



Summary of Meeting: Telecommunications – Energy Post-Season Review

Friday, 23 April, 2021.

This was the second meeting of the Telecommunications – Energy Working Group, which was formally established by Communications Alliance and Energy Networks Australia, and their member companies, following the agreement of a Memorandum of Understanding between the two associations.

The meeting was characterised by constructive discussion and evidence of a shared desire to build on the stronger engagement already taking place between the two sectors.

Attendance

The meeting was attended by:

- Energy Networks Australia (ENA) and representatives of its members, including Ausgrid, Electranet, Energy Qld, SA Power Networks, Powercor UE and TasNetworks;
- Communications Alliance (CA) and representatives of its members, including MNF Group, nbn, Optus, Telstra and TPG Telecom; and
- The Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications (attending as observers).

Review of the 2020-21 Disaster Season

Representatives of the energy and telecommunications companies provided briefings on their post-season review, including updates on any notable outage events due to natural disaster events. The significant events of 2020-2021 included the floods in New South Wales and cyclone in Western Australia. Carriers and networks had both used the contact list to resolve outages and one network was praised for a proactive approach following a storm. There was also discussion of information sharing between carriers and networks around planned power outages related to restorations following events and a rule-change in Victoria that allows customers to choose their notification method for planned and unplanned power outages.

The discussion also focused on building telecommunications and electricity network resilience for improving reliability during unforeseen events in NSW, arising from the NSW Bushfire Inquiry.

During the Working Group discussion, action items were agreed as follows:

Action item 1.1: ENA to provide the contact(s) from Western Power that focusses on planned power outages related to restorations.

Action item 1.2: ENA to set up a meeting with New South Wales networks and carriers to discuss resilience.

Action item 1.3: ENA to follow up with Western Power for more information on Kalbarri and provide it to this group.

Action item 1.4: ENA and CA to discuss the application of the recently published CA Facilities Information Sharing Industry Guideline.

Action item 1.5: Powercor UE to provide an update on the ESC obligation on outage notifications at the pre-season meeting in October 2021.

Specific areas for cooperation/assistance requests

Telecommunications carriers noted their lack of visibility of locations and durations of planned power outages particularly during the network restoration phase following a natural disaster event. This information would assist carriers in removing their generators and other assets on a permanent basis.

Next Meeting

The Working Group agreed to meet again in October 2021.