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## **“Fourth industrial revolution” shaping the energy grid for a low-carbon future**

South Australian Treasurer and Energy Minister, Tom Koutsantonis has told energy policy makers and practitioners at *Energy Networks 2016* this morning to “adapt, change, evolve”.

Basil Scarsella, CEO UK Power Networks and former chief executive of ETSA Utilities, highlighted the need for the energy grid to change its delivery systems to support local energy and microgrids – “community solutions”.

Mr Scarsella highlighted the importance of recent regulatory reforms in the United Kingdom to encourage more innovation and better customer services.

He said incentive frameworks had been introduced so that regulated energy businesses lose or gain revenue depending on how well they performed for customers.

The introduction of a Low Carbon Innovation Fund had also been instrumental in promoting experimentation and innovation in smart grid services, supporting cleaner technologies.

Scarsella said a “fourth industrial revolution” was establishing a “cyber-physical system” providing increased capability for the two-way exchange of services for customers.

Energy Networks Association CEO, John Bradley, told delegates the Australian energy system was in an ‘egg and spoon’ race on behalf of energy consumers.

“We must execute a rapid transformation in the energy system without compromising the delicate balance of affordability, sustainability and reliability,” Mr Bradley said.

“Most customers would be unaware the energy grid was built for a passive one-way flow of electricity, but today needs to be a dynamic, actively managed smart grid to support a cleaner, distributed energy future.

“Energy networks can’t ‘command and control’ our way through the energy transformation, but we can ensure the right incentives are sent to market decision makers.”

Mr Bradley said the conference and exhibition is demonstrating what networks are doing on a day-to-day basis, in partnership with new market participants, to transition to a cleaner energy future and deliver greater choice and control to customers.

“SA Power Networks announced here it will be deploying Tesla and Samsung batteries in Australia’s largest trial of combined solar and energy storage in an established suburb to defer network expenditure.

“We’re seeing new innovative solutions all the time, including GreenSync’s announcement today of a new “pluggable” software platform for controlling distributed energy resources for local electricity grids.”

Nigel Barbour, CEO of Powerco, the New Zealand gas and electricity distribution network, told delegates the grid will become an “open access platform” enabling competition and the trade of services by new and innovative market participants, “some we haven’t even thought of yet.”

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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.