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New Handbook to raise the voice of energy customers

Energy networks are pursuing a revolution in the customer relationship that is as dramatic as changes in the energy system itself, Energy Networks Association (ENA) Chief Executive Officer, John Bradley, said today.

The ENA and CSIRO released today the *Customer Engagement Handbook* – the first major work from the *Electricity Network Transformation Roadmap* project for 2016.

Mr Bradley said there is no silver bullet for ensuring the energy system delivers the best outcomes for customers.

“Giving a voice to time-poor customers is the key to maximising the benefits of a changing energy system for the community,” Mr Bradley said.

Electricity Network Transformation Roadmap Program Director CSIRO, Mark Paterson, said the evolution to a two-way flow energy system must be reflected in the relationship between energy companies and their customers.

“The Handbook provides practical advice on customer engagement approaches and methods and builds on work already undertaken by energy network businesses as they navigate a period of unprecedented change,” Mr Paterson said.

Mr Bradley said that energy networks recognise there is more to do to support customer choices and improve relationships with energy customers.

“Energy network businesses are actively engaging with customers on how they want to use the network, future energy network prices, and changing energy services,” Mr Bradley said.

“For example, Victorian energy distributor, AusNet Services, sends customers with a grid-connected solar system an SMS when their solar panels appear not to be operating efficiently and directs them to a troubleshooting fact sheet.

“Energy networks also engaged significantly with their customers in developing Tariff Structure Statements, which describe how networks will charge customers for network services, to gain customer views on tariff design as the system transitions to fairer, more efficient tariffs.

“Customer Panels are also an important example, such as the ElectraNet Consumer Advisory Panel established to provide advice on customer needs, inform planning and improve the value of electricity transmission services in South Australia.

“While changes in technology and services add complexity to the energy system, they also provide opportunities for greater choice and engagement by customers with the system.

“The new Handbook reflects the commitment of energy network businesses to raising the profile of energy network customers in decision making processes,” Mr Bradley said.

The *Customer Engagement Handbook* is available at www.ena.asn.au/customer-engagement-handbook

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About the Handbook

The *Customer Engagement Handbook* has been designed to provide practical guidance to energy network businesses in fostering transparent dialogue with their customers.

In developing the Handbook, the Energy Networks Association conducted formal engagement workshops and ongoing conversations with CSIRO social science experts, customer engagement practitioners from energy network businesses, and customer advocacy and other stakeholder groups.

The Handbook includes references to further resources and case studies of engagement activities drawn from Australian energy network businesses.

The *Customer Engagement Handbook* can be downloaded [here](#).

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Australia's national science agency CSIRO and the peak national body representing gas distribution and electricity transmission and distribution businesses in Australia, the Energy Networks Association (ENA) have partnered to develop an Electricity Network Transformation Roadmap (the Roadmap). The Roadmap is a two stage process running over approximately 18 months. For more information go to www.ena.asn.au/roadmap