing" is always an option. **Q:** Is there a formal working group structure that applies? Where everyone works with AEMO, TNSPs, government and consumers – sitting around the table to work through the ISP review? **R:** Those structures aren't settled at this point. We're currently in the process of refining our engagement approach in this regard. We're keen to consult where we can. We know this will lead to more transparent methodologies and better outcomes. **C:** It's about the sensibility of the outcomes. We recognise that things happen quickly and we want to have the ability to test inputs and assumptions. **R:** We really want feedback on the 2018 ISP process and are here today to seek your input to determine the best way to move forward. That's one of the improvements we're hoping to make this time around. **Q:** Is there an inherent duplication between the ISP and RIT-Ts? **R:** RIT-Ts are not a broken process. We're trying to streamline any elements of inefficiency and take duplicated processes away. They both serve a purpose in assisting the planning and development of the system. **Q:** There's been lots of discussion around what a future TNSP is? Can you give us a view of what a future AEMO might look like?			

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	R: Our role is to help inform decision making. We see our long-term value in assessing the interrelationship between large-scale energy systems, distributed energy resources and future market design – while cultivating strong relationships with other market organisations. We want a market design that works with the new market that we have. *Please refer to Appendix A for details of active group discussion on this topic.*			
8	**Meeting closed at 4.15pm**			

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Appendix A – Combined group discussion notes regarding AEMO's 2020 ISP

1. What would customers like to get out of these changes?

- Minimum cost solutions
- Collaboration
- Limiting duplication
- Flexibility for the future
- More clarity on RIT-Ts vs ISP
- Better understanding on assumptions
- Balance of info and access to "right" analysis and models
- Coordination across jurisdictions – including between Energy Queensland and Powerlink
- Better investment decisions
- What are the best technologies and the mix of those technologies – need to agree on what the best mix is
- More economically efficient systems – not just technology
- Different types of customers e.g. load customers – how they are impacted, needs to be tailored
- Want to have more confidence in ISP and other aspects that are inputs/outputs to it
- Guidelines for forecasting seen as a positive step, need to adapt and change to include what we are seeing
- Have ability to include points important to customer and Powerlink – even if not important to AEMO

2. What concerns do you have regarding these changes?

- Paralysis – potentially no decision is worse than a "bad" one
- Lack of motivation
- Over-influence of AEMO with national plan
- Impact on existing RIT-T processes
- Making sure AEMO is in touch with the market
- Confusion over what ISP is and isn't
- Confusion over market bodies – a very busy ESB, AEMC and ECA environment
- Struggling to understand key benefits for all aspects of the industry

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- Need to build trust
- Consideration for who pays? Is that equitable?
- Political influences
- Stranded assets – in 10 years – consumers should only have to pay for the part of the interconnector upgrade that benefits them
- Risk aversion – not adding something because you're scared it won't work – do nothing as a result
- No R&D
- Criticism of underlying assumptions – hard to get consensus
- Nothing bringing it all together – what's the right call?
- How do we make sure AEMO and TNSPs are clear on who's doing what?

3. How can AEMO get greater customer engagement in the ISP process?

- Continue development of personal relationships with renewable customers
- Investigate getting ECA on ESB
- AEMO could develop a 'Customer Council'
- Keep engaging early
- Whole engagement strategy developed for ISP
- Broad stakeholder identification and analysis
- Customer reference group? Who are your champions?
- Two-way engagement opportunities e.g. face-to-face
- Feedback loop. This is what we've heard and this is what that influenced → Build trust
- Contextual info for the customer – what does it mean for us as customers?
- Do more in non-network space
- One-way approaches e.g. webinars + online submissions less useful/genuine
- Simplify info
- "Minutes workshops" – in person, on the spot submission lodgement
- Consideration of funding for consumer participation

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