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IEA & ESB outline our pathway to a positive energy future

Energy Networks Australia welcomes two reports released today that outline Australia's way forward to manage our energy challenge.

The International Energy Agency's (IEA) review of Australia's energy policies and the Energy Security Board's (ESB) National Energy Guarantee consultation paper combine to demonstrate what we can learn from other countries and strategies to address Australia's energy policy challenges.

"Australians have a right to expect safe and reliable energy, even as we reduce emissions," said Energy Networks Australia CEO, Andrew Dillon.

"We welcome the IEA report's focus on integrating variable renewables into our grids, its emphasis on the need for a transformation of our energy distribution systems and identification of the need for effective natural gas markets," he said.

Australia is a world leader in the deployment of small scale renewables. As more households connect solar and batteries, there are technical challenges to manage the grid.

"It's essential we orchestrate all the small scale solar and batteries connecting to the grid so we can keep the lights on, maximise returns to their owners, eliminate avoidable network upgrades and deliver affordable energy for Australian communities," Mr Dillon said.

The IEA has also found that a lack of smart meters is a barrier to consumer choice, and many consumers are paying more than they need because of Australia's low uptake of smart meters.

"We welcome the finding that greater penetration of smart meters is essential to increase transparency for customers, leading to better understanding of energy use, greater efficiencies and flexible options to save consumers money," Mr Dillon said.

The IEA notes the role that gas can play as coal power capacity is being retired.

"Australia needs a national science-based approach to encourage additional production of natural gas," Mr Dillon said.

"It's noteworthy that the IEA report calls for an energy and climate policy framework that will steer us to 2030 and beyond. Today's consultation paper from the ESB is a welcome step along that path.

"The ESB's approach aims to bring together Australia's climate and energy policy in one over-arching approach that is mindful of both emissions and reliability.

"Our energy solution can only be achieved through a collaborative, nation-wide approach," Mr Dillon said.

"This is not a State-by-State issue but a national concern and we all need to work together, with inclusive, integrated policies that can deliver."

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.

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