

AusNet Services Greenfields Negotiated Electricity Connections

Customer Service Standard

February 2021 v2.0

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Introduction

In late 2020, the Essential Services Commission of Victoria (ESC) undertook a review into improving the timeliness of electricity connections. As a result of this review, the ESC requires all electricity distribution network service providers (DNSPs) to engage with property developers to create a Customer Service Standard (the Standard) for Greenfields Negotiated Electricity Connections.

AusNet Services owns and operates one of five electricity distribution networks in Victoria. We serve Melbourne's north and eastern fringe (which has some fast-growing suburbs), regional communities throughout eastern Victorian and remote customers in the alpine areas of Victoria.

Our electricity distribution network covers 80,000 square kilometres and consists of around 46,000 kilometres of power lines and 400,000 power poles. These assets deliver energy safely and reliably to around 737,000 customers across Victoria.

AusNet Services is committed to improving how customers experience our services. This focus has been driven by more than two years of capturing feedback and implementing changes as part of our ongoing Customer Experience Program and is one of our organisation's strategic pillars. Residential greenfield developers are a key customer group of AusNet Services. In 2020 alone, over 6,750 greenfield development lots connected to our network. Within the residential developer connections space, we have made a number of changes to improve developers' experience with AusNet Services, including:

Centralising residential estate connection requests into one 'centre of excellence' to promote consistency and more effective relationship management of developers.

- Engaging more network audit providers to give developers more choice and reduce timing risks.
- Maintaining our performance across key metrics while experiencing a 27% increase in housing development connection volumes.
- While developing our 2022-26 regulatory submission, we engaged with industry stakeholders via a customer representative body (the Customer Forum) who met with the building industry to canvass expectations in relation to connection process and timeframes.
- Implemented a new customer connections portal, "Energy Connect", and process automation to improve project delivery times, enable online service applications and provide customers and their agents with visibility of the status of their projects.
- Established a joint technical standards committee with the other Victorian distribution businesses and convened our own Underground Reticulation Developer (URD) Consultative panel.

We welcome the opportunity to continue this engagement with property developers, and work closely with them to develop a greenfield negotiated electricity connection customer service standard in line with the ESC's objectives, being:

- Continuous improvement and building effective business relationships between distribution businesses and developers to resolve issues.
- Accountability and transparency about the time it takes distribution businesses to complete certain steps of the connections process.

Research and engagement process

AusNet Services has taken the view that understanding what is important to property developers in the greenfields negotiated electricity connections process should underpin our customer service standard. Therefore, the customer service standard and associated metrics have been based on developers' needs of the process, ensuring that we are focusing our efforts and resources on the aspects that really matter to property developers.

To understand the needs of property developers, their consultants and contractors, we interviewed 16 individual stakeholders representing 13 organisations. Some were interviewed together, and 10 interviews were conducted in total. Developers work closely with consultants and contractors across several aspects of the process and were a critical party to engage in our consultation. Property developers, their consultants and their contractors are referred to collectively as "developers" throughout this document. A select number of property development industry groups were also engaged in this stage.

The purpose of these interviews was to understand:

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- The experiences of developers when engaging with AusNet Services on a new connection.
- Which aspects of the process were working well, and which aspects could be improved and how?
- What developers would like to see in the AusNet Services Customer Service Standard?
- Developers' preferred format for the Developer Consultative Committee (DCC).

Concurrently to the engagement with developers, extensive consultation with our internal staff was conducted to understand which aspects of the process were working well and what could be done to address those that were not. We also sought input from the Customer Consultative Committee (CCC) – a pre-existing AusNet Services reference panel comprising external representatives from a range of customer interests and community groups.

Using the information gathered through engagement with developers, AusNet Services stakeholders and the CCC, a draft customer outcomes statement was produced.

Following this, a workshop of the same group of developers was convened. At this workshop, developers were asked to review and provide feedback on the collated insights, including areas for improvement, proposed actions to address these areas, and the inclusions of our draft customer service standard. Developers' feedback was incorporated into the final version of the customer outcome statement following this workshop.

All developers that participated in the engagement process had recently connected a greenfield development to the AusNet Services network.

Appendix A describes the engagement process in greater detail and includes a list of the property developers and their representatives consulted. Detailed feedback from Developers involved is also provided, as Appendix B.

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As outlined above, the research and engagement activities undertaken with developers and the feedback heard throughout our initial engagement process underpinned the development of our customer service standard, including the outcomes we are seeking to achieve, the principles we commit to following when engaging with developers and the establishment of a Developer Consultative Committee (DCC). We have further refined this customer service standard to reflect feedback received on the draft standard we submitted to the ESC in late 2020. The draft standard was published on the ESC's website and the ESC and interested stakeholders were invited to provide comments.

Customer Outcomes Statement

Our customer outcomes statement is comprised of two parts, as required by the ESC:

- The outcomes each distribution businesses will achieve over the next two years in relation to negotiated connections.
- The principles or considerations each distribution business will commit to use when interacting with developers and their contractors.

AusNet Services and developers agreed on the following *outcomes* to be achieved over the next two years:

Reduce the overall time to connect.

While we have made significant improvements to our process over the past two years, we are committed to continual improvement in the timeliness of our service delivery.

Increase transparency of the audit process.

We are also committed to further improvements in the auditing process through the inclusion of performance metrics and sharing of information around the volume of audits passed and failed, re-audits and audits requested and completed.

Streamline our communication processes.

We will make it easier for developers to connect to our network by streamlining our communication processes, providing a single point of contact, making it easier for developers to get into contact with us. This will ensure that developers are easily able to gather the information that they need in a timely manner.

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Customer Engagement Principles

AusNet Services, in consultation with developers, have agreed to adhere to the following principles when engaging with developers and the greenfields connection process. These principles serve as a guiding framework, shaping how we interact with developers who are seeking to connect their residential developments in greenfield sites on our network. They are also key input to our achieving the outcomes stated above and the performance metrics included in this document.

AusNet Services customer engagement principles which we will follow in all interactions with developers are:

- We will never compromise safety when it comes to the connection of greenfield residential developments to our network.
- We will work collaboratively and proactively with the industry to reduce the overall time to connect to our network and continue working with the industry to refine our metrics and targets.
- We will be more transparent when it comes to published timeframes for the end-to-end process as we know this is a pain point for developers.
- We will maintain open conversation and continually engage with the DCC and broader industry to seek feedback on major AusNet Services technical standard changes before implementation. In addition, we will host industry briefings to proactively communicate changes.
- We will regularly communicate minor technical standard updates and changes on the AusNet Services website.
- We will provide developers with a point-of-contact for each project. It is the responsibility of this AusNet Services contact to respond to any developer queries in a helpful and timely manner.
- We will work proactively with the industry to provide guidance around audits, audit fail rates (and reasons) as well as additional information on audits that can be performed by certified third parties as we understand that this is what the industry would like from us.

Developer Consultative Committee

AusNet Services is establishing a Developer Consultative Committee (DCC) as part of its customer service standard for greenfields electricity connections.

The DCC is designed to be a forum for property developers, their consultants, contractors and industry group members to raise and discuss matters relating to AusNet Services that will ultimately improve their experience with negotiated electricity connections. AusNet Services also plans to use the DCC as a forum through which to consult developers on any changes that AusNet Services proposes making to the greenfields connection process that may impact developers.

The DCC will be the mechanism by which AusNet Services' customer service standard will be reviewed and updated, including the metrics and other initiatives sections. Changes to the customer service standard will be a standing agenda item discussed at each quarterly meeting of the DCC, and any changes to the customer service standard will be negotiated between the DCC and AusNet Services. AusNet Services will, via the DCC, propose changes to the customers service standard if we identify any opportunities for improvement, and will encourage DCC members to do likewise.

The DCC will meet on a quarterly basis and DCC membership is to be reviewed annually. The DCC will be comprised of developers, other industry stakeholders and key AusNet Services stakeholders to the greenfields connection process, allowing direct and frequent engagement between these two critical groups. The full terms of reference for the DCC are provided as Appendix C.

The DCC will have a channel of escalation via AusNet Services' Customer Consultative Committee (CCC). It is proposed that the DCC will provide the CCC with:

- A summary of repeat or fundamental issues identified on a quarterly basis, including any developer-requested changes to the customer service standard that have been repeatedly deferred.
- A summary report of outcomes and achievements to the CCC on an annual basis.

AusNet Services intends to advocate for a shared Victorian DCC, in which all Victorian DNSPs participate. During our engagement activities, property developers and stakeholders expressly indicated that a single DCC is their preferred model. Having a single forum would reduce the burden on property developers and other

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stakeholders having to attend multiple committees with similar objectives, create efficiencies for the DNSPs, and promote collaboration and consistency in the process.

We understand water authorities have taken this approach with their property developer committees, and that this has been very well received by developers.

Performance Framework

Where Metrics Have Been Proposed

Through our targeted research and engagement activities with developers, it was agreed that AusNet Services would assign or develop performance metrics for the stages of the connection process deemed to be important to property developers and are in AusNet Services direct control.

The flow chart below shows the end-to-end process in a greenfields negotiated electricity connection and highlights the areas that AusNet Services is responsible for versus areas where property developers take responsibility. Further detail on each of the stages where we are proposing performing metrics along with targets are presented in Table 1.

We have also made a number of other commitments to developers. These are not included as specific quantitative performance metrics, rather represent a range of softer metrics and initiatives that will ultimately improve the experience that developers have with AusNet Services. These are detailed in Table 2.

Where Metrics Have Not Been Proposed

In the development of this customer service standard, AusNet Services has taken considerable care to understand which aspects of the greenfields connection process are of most importance and most concern to developers. We have also reflected on the significant changes that AusNet Services has made to the greenfields connection process prior to 2021 to improve developers' experiences with the process and make connecting to AusNet Services' networks faster and smoother. This includes putting more aspects of the process in the control of developers and providers with whom they have commercial arrangements and streamlining some processes to reduce the time taken for AusNet Services to complete certain tasks.

As such we are very cognisant, when proposing metrics and changes to the process via this customer service standard, that we only propose additional processes or metrics that are supported by feedback, are meaningful and would improve outcomes for developers. AusNet Services has identified several instances where we do not think it is practical to introduce metrics or where further exploration is needed, including for potential metrics that:

- Are not currently measured and would require costly upgrades (estimated at ~\$250-500k per metric – a cost that would be borne by our customers) to AusNet Services' systems and would deliver minimal additional value for developers (such as in cases where AusNet Services is consistently meeting and/or exceeding developers' expectations regarding timeliness).
- Could feasibly be measured but are not meaningful to developers, and if measured may direct AusNet Services efforts to activities that are not providing value, mislead developers and/or be prioritised at the expense of non-measured activities that do provide value.
- Are not in AusNet Services' control and are the responsibility of developers.
- Are subject to pre-existing commercial arrangements between AusNet Services and external suppliers, but which are not practical to change at this time. When such commercial arrangements are being reviewed, AusNet Services will seek the advice of the DCC regarding their preferences for metrics to be included in revised commercial agreements.

The following pages detail the greenfields connection process and the metrics that AusNet Services proposes to report against. Where metrics have not been proposed, this has been clearly indicated and a rationale for the omission has been given.

Omission of a proposed metric should not be interpreted as a lack of commitment from AusNet Services to meeting developers' expectations in that stage of the process. We will continue to review the value and feasibility of introducing new metrics via the DCC and will continue to seek developer feedback on AusNet Services' performance in those stages of the process where we are already meeting or exceeding developers' expectations on timeframes to ensure our performance remains high.

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Specific considerations for tie-in cancellations

During our initial conversations with developers, we heard them talk to frustrations around the final connection to the network (tie-in stage) of the process. Developers expressed that when tie-ins are cancelled last minute it causes issues to them as delays to reschedule the tie in. In addition, developers expressed the need to have greater communication around this stage of the process when things go wrong. They want the ability to talk to someone from AusNet Services to identify a resolution.

AusNet Services fully understand the cancellation of tie-ins as a pain-point for property developers. We explored this feedback internally with our core team and the impacts on property developers and their customers in the settlement process.

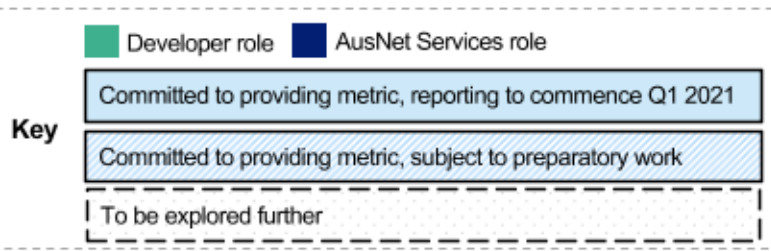
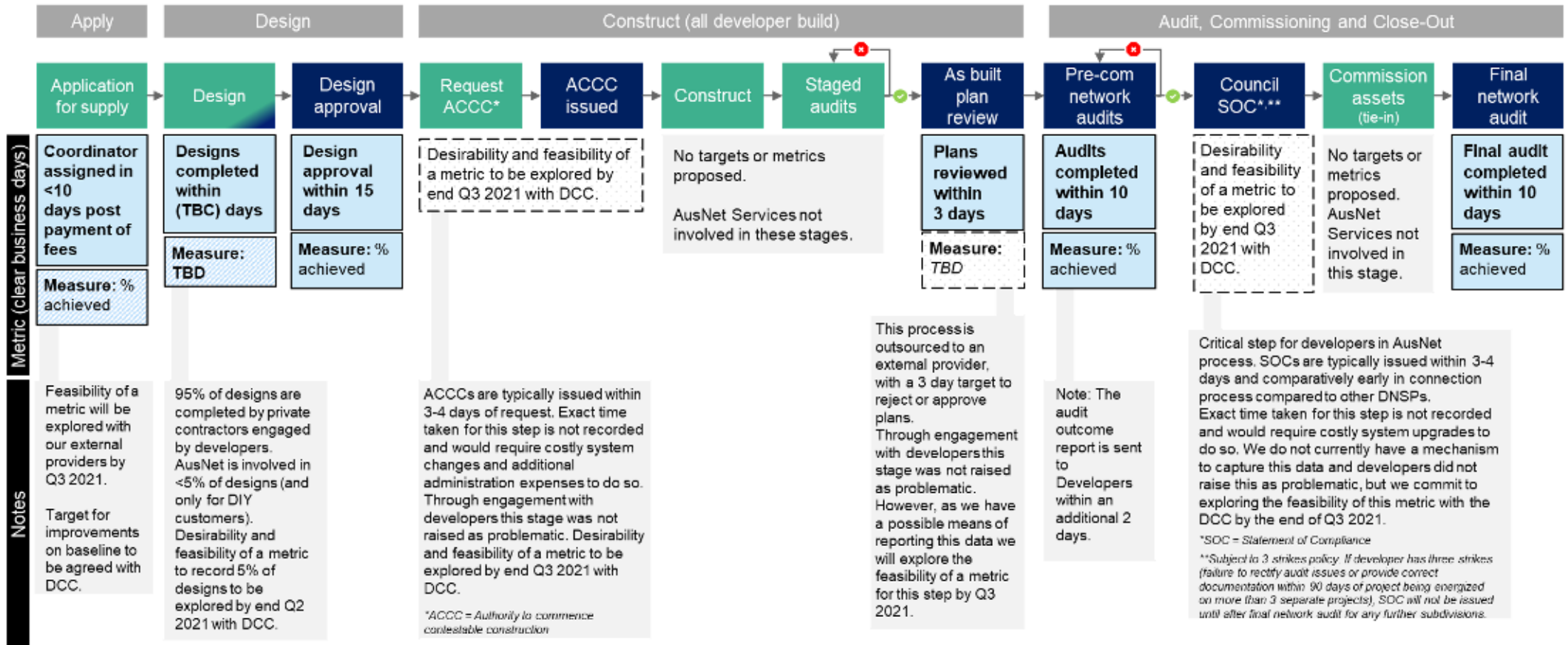
We are constrained in our ability to prevent tie-in cancellations because cancellations typically occur as a result of events outside of our control, such as severe weather. However, we would like to leverage the creation of the DCC to collaborate with the Committee members to set guidelines on how to better manage and communicate these cancellations in the future.

Specific considerations for end-to-end timeframes

We are committing to report on end-to-end timeframes (detailed in Table 2), but further exploration with developers is needed to apply a metric and measure to this. We plan to continue working with the DCC to understand how we might be able to measure the end-to-end timeframe, as has been suggested by some developers and other industry players. As illustrated in the process flow below, there are some complexities in developing this measure as responsibilities are split between AusNet Services and developers across the end-to-end process. Capturing this measure would require collaboration between developers and AusNet Services.

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AusNet Services High-Level Greenfields Connection Process



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Table 1: Detailed description, targets, and additional commentary on the greenfields connection process.

Process Stage / Metric	Description	2021 Target	2022 Target	Additional commentary
Application for supply	When the developer is ready to commence the energy application process and they make an application to AusNet Services.	Develop and report on assignment of a coordinator <10 days post payment of fees.	Improve baseline as agreed with DCC.	We do not currently capture this metric. We will engage with our external supplier to arrange development of capabilities to report on this metric, with a view to reporting from Q3 2021. Note: this metric is recorded from payment of fees by developer.
Design	This stage involves the drafting of the electrical infrastructure designs for infrastructure intended to be built (i.e., construction plans).	Resolve appropriateness of this metric with the DCC by end of Q2 2021.	TBC	Approx. 95% of design work is assigned by developers to private contractors. AusNet Services completes design work for a small proportion (around 5%) of customers. These tend to be for residential DIY customers (not professional developers).
Design approvals	This stage includes Design Reviews and Master Plan Review. Master plans show how a new staged development will ultimately connect into the distribution network. Design plans show how each lot is connected to the network and clearances between electricity infrastructure and other services.	< 15 business days per plan	< 15 business days	We will explore if we can separate out Design Reviews and Master Plan Review measurements by Q3 2021. This is not currently possible. Note, metric reporting excludes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-lead <i>bookings</i>. • Public holidays and end of year shut down period.
Request authority to commence connect construction (ACCC)	The developer requests notification that the commercial arrangement (supply offer) has been completed.	N/A	N/A	This stage of the process is the responsibility of property developers and their contractors.
ACCC issued	AusNet Services provides an approval form to developers advising them that they have authority to commence construction.	Explore desirability and feasibility of this metric with the DCC by end of Q3 2021.	TBC	Property developers voiced no concerns regarding timeliness of ACCC issuance during our engagement process or the draft consultation stage. We currently issue ACCCs within 3-4 days of request, but the exact time taken for this step is not formally recorded and would require costly system changes and additional administration expenses to do so.

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				<p>Following feedback received on our draft standard, we will commit to providing clear guidance to the industry as to requirements for the ACCC to help improve construction timeframes. We will work with the DCC to better understand their specific information needs, with a plan to publish this information by Q2 2021.</p> <p>AusNet Services was also asked to provide clarification as to whether ACCC accreditation is required for greenfield development works. For greenfield estates, an electrical contractor can commence without an ACCC if they are using plans approved by AusNet Services. However, they cannot do any work on or near our network until we issue them with an ACCC. If uncertainty on when ACCCs are required persists, we would be happy to address this via the DCC.</p>
Construct	In this stage the new infrastructure is built.	N/A	N/A	This stage of the process is the responsibility of property developers and their contractors.
Staged audits	There are five-staged audits that need to be undertaken to assess the quality of construction works. This ensure that the construction work is being performed to a high standard as per the approved design. Developers use their own accredited auditor to undertake this work.	N/A	N/A	This stage of the process is the responsibility of property developers and their contractors.
As built plan reviewed and approved	Time taken to review as built drawings once submitted to AusNet Services.	Explore feasibility of this metric with the DCC by end of Q3 2021.	TBC	<p>This process is completely outsourced at AusNet Services. Design reviews are typically completed within 3 days. The developer's consultants work directly with our provider to complete this stage.</p> <p>While this stage was not voiced as a key pain point for developers in the AusNet Services process, we have committed to exploring the feasibility of a metric with our external provider by end of Q3 2021.</p>
Pre-commission network audits (audit before we energise)	AusNet Services sends one of our accredited auditors to assess the accuracy of the staged audits. Developers are provided with a pass/fail result.	95% completion within 10 days	95% completion within 10 days	<p>Note: The audit outcome report is sent to Developers within an additional 2 days.</p> <p>Note, metric reporting excludes:</p>

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				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-lead bookings. • Public holidays and end of year shut down period.
Council Statement of Compliance (SOC)	At this stage, AusNet Services advises the Council that we are satisfied with the construction work undertaken by the developer. Upon receiving this, the Council will issue a compliance letter and release the title to the developer.	Explore feasibility of this metric with the DCC by end of Q3 2021.	TBC	<p>Property developers voiced no concern with this stage of the connection process in our engagement.</p> <p>Feedback suggests that this process is positively received because the Council SOC is issued following successful completion of the pre-commission audit, before the site is energised. Waiting until the site is energised can delay the process by 4 – 6 weeks. Exact time taken for this step is not recorded and would require costly system upgrades to do so. We commit to exploring the feasibility of this metric with the DCC by the end of Q3 2021.</p>
Commission assets (tie-in)	This is the process of energising the estate. Power is available in pits and the new connection to individual homes can commence.	N/A	N/A	<p>This stage of the process is fully contestable and the responsibility of property developers and their contractors.</p> <p>Note: we will work with the DCC to set guidelines on how to better manage and communicate these cancellations in the future.</p>
Final network audit	AusNet Services accredited auditors will go and assess the tie-in work to ensure compliance and ensure it meets safety standards. Sites can be energised ahead of this stage.	95% completion within 10 days	95% completion within 10 days	<p>Note: The audit outcome report is sent to Developers within an additional 2 days.</p> <p>Note, metric reporting excludes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-lead bookings. • Public holidays and end of year shut down period.

Table 2: Other AusNet Services commitments

Initiative	Why	Timeline
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<p>Publish information about the end-to-end process for AusNet Services. Specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the steps involved in connecting a greenfield development (flow chart) • average end to end time taken to connect greenfield developments end-to-end • total volumes of jobs completed: No metric proposed (est. 5,000 to 10,000) 	<p>Providing developers with a clearer understanding of the process, the delineation of responsibilities and the timeframes they can expect when undertaking the greenfields negotiated electricity connection process. In addition, the inclusion of the total volumes of work within the AusNet Services area provides good context for the progress of performance metrics.</p> <p>Regarding end-to-end timeframes, as stated earlier we plan to continue working with the DCC to understand how we might be able to measure the end-to-end timeframe. Capturing this measure would require collaboration between developers and AusNet Services.</p>	<p>AusNet Services will begin publishing this information by end Q2 2021.</p>
<p>Publish information specifically relating to audits (pre-commission and final network audit), including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • volume of audits passed/failed • audits requested and completed 	<p>To ensure that timely development connection is not held up by the auditing process.</p>	<p>AusNet Services will begin publishing this information by end Q2 2021.</p>
<p>Proactive issue identification with top audit failure items.</p>	<p>Greater transparency for developers to assist them in understanding the auditing process and initiate corrective actions with their construction teams.</p>	<p>Published quarterly and as-needed when significant issues occur between quarterly publications.</p>
<p>Communicate AusNet Services auditing expectations with VEDN auditors.</p>	<p>Helping to simplify the auditing process for third-party VEDN auditors, raise any issues that have been identified by AusNet Services or developers (via us), and to reinforce expectations of VEDN auditors.</p>	<p>Completed in January 2021. Will be continued as ongoing activity, on as-needed basis</p>
<p>Host briefings with the industry to proactively communicate significant standards changes and provide an opportunity for Developers (outside of the DCC) to raise issues.</p>	<p>We want to engage more proactively engage with the industry, and recognise there is mutual benefit to doing this. The details of these briefings (including who will be invited to attend and when they will be held) will be established following further consultation with the DCC. While AusNet Services will make every effort to minimise the number of changes to connection standards, some changes will occur from time to time. When significant changes occur, we will hold industry briefings to communicate these changes and answer developers' questions on them.</p>	<p>Biannually, beginning in 2021.</p>

Appendix A – Research & Engagement Processes: Supporting Documentation

The engagement process that we undertook to develop the Customer Service Standard had three broad stages:

1. Data capture.
2. Engagement.
3. Reporting.

Our approach comprised of the following activities which are outlined in detail below:

- Property developer and stakeholder identification.
- One-on-one interviews.
- Core team project workshops.
- Customer Focus Group.
- Customer Consultative Committee briefing.

Property developer and stakeholder identification

As a first step, a number of property developers, consultants, contractors and industry groups were identified as critical stakeholders to be involved in the development of Customer Service Standard. They were chosen because of the recent dealings with AusNet Services in connecting power to new developments. Throughout the process with these stakeholders, a number of additional parties were identified and also included in the process.

The property developer organisations involved in each activity and the engagement details are outlined in the tables below.

Details of meetings conducted

Developer / Consultant / Contractor	Engagement Details
DFC Pty Ltd	Thursday 19 November 2020
Moremac Property Group	Wednesday 18 November 2020
Mirvac Victoria Pty Ltd	Tuesday 17 November 2020
National Pacific Properties	Thursday 19 November 2020
Satterley Property Group Pty Ltd	Tuesday 17 November 2020
Peet Estates (VIC) Pty Ltd	Thursday 19 November 2020
AV Jennings Properties Pty Ltd	Wednesday 18 November 2020
Association of Land Development Engineers (ALDE)	Tuesday 17 November 2020 Monday 23 November 2020
Urban Development Institute of Australia (UDIA)	Thursday 19 November 2020
Plan B (consultant)	Friday 20 November 2020

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Civil Contractors Federation (CCF)	Monday 23 November 2020
GRM Consulting (technical consultant to CCF)	Monday 23 November 2020
Winslow Constructors (civil contractors)	Monday 23 November 2020

One-on-one interviews

In total, 10 interviews were conducted with 16 individuals from 13 organisations. The interviews took place between Tuesday, 17 November 2020 and Monday, 23 November 2020. At this time, most of Victoria remained under Covid-19 restrictions so interviews were conducted in a virtual format via Microsoft Teams.

Interview questions revolved around the two key objectives of the Standard. A list of interview questions is included below.

Questions were developed around the key objectives of resolving issues that cause delays in the connection process and having transparent performance reporting.

Developer Interview Questions

Objective 1: Resolve issue that cause delays in connection process

- Describe your company's relationship with AusNet Services.
 - What have been some of the positive experiences?
 - What are some of the things that haven't been working well?
 - Have you experienced delays in connections with AusNet Services?
 - How many instances have there been?
 - When did they occur?
 - What causes the delays?
 - How do you think things could be improved?
 - What are your main needs out of this relationship?
 - What do you see are AusNet Services main needs?
- What's working well in your engagement with AusNet Services?
 - Have you used their online portal?
 - What do you think of it?
 - Is it easy to use?
 - Has it led to better outcomes?
 - How could the portal be improved?
 - What's not working well in your engagement with AusNet Services?
 - Do you also have a point of contact you go to at AusNet Services? Phone or email?
 - Is it an assigned contact or do you go through a call centre?
 - Do you initiate contact or does AusNet Services drive communication?
 - Is this a satisfactory process?
 - Do you interact with AusNet Services on a regular basis, or only for discussions about a particular project?
 - Would you like to interact with AusNet Services more frequently e.g. Would you welcome being part of a consultative committee going forward?
 - How could communication and engagement with AusNet Services be improved?

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- From your perspective, what would you like to see in the Customer Service Standard?
 - What should be the key areas of focus for AusNet Services in the next 2 years?
 - How would you like AusNet Services to interact with you throughout the life of a project?
 - Or what principles do you think should be put in place?

Objective 2: Performance reporting

As part of the Customer Service Standard the ESC has requested that a performance reporting framework is put in place, measuring performance across the steps of the connections process that distribution businesses perform, and are important to developers.

- What steps of the connection process are most important to you?
 - What metrics would you like to see in place to measure these steps? What do you think is a reasonable target for this metric? Will this help resolve issues in the connection process?
 - What information would you like to see to improve accountability and transparency?
 - How often should updates be provided?

The interview responses were analysed to identify the common and salient themes emerging. A copy of the comprehensive and de-identified output of all interviews is provided in Appendix C.

Customer focus group

All property developers and stakeholders who participated in the interviews were also invited to a Customer Focus Group Session. The 90-minute Focus Group was held via Microsoft Teams on Thursday, 26 November 2020. Senior AusNet Services management were also in attendance.

The purpose of this Focus Group was to play-back and validate the themes and issues derived from the interviews and gather any additional feedback. We also demonstrated how insights from the interviews were used to underpin the Principles and outcomes included in the Customer Outcomes Statement.

Overall, property developers and stakeholders were comfortable that we had accurately captured their feedback and were supportive of what was proposed for inclusion in the Customer Outcomes Statement provided. The slides for the Focus Group session are provided in Appendix D.

Core team workshops

We recognise the importance of ensuring that key internal stakeholders understand and are able to action the insights that we learn from property developers and stakeholders. As such, we established a core working group comprising of a cross-section of the AusNet Services team responsible for the connection of electricity to developer sites at the outset of the project.

Set out below is a summary of core-team meetings that occurred.

Timing	Workshop	Details and content
6 November 2020	Core team workshop 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial ideation on property developer and stakeholder issues
16 November 2020	Core team workshop 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree engagement process and research questions
23 November 2020	Core team workshop 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review feedback to date • Develop performance metrics across key themes
30 November 2020	Core team workshop 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss and refine draft ss

Customer Consultative Committee briefing

In 2016 AusNet Services established its Customer Consultative Committee (CCC). The CCC comprises of representatives from AusNet Services and external representatives from a range of customer interests and community groups. The CCC meets monthly to consult on key topics facing customers and the business.

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In the 1 December 2020 CCC meeting, we presented the core themes and draft Standard to the Committee for discussion. The Committee was supportive of this project and what was proposed in the Standard.

Developing the customer standard – 3 stages

The process for developing the Standard covered three broad stages: data capture, engagement, and reporting. These stages are outlined in the table below.

Stage	AusNet Services tasks	Engagement activity
Data capture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assign core project team to focus on the development of the Customer Service Standard. Identify, understand and document property developer pain-points when working with AusNet Services. Self-reflection and identification of AusNet Services process issues. Agree on research strategy and plan - qualitative through personalised interviews. Identify property developers, their consultants, contractors and industry groups to interview. Identify common issues and trends to inform the engagement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Core team issues identification workshops.
Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invite property developers and stakeholders to an interview Develop and agree on interview questions and interview format. Undertake all interviews and record issues and input. Undertake a thematic analysis to identify comment themes and issues. De-identify responses and report on themes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One-on-one interviews. Core team workshops.
Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use themes to develop and agree on a number of core focus areas. Further develop these core focus areas into Customer Outcomes Principles. Report back to developers and stakeholders through a Customer Focus Group on 'what we heard' and seeking final input to the <i>Customer Service Statement</i>. Brief AusNet Services Customer Consultative Committee, which is comprised of customer representative bodies, including the Energy Users Association of Australia (EUAA), on the process and outcomes. Finalise the Customer Service Statement and Standard. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Core team workshops. Customer Focus Group. Customer Consultative Committee briefing.

Appendix B – Interview feedback

All feedback	Key notes, key quotes
<p>Company perception</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The most common thing people say about AusNet is that “at least it’s not Powercor” • Sometimes we despair if we know we are going to have to deal with a power distributor because they are responsible for the region, we are working in. We know we are going to have problems down the track. • The issue with power authorities is that you do not know the process until you are in it, in terms of lead times, approvals and shut down periods. • We want to feel more like a customer. We are putting a lot of assets in the ground for you, but I do not think that message gets across. We are viewed as a problem, not a solution. There is a customer at the end of this – someone who is purchased land and want to move into their new home. We are an enabler for bringing new customers to AusNet. • We take the approach that there are rules there for a reason, and we just live with it and try to adapt. There is no point trying to fight AusNet. • Do not feel like a customer when I am talking to AusNet. I am more begging and pleading. They are an authority and that is how they act. • Communication is very poor across the whole industry. • Faceless organisation. • Biggest thing is that, talking from AusNet point of view, a lot of staff need to realise they are there to serve customers. If they do not improve, they will lose customers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The most common thing people say about AusNet is that “at least it’s not Powercor” • You do not know the process until you are in it, • We want to feel more like a customer • There is no point trying to fight AusNet • They are an authority and that is how they act • Faceless organisation • They are there to serve customers. If they do not improve, they will lose customers • “don’t feel that AusNet considers developers are customers”
<p>Auditing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Auditing is a dirty word. I would be encouraging AusNet to have a team or pool of auditors that we can go to. It has been Compliance Plus for the past four years. Would be good to add more to the mix. The timeframes for them to come do a job is fine, but the way they go about it is frustrating. As soon as they find a problem on site, they disappear until its fixed. Would be good if they just fixed all the issues as they go through. They have gone too far past being strict. • You assume you never get past the first audit. Takes two or three goes. If auditors worked better with us on non-conformance, it would help everyone. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Auditing is a dirty word • The way they go about it is frustrating • Here are many times where little items are found and the auditors will walk off the job, three strikes and you are out • They have gone too far past being strict

Customer Service Standard

All feedback	Key notes, key quotes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why are there only two external auditors? There are certain pressure points in the year when it becomes an issue to get auditors. Booking an audit, depending on where and why it might take a day or two. The problem is you can always find something wrong. I have done auditing, there is always something wrong. There are items that are minor or major. There are many times where little items are found and the auditors will walk off the job, three strikes and you are out. And they will not come back until they are booked again, can take up to 10 days to get another audit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If auditors worked better with us on non-conformance, it would help everyone.
<p>Tie ins and shutdowns</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are enormous ramifications for first home buyers if tie ins are cancelled. Means first home buyers are not able to settle on their land and move into their homes. Customers hassle us and seek compensation, but we are not obliged to pay. It is a really poor experience for customers. Have had 4 tie ins cancelled since June. Every time a tie in is booked, there is a 6-week notification period. The clock starts again when a tie in is cancelled. Disappointing that shutdowns happen. There is no consultation, or courtesy call to explain why. Causes major issues and delays for project delivery. Shut down periods make us nervous. They are never guaranteed. We have no confidence in AusNet meeting the shutdown tie in date. It causes financial hardship. Is a nightmare to coordinate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are enormous ramifications for first home buyers if tie ins are cancelled There is no consultation, or courtesy call to explain why Shut down periods make us nervous. They are never guaranteed. We have no confidence in AusNet meeting the shutdown tie in date.
<p>Commercial ramifications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> General perception is that developers have all the money so it does not matter. It is a stigma in the industry. Issues with the timing of payments. You can end up delaying a multimillion-dollar project because you cannot get a \$3,000 payment sorted in 14 days. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General perception is that developers have all the money so it does not matter You can end up delaying a multimillion-dollar project because you cannot get a \$3,000 payment sorted in 14 days.

Customer Service Standard

All feedback

AusNet Services staff relationships

- ██████████ is fantastic to deal with. He is a godsend. Everyone picks up the phone to him. He is competent and gets the job done. Would be good for people who work with ██████████ to introduce themselves to us. ██████████ understands the commerciality.
- Having someone in a case manager role would be a big help.
- Our consultants engage with AusNet. The feedback we get is that there is no room to negotiate. Take it or leave it.
- Deal with ██████████ and ██████████. Work with them on compliance and ensuring land is titled. Always had an excellent working relationship with ██████████. I find ██████████ has too much on his plate, but can sympathise with him, because he would have a lot of other developers on his back. We are experiencing incredible growth in the industry, and we need more than one ██████████.
- There would be benefits to having a case manager to assist us.
- Would only get in contact with AusNet when issues occur and when we need to escalate things. Those occasions are few and far between. We use the consultants as the middleman to manage those things.
- Appears to be a disconnect from authority to authority (council and distribution business) regarding new rules and standards that are put in place.
- Having a case manager from AusNet would be incredibly helpful. Would be good to have someone to take us through the life cycle of the project.
- We deal with ██████████ when dealing with AusNet.
- Everyone seems to have their own specific little function and that is where their function finishes. ██████████ is about the only one who can find why the process has stopped or point you to who to ask for next step.

General communications

- Biggest issue is having blanket changes sprung on us. You do not discuss it with us. We need to know six months in advance if something like is going to change.
- No dialogue between AusNet and Council. Lack of communication.
- We have millions of dollars tied up because two authorities cannot agree on something.

Key notes, key quotes

- ██████████ is fantastic to deal with. He is a godsend
 - ██████████ is about the only one who can find why the process has stopped or point you to who to ask for next step.
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 - No dialogue between AusNet and Council.
 - Lack of communication.
 - We have millions of dollars tied up because two authorities cannot agree on something.

Customer Service Standard

All feedback

Key notes, key quotes

Consultative committee

- Will consider taking part in a consultative committee, but we want to have the ability to negotiate and resolve issues as they arise. We are working to tight delivery timeframes. Taking part in a quarterly consultative committee could be too late.
- UDIA would be good to have on a consultative committee. They collate a lot of thoughts from property developers.
- Would like continuing engagement on a monthly basis to work through any project issues.

- We want to have the ability to negotiate and resolve issues as they arise.
- Taking part in a quarterly consultative committee could be too late.
- Would like continuing engagement on a monthly basis to work through any project issues.

Online portal

- Our consultants use AusNet's online portal.
- We do most of the developers stuff on AusNet's portal because they have given up. We load stuff into it and you get no response for 3-4 weeks. We have admin staff, team has grown ridiculously, just to manage the application process. The girls try to follow up, put in emails with read receipt on, they do not get read. Make calls, get told to email. No response. Can take 5-6 weeks to have any contact after submitting.

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- No response. Can take 5-6 weeks to have any contact after submitting.

Customer Service Standard

All feedback	Key notes, key quotes
<p>Timeframes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed turnaround timeframes in terms of initial applications and responses. • Key message to AusNet is meet your shut down dates, and if you cannot, then we should get the first spot available and not wait another six weeks. • If we call for an auditor, get them out by a certain time. • Put timeframes on the table. Would like the opportunity to provide feedback. • Big issue is timeframes. If an authority says they will get something back to you in x amount of days, it is easy for them to come in just before it is due and stop the clock. • Would like to see a clear requirement around dates and times. Understand it may result in accountability issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet your shut down dates. • If we call for an auditor, get them out by a certain time. • Put timeframes on the table. • If an authority says they will get something back to you in x amount of days, it is easy for them to come in just before it is due and stop the clock.
<p>Process improvements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should look at eradicating or automating touchpoints and processes. • Would be helpful for AusNet to map out their processes and where the touchpoints are. How long should there be for masterplan approval, how long for detailed design. How long should it take for an audit to be placed and happen, then turn around times for approval. • Baffling how reapprovals can take so long. Would be good to get insights from AusNet on what is wrong with the items they submit. • Because there are many facets to AusNet’s purpose – my biggest gripe is the “stop start stop start” service. You get one process, it gets done, then you need to push it on yourself. • If you got to the local coffee shop, you get the coffee, the mug, the milk, the sweetener, all with a smile. At AusNet, you apply for a cup. Then you might get a cup. Have to ask someone else for the coffee. And someone else for the milk. Not a seamless process. And there is no smile at the end of it. • If it were a seamless process it would be good. • Changes to standards are really important to communicate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “we don’t know the process until we are in it” • Should look at eradicating or automating touchpoints and processes • Map out their processes and where the touchpoints are • Would be good to get insights from AusNet on what is wrong with the items they submit • Biggest gripe is the “stop start stop start” service • If you got to the local coffee shop, you get the coffee, the mug, the milk, the sweetener, all with a smile. At AusNet, you apply for a cup. Then you might get a cup. Have to ask someone else for the coffee. And someone else for the milk. Not a seamless process. And there is no smile at the end of it

Customer Service Standard

All feedback

Key notes, key quotes

Timeframes

- Would be good to see timeframes in performance reporting.
- Turnaround times for service applications and design reviews. At least by reporting we will be able to see if there is an improving or worsening trend. You can see what is causing the problem.
- More certainty around those timeframes. Can plan ahead when there's certainty. When it disappears into the aether, you have to ring and chase there must be a lot of mirrors in AusNet.
- We would like to see numbers and how you have done on each of the metrics that have target dates.
- Would like to see the time taken to review/approve designs. It has been pretty good with recent design approvals, but in the past, civil construction would have commenced, and you are betting on design approvals to come through by a certain time.
- Good timely warning of notifications.
- As a developer, we are only interested in our own projects and how they are tracking.

- Would be good to see timeframes in performance reporting
- At least by reporting we will be able to see if there is an improving or worsening trend
- Can plan ahead when there's certainty

Contractor/consultant performance

- Would like to see performance reporting of electrical and civil contractors.
- AusNet should hold their consultants to account. You contract and engage auditors – you should be managing them in a better way.
- For some reason, there is only one capable contractor (UCS). It is a monopoly. Do not understand how they can do it all. They do a good job, but there needs to be more players in the field.

- AusNet should hold their consultants to account. You contract and engage auditors – you should be managing them in a better way.
- There needs to be more players in the field.

Three strikes policy

- Would like to see information on three strikes policy.
- Seems to be an extraordinarily unfair system. It is easy for larger developers to get three strikes, because they have got huge projects. We got a strike because an approved contractor is not coming back to complete the work. These are AusNet approved contractors. Needs to be a better way.

- Seems to be an extraordinarily unfair system.
- It is easy for larger developers to get three strikes, because they have got huge projects

Appendix C – Developer Consultative Committee Terms of Reference

Purpose

The purpose of the DCC is to support the implementation of our Customer Outcomes Statement and to promote open communication and accessibility between the development industry, contractors and consultants and AusNet Services.

Membership

Membership of the DCC will generally comprise 4 AusNet Services representatives and up to 10 external representatives from a diverse group of property developers, industry representatives, consultants and contractors.

Membership of the committee will be reviewed annually, to ensure both AusNet Services representatives and external representatives are satisfied with the make-up of the committee and to allow for other interested parties to be involved.

Prospective members will be required to agree to these Terms of Reference before their membership is confirmed.

Membership of the DCC comprises the following individuals:

Property developer	Industry group	Consultant / contractor

Roles

Chair

The role of the Chair is to run the meetings and facilitate discussion and participation by all members.

The Chair is the sole determinant of issues to be dealt with in accordance with the Terms of Reference. The Chair is responsible for ensuring the appropriate and professional conduct of the group.

Members

The membership of the DCC includes property developers who are currently engaged with AusNet Services to connect electricity to their new greenfields developments, along with the industry groups who represent them and the consultants/contractors they engage. AusNet Services representatives will also be included as members.

The DCC is not a forum for property developers to raise specific issues related to their own developments. Discussions should focus on common themes and issues affecting the industry and how they relate to AusNet Services, including standards and auditing requirements. Property developers and their consultants should raise specific issues related to their projects through their assigned AusNet Electricity Project Coordinator.

Members are required to:

- Attend all DCC meetings where practicable
- Provide a perspective that is representative of the organisation they represent
- Disseminate relevant information fully and accurately within their organisations
- Contribute to the discussions as they relate to common themes in the industry and AusNet Services.
- Membership of the DCC is voluntary and will be reviewed annually.

If a member does not attend two meetings without sending an apology, their membership will be rescinded.

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A member may, at the discretion of the Chair, ask a proxy to attend in their place. The proxy will need to agree to these Terms of Reference before attending the meeting.

Members are able to cease membership at any time by notifying their intention to the Chair in writing.

Reporting requirement

Some items presented at the DCC, including agendas, briefing papers, presentations, and performance reporting results may be published on the AusNet Services website the after each meeting.

Meeting minutes will be made publicly available online within 20 business days.

The DCC will be engaged on changes to AusNet Services technical standards before they are implemented. The technical standards will also be published on the AusNet Services website.

The Chair is responsible for reporting back to the DCC on items that required follow up action from AusNet Services at the next Committee meeting.

Media

To encourage open discussion at meetings, members are required to adhere to the following media protocols:

- Members of the DCC are not authorised to provide written or verbal statements to the media about matters discussed at the DCC unless written approval is received in advance from the Chair.
- All media enquiries received by a DCC member that are about the DCC or a matter discussed by the DCC are to be referred as soon as possible to [\[AusNet Services media contact\]](#).

Breaches of the terms of reference

If there is a breach of trust in relation to the Terms of Reference, the DCC (and/or the Chair) will discuss the matter with the member(s) involved. At the Chair's discretion, member(s) may be asked to leave the DCC.

Review of terms of reference

A review of these Terms of Reference will be undertaken annually to coincide with the review of Membership.