

MEDIA RELEASE

14 December 2016

A fresh start to National Energy Strategy in 2017

There is still time for Australian governments to work together to achieve a national energy plan in the interests of customers.

Energy Networks Australia Chief Executive Officer, John Bradley, welcomed the decision by State and Federal Governments to meet again in 2 months at a time when all stakeholders are urging greater collaboration and integrated national measures.

“We welcome the progress made today and urge State and Federal Governments to recommit to achieving a national energy blueprint in the interests of customers,” Mr Bradley said.

Ministers agreed to fast-track for consideration in February additional measures to strengthen the NEM and accelerate proof-of-concept projects in order to respond to security and reliability issues identified in the preliminary report.

“There is enormous support for Governments to put customers above politics, by hammering out a stable, enduring plan for carbon policy and energy strategy during 2017.”

Mr Bradley welcome a decision to streamline interconnection between States to improve the efficiency of the National Electricity Market support system security with changing generation mix.

“This week, the independent market operator confirmed interconnectors could lower costs to customers, improve security and help us achieve increased renewable energy,” Mr Bradley said.

“We support a streamlined process which delivers customer benefits as early as possible, without compromising a rigorous assessment of alternatives, including non-network solutions.”

Mr Bradley also welcomed Minister’s agreement to develop reforms to the existing model of limited merits review.

“Energy Networks Australia has set out a package of potential reforms and looks forward to working with COAG Energy Council officials and interested stakeholders on improvements to the regime.

“We want to make the system work better, so it can deliver the accountability and benefits to customers that stakeholders widely supported in the recent review.”

Noting Council measures to improve gas transport negotiations, Mr Bradley said it was disappointing Governments had not acted to remove unnecessary bans on gas development in some States.

“Australia’s gas industry and gas customers are united in their concern that bans on gas exploration and supply in some States could increase gas prices and ‘demand destruction’ in industries reliant on this low emission energy source.”

Mr Bradley said Governments and industry were collectively accountable to customers for fixing a damaged energy system in 2017.

“For the sake of Australian energy customers, State and Federal Governments cannot miss the opportunity of the independent Finkel Review to deliver a blueprint for the energy transition.”

Mr Bradley said the recent *Electricity Network Transformation Roadmap* released with the CSIRO had highlighted the need for collaborative action by industry and government on stable national carbon policy, pricing reform and standards for new energy technologies.

“The point of a decentralised energy revolution is that no government or company can refuse to compromise - we can only work through stable policy which promotes markets and incentives.

“The peace dividend for customers is enormous, as the Roadmap shows, we can decarbonise electricity without compromising energy security or affordability, if we collaborate and act early.”

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Energy Networks Australia represents Australia’s electricity transmission and distribution networks and gas distribution networks. Our members provide energy to virtually every household and business in Australia.

