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## CONSULTATION PERIOD EXTENDED FOR INTEGRATING SOLAR AND STORAGE INTO THE GRID

Overwhelming interest in Energy Networks Australia's joint work with the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) on how best to integrate solar and energy storage into electricity networks has resulted in an extended consultation period for stakeholders to have their say.

Launched in June 2018, the Open Energy Networks Consultation Paper will now accept submissions from stakeholders until 10 August 2018.

The consultation paper proposes options for improving the electricity system to ensure household solar and storage work in harmony and deliver the most value for all customers, helping to bolster quality and reliability of supply and lower household power bills.

A series of stakeholder workshops on the Open Energy Networks Consultation Paper were filled to capacity in Melbourne and Sydney this week, with a broad range of participants from the energy sector, government, private enterprise and community groups keen to contribute to the consultation process.

Energy Networks Australia Acting CEO Tamatha Smith said the overwhelming interest from stakeholders across Australia wanting to take part in the Open Energy Networks consultation and share their views was evidence of the public appetite for conversation about modernising our grid.

“The huge uptake of rooftop solar systems and the increasing growth of both household batteries and electric vehicles poses great opportunity, but also significant technical challenges for the distribution and transmission of electricity,” she said.

“This is changing how our energy system has been designed to work for more than a century - from a centralised one-way flow of electricity to consumer to a decentralised system, where households can feed power back into the grid.

“A re-design of the system to better accommodate this will provide opportunities for customers to have more choice and control of their energy needs, including how they interact with energy markets.”

Ms Smith said fully booked stakeholder workshops had been hosted in Melbourne and Sydney this week and the Perth workshop in Late July was already waitlisted.

“We've also had requests for a further workshop in Brisbane,” she said.

“This level of engagement demonstrates how important it is to our communities, businesses and governments to ensure our grid can handle the increasing amount of decentralised renewable energy.”

The effective management or ‘optimisation’ of a decentralised energy system would not only support its safe and reliable integration into the grid, but also unlock the true value of customer investment in these resources. However, it was also important that all customers could benefit from this release of value and it was equitable for all.

“We must take action for everyone, especially consumers, and the public’s desire for information, collaboration and solutions is clear,” Ms Smith said.

To join the Perth waitlist, visit [here](#). To register interest in attending a Brisbane workshop on Friday the 3 August, email [skalina@energynetworks.com.au](mailto:skalina@energynetworks.com.au)

**ENDS**

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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.*