Steering Group meeting

When	**Thursday 17 September 2026, 0900-1030**
Where	Virtual
Who	Toby Stevenson, Sam Elder, Malcolm Cleland, Matt Smith, Matt Bostwick, Terry Paddy, Tim Calder, Fiona Wiseman. Secretariat: Craig Evans, Lyndal Blatch Observers: Sean McCready (Commission), Brian Fitzgerald (EECA)
Apologies	Nicole Kirkham, Siobhan Bradley (EA)

Session notes

1: Welcome

The Chair welcomed everyone to the session.

The SG:

- noted apologies
- noted their individual obligations relating to the Commerce Act 1986 prohibiting anti-competitive conduct
- noted interests
- confirmed the agenda.

Strategic items

2: The Flexforum value proposition

The SG discussed the FlexForum value proposition.

- The SG agreed that FF provides value to Members and the wider electricity ecosystem, including by supporting the coordination and collaboration which is required for faster flex progress.
- FF's coordination and collaboration activities represent a common and public good. However, the common good aspects do not necessarily translate into commercial benefits for individual businesses. The 'what's in it for me' that some businesses require to justify participation is not fully clear, and differs for each business.

- An example articulation of membership benefits is the Drive Electric Membership Guide 2026.
- SG Members identified several parts of the FF value proposition
    - supporting flex development is aligned to commercial strategy and long-term business interests, eg, flexibility is part of successful transport electrification.
    - the 'newness' of the subject makes it important to understand what is happening, who is doing what and how things work… 'where else do you go to meet people and get details on flexibility activity?'. SG members concurred FF provides a unique window into awareness of flex progress.
    - the knowledge sharing and opportunities to learn from other flex champions.
    - individual expert and corporate relationship development, and connection to the right (technical) people.
    - ability to identify where your business is aligned (or not aligned) with the wider flex consensus on a topic/issue.
    - ability to pool scarce resources to do more with less (or a party could not do alone). There are finite resources available for flex activity. FF enables parties with common issues to share resources and resolve them collaboratively, thereby reducing effort.
- Value is different for different parts of the sector. For the smaller end of the sector, FF provides access to discussions, eg, FNF and ERGANZ are seen as closed / siloed shops with involvement on flex topics on their terms. It is not an equal relationship although these parties need and should want contributions from the smaller end of the sector to enable better and enduring decisions based on an ecosystem-wide perspective.
- The process to develop an (emergency) load management protocol was discussed as an example of the low maturity of existing coordination/collaboration infrastructure and the difficulty the sector has knowing when and how to work collaboratively on issues.
- FF can clarify the value proposition for individual businesses by identifying which of the flex priorities represents a burning problem for each part of the sector.
- FF is not an advocacy organisation. Providing advice derived from the expertise of its membership should be distinguished from advocacy.

The SG agree several actions:

- review the membership fees and categories ahead of the next AGM to ensure these align with member value and support participation.
- provide suggestions about the reasons for participating in FF to inform an update description of the value proposition.

Standing items

3: Engagement

The SG noted the engagement update:

- multiple stakeholder conversations have been had or scheduled since the August SG meeting. The SG noted the Chair would be scheduling further meet-ups with key stakeholders to discuss accelerating flex progress.
- statistics on interactions with FlexForum through its website, newsletter and linkedin channels.

The SG agreed FF should respond to the Commerce Commission Open letter (responses due 22/10) focusing on the role flexibility and FlexForum can play in achieving the indicative vision.

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- The response should provide evidence/FF observations about what is needed to achieve the Commission's indicative vision/outcomes sought. Consensus and agreement about these topics has been rare and difficult to achieve. A FF view would be valued by the Commission because it can provide a neutral, expert view of 'this needs to be worked on'.
- Responses will directly inform the Commission's action plans for developing DPP2030. The SG noted the ability for FF to have direct discussions like this with regulators about flex/sector priorities is an important value proposition for some Members.
- A specific point FF could make is that lines company performance is no longer exclusively a network issue. The response could also note how the distributor role fits in with the wider ecosystem.
- The response could be prepared using existing FF positions - 2026 progress report etc - and tested with FF Members before submission.

4: Workplan

The SG noted the workplan update.

- **Flexibility Plan progress assessment is complete for 2026**. The 2026 progress report was published 5 August 2026. A summary of progress insights and flexibility priorities will be published shortly.
- **The pricing and orchestration deep dive** is underway. The next session focusing on wholesale signals will be scheduled shortly once expert contributors are confirmed.
- The resulting whole-of-system view on pricing and physical signals will enable FF to contribute its expert consensus to several regulatory and industry workstreams, including an Energy Competition taskforce investigation of GXP investment signals, ERGANZ/ENA updates to the (emergency) load management protocol, and to inform the response to the Energy Transition Framework report recommendation for… "*Flexibility in every new conversion - Industrial, commercial and residential conversions are all opportunities to incorporate flexibility (including reducing energy use and optimisation). … The plan would need to consider how to ensure there are incentives that reflect the value that flexibility could provide to the system.*"
- **A significant amount of knowledge sharing activity is underway** including the October Lunch and learn session with Gridsight, a webinar on 21 October to hear about the Australian Distributed Energy Integration Program, and Flex Day on 14 October.
- FF is **supporting learning-by-doing** through Flex Day 2026 and the warm up workshop on integration. About 30 people had registered for Flex Day, and 17 had registered for the workshop.
- The main focus of FF support of the EECA scaled flexible pilot project is a datasets and data flow mapping exercise. The task is to document: datasets operate and evaluate each pilot, what datasets move between parties, by what mechanism and how often, who holds each dataset and who looks after it. The exercise has in part prompted the integration workshop

5: Finance

The SG noted the financial update.

- The SG noted the status of membership renewals.

Procedural items

6: Memberships

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The SG noted that 4 membership enquiries had been received since the August meeting, and 1 resulted in a request to join FF.

7: Actions

The SG noted the status of actions from previous sessions.

8: Next Steering Group meeting

The SG confirmed the SG meeting is Thursday 8 October 2026.

9: AoB/Close

No other business.

Meeting finished at 10.15am

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