

# FLEXFORUM |

## Steering Group meeting

<b>When</b>	Thursday 1 August 2024, 0930-1200
<b>Where</b>	Virtual
<b>Who</b>	Steve Batstone, Shay Brazier, John Campbell, Ryan Kuggeleijn, Matt Smith Evie Trollove, Fiona Wiseman Secretariat: Craig Evans Observers: Briony Bennett (Ara Ake), Peter Bartlett (MBIE)
<b>Apologies</b>	Terry Paddy, Brian FitzGerald (EECA), Mark Herring (EA), Sean McCready (CC)

## Session notes

### 1: Welcome

The Chair welcomed everyone to the session.

The SG:

- confirmed there was a quorum
- noted their individual obligations relating to the Commerce Act 1986 prohibiting anti-competitive conduct
- noted apologies
- confirmed the agenda.

## Strategic items

### 2: AGM agenda materials

The SG discussed the substance of each item on the agenda for the upcoming AGM

- The year that was:
  - A report on FlexForum affairs for 2023-24

- o Annual statement of accounts for 2023-24
- The year ahead:
  - o Progress with delivering the Flexibility Plan 1.0
  - o FlexForum Workplan and Budget for 2024-25
  - o Updating the Flexibility Plan.
- Filling Steering Group vacancies:
  - o Independent Chair
  - o Steering Group members.

**The year that was - a report on FlexForum affairs for 2023-24.** The SG shared views about FF achievements and things learned in 2023-24.

- provide a 1-line description of the year, eg, what was done and what is next.
- recognise that we cannot do everything we would like to, and that requires decisions about what gets done
- highlight that FF has been learning its role by doing
- clarify the role FF is taking on, and how that is unique, eg, this is what we are doing and this is what others are doing to highlight the gap being filled - provide people with a clear view about the role and impact

The SG noted that FF has helped MBIE and government see flexibility as a real option, particularly to help address affordability. The impact is visible in the references in the emissions reduction plan. There is an ongoing FF role to convene expertise on a complex topic to help get things done. MBIE is very interested to understand who has to take action, how ambitious it should be, and when it is needed. FF really adds value when it can answer these questions and highlight how NZ can best leverage its scarce resources, particularly given the diverging views on the costs, benefits and implications of flexibility. FF is a valuable tool by providing an expert and bipartisan group able to find the agreed facts.

**The year that was - statement of accounts for 2023-24.** The SG noted the 2023-24 accounts, including that the financial year ends 30 March 2024.

**The year ahead - progress with delivering Flexibility Plan 1.0.** The SG noted a draft progress report is nearly ready and discussed the emerging insights

- the Flexibility Plan is a necessary condition for progress in the right direction at pace by keeping everyone honest and raising questions about where progress is happening/not happening. The progress report must be annual.
- most progress is happening at the enable/operate end of the flexibility journey, with very little progress at the starting point of the flexibility journey, ie, the discover/assess stages.
- while it is reasonable to make sure the machine works before selling it to people, the lack of action to assist people understand and make choices is concerning. There are a considerable number of frustrated early adopters.
- designing solutions without user input will result in money and time being spent on things people do not want. There needs to be a focus on testing the transactions and processes that will inform the final design. The double diamond framing could be used to show the gaps in effort.

**The year ahead - FlexForum Workplan for 2024-25.** The SG agreed that Members are best placed to decide the workplan specifics and to outline a process to do this at the AGM, taking account of the insights from work to date and the progress report. The discussion included:

- there are several likely priorities emerging from our work to date
  - o updating the Flexibility Plan so it remains a useful measure of progress
  - o the blueprint including 3, 5 and 10 year goals to provide more robust sequencing of priorities
  - o delivering steps that would have the biggest and most immediate impact on the choices people make - changes to rules to enable people to easily get personalised advice and to fill the holes in the value stack
- how to put a greater emphasis on practical learning-by-doing. The Flexibility Plan is based around Accountability, Collaboration and Action - the action isn't getting as much attention
- the opportunity to collate knowledge and learning and represent this for Members
- the value of the blueprint to provide a framework for setting priorities and sequencing effort. FF should not shy away from being blunt to regulators/policy makers about the things that are not important right now.

**The year ahead - FlexForum Budget for 2024-25.** The SG agreed to present the core delivery and resourced delivery budget options and the implications for the workplan. The discussion included:

- there are 3 types of cost: operating, doing and communicating really well. The resourced delivery budget allows more doing and more communicating
- how do we determine the highest value use of FF resources? What are the must do things?
- more funding will enable more to be done. Delivering a deep dive requires around \$50-60,000 of effort based on experience this year.

**The year ahead - updating the Flexibility Plan.** The SG agreed to the approach for updating the Flexibility Plan and starting this following the AGM.

- maintaining and reporting on progress with the Flexibility Plan is a must do

**Filling SG vacancies.** The SG discussed the nomination process, nominations and new information about the availability of the sole nominee for chair in the period to December. The SG agreed there were suitable options available to the incoming SG to manage the situation, including appointing a deputy chair.

## Standing items

### 4: Engagement

The SG discussed the strategic communications plan and the results of Heft assistance communicating the most recent FF insights.

- the key to communicating better is having dedicated resource able to translate FF content for the various audiences and commit to maintaining the FF voice online (eg, reposting, commenting etc)
- the SG endorsed FF taking the role of the relentless expert prepared to speak plainly.

### 5: Workplan

The SG noted updates on workplan progress and other FlexForum tasks.

- the Market frameworks stream task on Maximising the value of flexibility was delivered 12 July 2024
- the Consumer participation stream task to develop an EV charging workplan was delivered 31 July 2024
- the Progress report task - a nearly final draft report exists...it will be provided to Members ahead of the AGM
- other tasks are in varying states of development. The next closest to delivery is the task to set the scene for digitalisation
- the outstanding activity required under the funding agreement with Ara Ake is to develop and maintain a list of priorities. All other activities are delivered or will be delivered by 31 August 2024.

### 6: Finance

The SG noted the finance update, cash flow projections and status of subscription payments.

## Procedural items

### 7: Updated policies and procedures

The SG approved two updates to the policy and procedures.

- Agreed to draft a policy to formalise practice for qualifying that FF documents represent FF views and individual Members may have their own view
- Approved changes to the Membership application process policy (1) and Annual subscriptions policy (2) to introduce new membership categories and update the annual subscription amounts
  - o NEW category for organisations with up to 2 people whether employees, contractors or owners = \$500

- o a NEW category for organisations with annual revenue of more than \$5M and up to \$10M = \$5,000
- o increasing the subscription for specified organisations (generator/retailers and distributors with >100,000 connections from \$20,000 to \$30,000.

The SG noted only 1 Member had feedback (supportive) about the proposed changes to subscriptions when given a heads up on 7 July.

## 8: Membership requests

The SG noted Membership requests approved since the previous SG meeting, and interest from further parties.

## 9: Actions

The SG noted the status of actions from previous sessions.

## 10: Next Steering Group meeting

The SG agreed the next SG meeting would be 12 September 2024.

## 11: Any other business

The SG noted Evie Trolove and Steve Batstone were stepping down at the AGM and thanked them for their contribution to the SG and FF over the year.

Meeting ended 11.40am