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Innovative grid maps – an opportunity for customer benefits

Australian energy networks are supporting an innovative new tool to encourage alternatives to traditional ‘poles and wires’ in a collaborative era of grid management.

The Energy Networks Association (ENA) said new *Network Opportunity Maps* launched by the Institute of Sustainable Futures would provide a ground-breaking way of highlighting opportunities for new energy solutions.

“Energy networks are looking for new and efficient ways the grid can support innovation in the Australian energy system,” ENA Chief Executive Officer, John Bradley, said.

“Network Opportunity Maps use current network data to highlight hotspots where new solutions like demand management could deliver better outcomes for customers.”

Mr Bradley said the maps include spatial data provided by electricity networks in the National Electricity Market showing where network constraints are emerging, planned investment and the potential value of distributed energy resources.

“This is a ground-breaking tool and the ENA and its members will be developing an industry guideline for gathering the spatial information and data that supports the ongoing use of the maps,” Mr Bradley said.

“These maps reflect the collaborative future of Australia’s integrated energy grid.

“Networks will highlight market opportunities for distributed energy resources and ‘non-network solutions’ to cost-effectively manage peak demand and defer network investment.

“The maps make it easier for new energy service providers to identify opportunities for renewable energy, battery storage and demand management initiatives to manage peak demand at a lower cost than augmenting the network.”

The *Network Opportunity Maps* were developed by researchers at the University of Technology Sydney’s Institute for Sustainable Futures (ISF) and are hosted on the CSIRO’s Australian Renewable Energy Mapping Infrastructure (AREMI) platform.

“These publicly available, interactive maps can help improve the efficiency of grid operation and reduce energy system costs for electricity customers,” Mr Bradley said.

Network Opportunity Maps can be accessed at <http://bit.ly/1JOBODs>

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The Energy Networks Association is the peak national body representing Australia's electricity transmission and distribution networks and gas distribution networks on economic, technical, environmental and safety regulation, and national energy policy issues. ENA members provide energy to virtually every household and business in Australia.

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