

Summary

In mid-March 2019, Energy Networks Australia proposed a change to the confidentiality provisions in the National Electricity Rules (the Rules) to allow transmission network service providers (TNSPs) to publish basic information about new and proposed connection enquiries and applications.

The purpose of the proposal is to increase transparency about possible connections to facilitate a more efficient connection process that delivers more optimal network outcomes at a lower cost to consumers.

Background

TNSPs are currently processing an unprecedented level of connection activity across the National Electricity Market (NEM), most notably a significant increase in renewable applications in Queensland (see Figures 1 and 2). As a result, the connection process often involves multiple proponents seeking to connect in similar locations at similar times moving along different timeframes. This makes the assessment of technical requirements and connection, network and system planning processes more complex.

Currently, confidentiality provisions¹ under the Rules prohibit network service providers from disclosing information obtained through the connection process. This creates barriers to the coordination of connection proposals.

To address this issue, Energy Networks Australia proposed a new exception to the confidentiality provisions which allows TNSPs to publish basic information regarding a connection enquiry or application, including the proponent name, size, location, estimated completion date, primary technology (eg. gas turbine, coal fired, wind generator etc.) and broad function (eg. base load generator, peaking generator or load). It is expected that greater visibility of this information will assist connecting parties to coordinate their proposals to achieve a more efficient solution for all.

Energy Networks Australia proposed that TNSPs publish this information in their Transmission Annual Planning Reports (TAPRs) and on their websites between TAPRs, where new information is provided by a connecting proponent.

The Australian Energy Market Commission (AEMC) received Rule change proposals from the Australian Energy Council (AEC) and Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO)² in December 2018 with related objectives of increased transparency to facilitate more efficient connections. Energy Networks Australia considers its Rule change proposal to complement the AEC and AEMO proposals.

Next steps

The AEMC is expected to consider the AEC, AEMO and Energy Networks Australia Rule change proposals together, commencing consultation in April 2019.

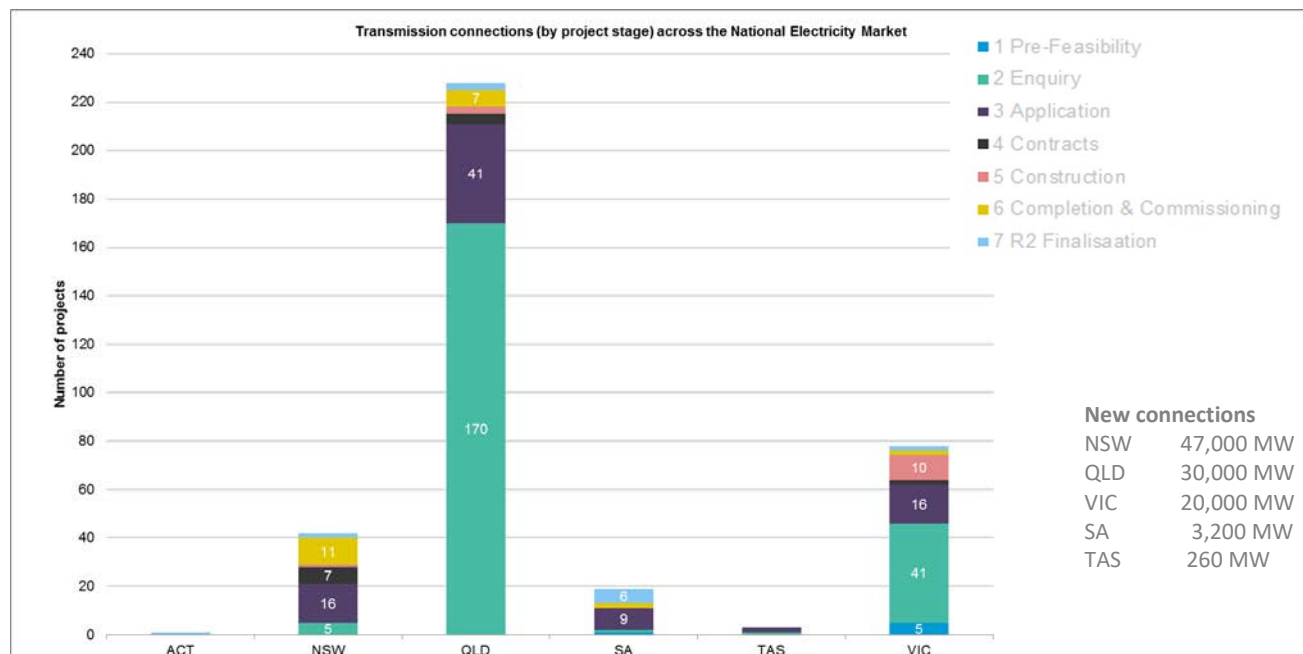
Input and feedback

If you have any questions, input or feedback on this note or the Energy Networks Australia Rule change proposal once published, please contact Powerlink.

¹ Clause 5.3.8 (Provision and use of information), Chapter 5, National Electricity Rules

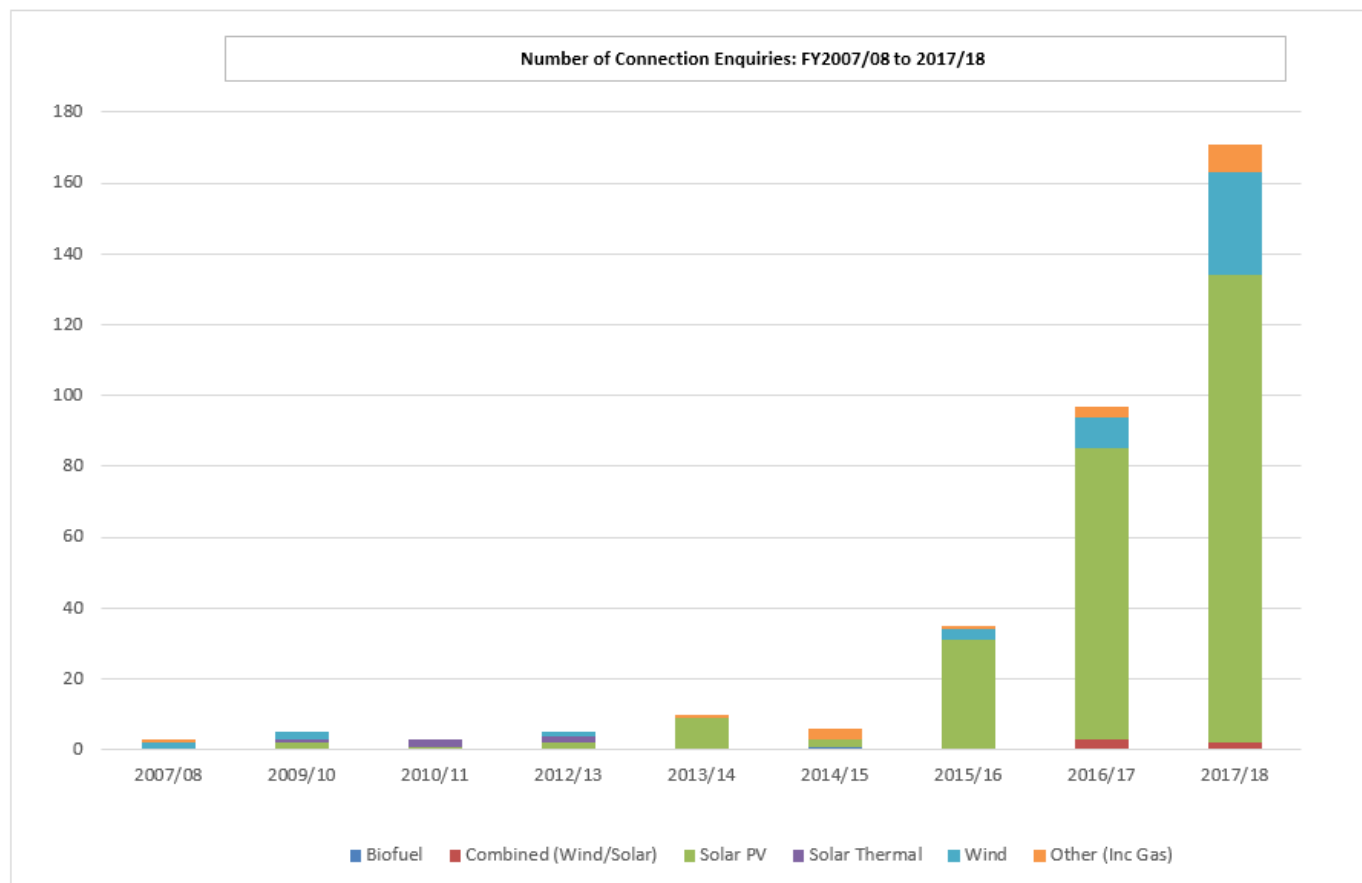
² Australian Energy Council, Transparency of New Projects Rule Change Request, 15 December 2018 and AEMO, Electricity Rule Change Proposal, *Providing NEM Information to Project Developers*, 31 December 2018

Figure 1 – Transmission connections (by project stage) across the NEM



Source: AEMO Presentation, Is Bigger Really Better? The outlook for utility batteries in Australia, Australian Clean Energy Summit, 1 August 2018.

Figure 2 – Queensland connection enquiries by type



Source: Powerlink Transmission Annual Planning Report Forum (Updated), August 2018.