

Steering Group meeting: 7 September 2023

When	Thursday 7 September 2023, 0930-1130		
Where	Virtual		
Who	Steve Batstone, Shay Brazier, John Campbell, Terry Paddy, Matt Smith, Evie Trollove Secretariat: Craig Evans Observers: Zoe Barton-Howes (EECA), Elzeth Grant-Fargie (EA), Nicole Kirkham (MBIE), Sean McCready (ComCom), Geoff Parr (EA), Andrew Zielinski (EA)		
Apologies	Mark Herring		
4.14	Secretariat	Finalise the subscription policy and make it available to Members	Soon
4.15	MS, ET + SB	Identify a shared workspace solution	Soon

Session notes

1: Welcome

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

The Steering Group (SG):

- confirmed there was a quorum
- noted apologies
- confirmed the agenda, with the addition of a discussion of establishing a shared workspace and starting with engagement update
- noted their obligations relating to the Commerce Act 1986 prohibiting anti-competitive conduct.

2: Engagement update

The Steering Group discussed engagement activities since the previous meeting.

- two conversations with the Australian [Distributed Energy Integration Program](#) (DEIP). It has been operating since 2018 with an equivalent objective as FF. Gave insights into running workstreams, ie, make sure they are supported with dedicated resources, and discussed prioritisation/workplan development, plus the importance of getting consumer input to inform technical (pre-policy) discussions. Committed to an ongoing interaction

- Green Building Council. Introductory session. Ongoing interaction will support delivering steps in the Flexibility Plan, eg, its [practical guide to electrification of existing buildings](#)
- noted the letter from the Minister following up from the meeting on 22 August, and agreed to send an introductory briefing to the Minister for Energy following the election
- EECA team about its EV charging work pending regulatory changes to enable it to regulate EV charger standards, and opportunities for the FF to assist with continued progress. EECA offered to provide information about its objectives inform scoping a task for the workstreams.
- a discussion with Ara Ake regarding supporting the FF with its activities. Outcome was for the FF to support Ara Ake prepare a funding request for consideration by its Board (mid-October meeting). The deliverables agreed in-principle with MBIE has been provided to AA.
 - the funding request is to support the fixed costs of operating the FF and WS, not for demonstration projects. The FF/Members can request funding for these separately.
 - the proposal will clearly show the relationship between deliverables and resources to avoid over-committing and will recognise that specific outputs depend on the workstream and workplan development process which will not be complete until November
 - the separate and complementary roles of the FF and AA are understood, but the ongoing role of AA in the FF as a Member and as a key stakeholder needs to be defined. This could include an AA observer on the SG.
- the chair is holding more introductory sessions with a range of entities. Following these, engagement between the SG and key stakeholders will be arranged to discuss how the FF can support them.

3: Workplan workshop – outcomes and next steps

The SG noted the outcomes of the Workplan Workshop and discussed the next steps.

- work on a starter pack for each of the workstream initial meetings will start next week
- the starter packs are to provide a structure for the discussions about the purpose and focus of the workstream. The indicative outcomes of the initial sessions are
 - the scope of the workstream
 - tasks the workstream wants to undertake and can be delivered in the near term (ie, next 4 months) and in the longer term, potentially categorised by tasks which involve agreeing facts and tasks which require a field trial
- several SG members agreed to assist with scoping the starter packs and the scope/approach of the workstream initial meetings, including who might lead/facilitate the initial meetings.

4: Establishing a strategic approach to delivery Steering Group

The SG discussed how the FlexForum can ensure it can effectively deliver its objective and purpose. Key points were:

- workstreams need to deliver what stakeholders need and when they need it. The main 'clients' of the Workstreams are: participants and the electricity ecosystem, MBIE, Electricity Authority, Commerce Commission and EECA. We need to identify what is important/useful and the key milestones/timing of delivery to be useful across this spectrum
- workstreams (and FlexForum more broadly) need to be resourced for success. We cannot expect that workstreams will magically deliver things. For example, the workstreams will

potentially require types of function to operate effectively: a workstream lead/chair to be responsible for keeping things on track; and a technical lead with expertise to accurately identify and reconcile divergent views.

- An initial view on the functions and effort required to operate the FlexForum and workstreams has been developed to inform what resourcing is required.
- The operating model of the workstreams will influence resourcing. For example, rather than having a dedicated technical resource, an approach is to rely on the technical expertise of the workstream members to prepare scopes of work and engage consultants for specific tasks, or to invite experts to contribute on specific issues.
- Drawing a parallel with the Future Networks Forum, it has project teams both preparing scopes for experts to undertake tasks and answering questions given its own expertise.
- A programme coordinator would be very valuable to work across the workstreams to ensure timelines are being met, to populate scoping templates and report.
- The FF contains a diverse range of views on issues which must be synthesised into a collective view. This is valuable and difficult for a member to do because they will bring their own perspective to the topic.
- Experience with effective working groups is that someone needs to put content together to facilitate a conversation that produces outputs. An effective working group requires facilitation and content to frame the discussion.
- Expecting FF / WS members to get involved day to day is not realistic. People have day jobs. Some people will get involved, but not everyone.
- Each WS will need someone able to understand the question to facilitate and effective conversation. Each WS will also need someone able to translate the conversation. Experience in the topic is necessary.

The group noted Steve and John would develop a scope of the functions and effort required to support the FF and WS drawing on the SG perspectives.

5: Response to MBIE Electricity Market Measures consultation

The SG agreed the FF should respond to the MBIE Electricity Market Measures consultation via a verbal process offered by MBIE.

- organise the issues to align with the workstream building blocks / more tractable categories
- arrange FF sessions to draw out perspectives on the various themes, with MBIE people attending to record the discussions/perspectives (subject to the MBIE record being provided to the FF).

6: FlexForum and Future Networks Forum MOU/MOC

The SG endorsed developing a memorandum of cooperation with the ENA Future Networks Forum.

The group noted the proposed MOC could be used to formalise relationships with other parties, eg, Consumer Advocacy Council.

7: Workplan update

The group noted the FF Insights paper would be finalised and published shortly.

8: Financial update

The group noted the FlexForum financial position.

Subscriptions will be requested as soon as the bank account is set up; which should be by 15 September.

9: Procedural matters

The group discussed several procedural matters.

- status of actions from previous meetings was noted
- the group agreed a sub-group of to discuss/develop arrangements relating to financial matters and bring these back to the SG for decision
- the next FlexForum meeting will be scheduled after discussing timeframes with the initial workstream leads
- a FF Progress Report is due soon – target is November to include discussion of workstreams and outputs etc
- members will be asked to submit details of their interests and conflicts shortly
- the group approved minor amendments to the subscriptions policy proposed by the chair 31 August 2023
- the group agreed a sub-group should identify and propose a shared workspace solution for the FF. The group noted that free options should be treated cautiously.

Finish 1158.