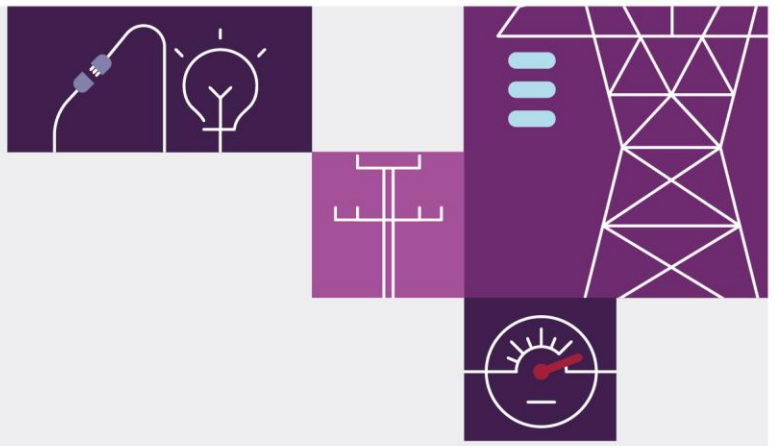


# 2026 ISP Stakeholder Engagement Plan

October 2025

AEMO's plan to engage with stakeholders on the 2026 Integrated System Plan (ISP)





# Important notice

## Purpose

This engagement plan outlines our intended stakeholder engagement approach to support the development of the 2026 Integrated System Plan (ISP).

We strive to deliver a collaborative approach to working with stakeholders and welcome input on this plan. We will continue to evolve and amend this plan as required throughout the 2024 to 2026 period to optimise our approach and ensure its suitability and accessibility. We will consider all feedback to improve this plan and any future stakeholder engagement.

## Disclaimer

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## Version control

Version	Release date	Changes
1	12 September 2024	First release
1.1	7 November 2024	Updates to include 2026 ISP Timetable dates
1.2	11 February 2025	Updates to include 2026 ISP Timetable dates
1.3	26 March 2025	Updates to include 2026 ISP Timetable dates
1.4	23 October 2025	Updates to 2026 ISP Timetable dates, including revised Draft 2026 ISP publication date



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AEMO acknowledges the Traditional Owners of country throughout Australia and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters, and culture. We pay respect to Elders past and present.

# 1 Overview

**This engagement plan outlines the initial stakeholder engagement approach to support consultation on the development of the 2026 Integrated System Plan (ISP). This plan will be periodically reviewed and updated throughout 2024–26 as engagement progresses.**

Published every two years, AEMO's Integrated System Plan (ISP) is a roadmap for the transition of the National Electricity Market (NEM), and the essential infrastructure required to meet future energy needs.

The purpose of the ISP is to identify efficient energy investments required to enable Australia's transition to a net zero economy by 2050, while balancing costs and risks and maintaining the reliability and security of the power system. It is developed in extensive consultation with consumer and community representatives, policy makers, regulators, industry bodies and other groups, and informed by a broad variety of technical expertise, voices, and views.

The 2026 ISP will continue to identify the optimal development path that is the lowest-cost, resilient, pragmatic path for the transition to net zero by 2050, while providing consumers with reliable, secure, and affordable power. It also serves the regulatory purpose to identify actionable and future transmission projects, and informs market participants, investors, policy decision makers and consumers.

Development of the 2026 ISP will draw on extensive stakeholder engagement and power system planning expertise to develop a roadmap that optimises energy market outcomes in the long-term interests of consumers. To ensure its quality, accuracy, and suitability, the 2026 ISP must reflect a broad range of stakeholder input.

The focus of engagement to support the development of the 2026 ISP will be consulting with stakeholders on how inputs, assumptions and scenarios and sensitivities are applied in our modelling. This will include consultation on the Draft 2025 IASR, ISP Methodology, Draft 2025 Electricity Network Options Report and the Draft 2025 Gas Infrastructure Options Report.

We welcome feedback and suggestions about the engagement process at all stages. Please share your feedback with the ISP team via [ISP@aemo.com.au](mailto:ISP@aemo.com.au). For more information, visit <https://aemo.com.au/en/energy-systems/major-publications/integrated-system-plan-isp>.

## 2 Purpose

**AEMO has published this engagement plan as an initial proposal and welcomes feedback from interested stakeholders on our approach any time during the engagement program. AEMO will apply any learnings to engagement on the development of the 2026 ISP and future engagement processes.**

The purpose of this engagement plan is to articulate how we intend to engage with stakeholders on the development of the 2026 ISP, and to provide a basis for planning individual engagements and consultations that will take place across the two-year ISP development period.

We strive to give all stakeholders as much opportunity as possible to get involved in our planning and guide its direction to ensure we achieve the best possible outcome.

We are committed to providing an accessible engagement program that offers stakeholders a range of opportunities to shape the final plan through consultations, stakeholder pulse surveys, a variety of forums and direct bilateral engagement.

### **Increasing the scope of the ISP**

The Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water and Energy Ministers finalised their ISP Review in February 2024, which has resulted in an increased scope of planning for future ISPs and the accompanying engagement program.

One of the findings of the ISP Review is that the ISP is a highly technical document, but that its audience has become more general over time. We are committed to continue to increase the accessibility of the ISP, evolve our engagement approach, and develop more effective and targeted communication products to help interested stakeholders engage.

More information about the Federal Government's ISP Review is available on the Department's website<sup>1</sup>.

### **2.1.1 Evolving the engagement approach**

While developing this engagement plan, AEMO considered and adopted feedback from the 2024 ISP engagement program.

Across three engagement satisfaction surveys conducted throughout 2023–24, AEMO achieved an overall engagement satisfaction of 8/10. This result met our original target, and we recognise this is a journey to improve and evolve engagement with stakeholders. Stakeholders provided feedback across a number of areas to inform continuous improvement. This feedback, along with recommendations from the Federal Government ISP Review, has resulted in amendments to our 2026 ISP Stakeholder Engagement Plan principles and commitments (Section 3.3).

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<sup>1</sup> Information about the Federal Government's ISP Review is available at: <https://www.energy.gov.au/energy-and-climate-change-ministerial-council/energy-ministers-publications/review-integrated-system-plan>

This plan has been developed in consultation with the 2026 ISP Consumer Panel and we have incorporated their suggestions where appropriate and agreed. AEMO has also released the 2026 ISP Stakeholder Engagement Plan (this document) for informal consultation, to ensure stakeholders have a say in how we approach engagement on the 2026 ISP.

For more information about evaluation of the 2024 ISP engagement program, see Appendix B: 2024 ISP engagement evaluation.

### 2.1.2 2026 ISP development process

The 2026 ISP will be developed across seven key stages as shown in Figure 1. The 2026 ISP Timetable<sup>2</sup>, published on 26 September 2024, provides dates for each key stage of ISP development.

Figure 1 2026 ISP Timetable<sup>3</sup>

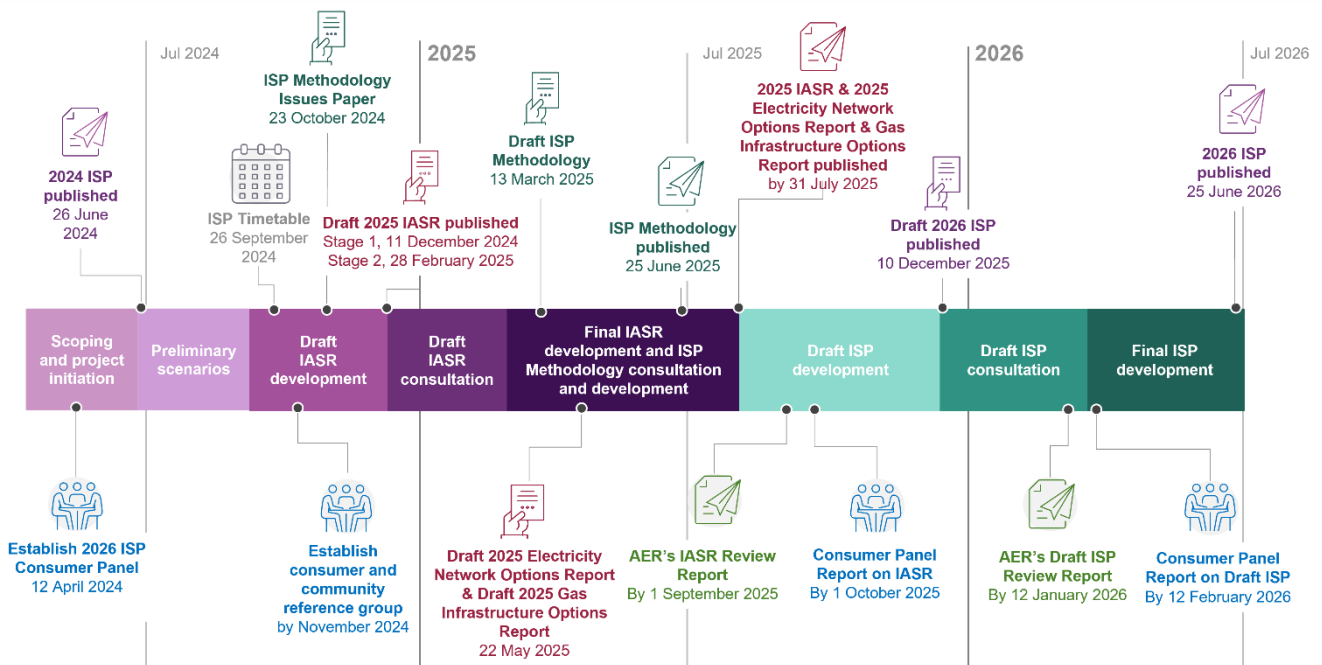


Table 3 (Section 5) outlines some of the opportunities to engage on the development of the 2026 ISP. AEMO welcomes suggestions about the engagement process at all stages. Please share feedback on this plan or individual consultation activities with the ISP team via [ISP@aemo.com.au](mailto:ISP@aemo.com.au).

AEMO welcomes feedback at any stage during the engagement process.

<sup>2</sup> Available at <https://aemo.com.au/-/media/files/major-publications/isp/2026/2026-isp-timetable.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> IASR is the Inputs, Assumptions and Scenarios Report.

## 3 Goal, objectives, and commitments

This section outlines:

- our engagement goal,
- a set of principles and objectives tied to our broader Corporate Plan, and
- our engagement commitments to stakeholders.

### 3.1 Engagement goal

This plan outlines our proposed approach to engaging with stakeholders during the development of the 2026 ISP, underpinned by our engagement goal.

Engagement goal for the 2026 ISP:

**Provide interested stakeholders with appropriate time and opportunity to access and provide meaningful input into our planning. We want interested stakeholders to get involved and shape our planning for the efficient development of the energy system, for the benefit of all Australians as we work to achieve a net-zero future.**

### 3.2 Objectives

We have aligned this plan to the broader objectives under our Strategic Corporate Plan FY25 that outlines our current strategic priorities and initiatives to address the opportunities and challenges in Australia’s accelerating energy transition. Please refer to Priority 2 *Navigating the energy future* and Priority 3 *Engaging our stakeholders* in AEMO’s Corporate Plan<sup>4</sup>.

This engagement plan is also aligned to the objectives of the Australian Government’s ISP Review<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> Available at: <https://aemo.com.au/en/about/corporate-governance/corporate-plan>

<sup>5</sup> See: <https://www.energy.gov.au/energy-and-climate-change-ministerial-council/energy-ministers-publications/review-integrated-system-plan>

## 3.3 Principles and engagement commitments

### 3.3.1 Principles

This engagement goal is underpinned by four key guiding principles that are applied to all of AEMO's engagement activities and are outlined in detail below:



#### Credible:

- We engage genuinely, with honesty, authenticity, and humility.
- We are open and transparent about our information.
- We are intentional in our engagement and clear about which decisions stakeholders can and cannot influence.



#### Reliable:

- When we make decisions, we explain them openly, clearly and in an accessible way.
- We provide a coordinated, consistent service to stakeholders so that engagement with AEMO is effective and efficient for all.
- We provide information in a timely manner, treat stakeholder queries as important and respond in reasonable timeframes.



#### Staying close:

- We are flexible and pragmatic when solving our stakeholders' problems.
- We meet with stakeholders regularly so we understand their perspectives and expectations and how we can offer value.
- We ensure multiple relationships between AEMO and each stakeholder.



#### Self-aware:

- We learn from our stakeholders through our engagements and apply those learnings.
- We treat our stakeholders' success as our own and help them achieve their objectives.
- We take a view of what is best for consumers and the energy system as a whole.
- We are aware of our limitations and consider whether other organisations are better placed to deliver on some things.



### 3.3.2 Engagement commitments

We have developed a set of commitments, aligned with our guiding principles, which we intend to meet through our engagement.

These commitments reflect contemporary, good practice engagement, and are consistent with feedback we have received from stakeholders about what is important to them. We are committed to pursuing engagement that is effective and fit for purpose within the regulatory requirements<sup>6</sup> and constraints of timing and resources.

We have identified four commitments that will guide our engagement approach for the 2026 ISP, outlined below.

For information on how we will measure and evaluate success against our engagement goal, objectives and commitments please refer to Section 6.

### 3.3.3 Respecting stakeholder time

We are committed to respecting our stakeholders' time, and we will seek to:

- Provide early, clear, and accurate guidance on consultation priorities and the purpose of individual engagements.
- Be clear on how we intend to engage, and the level of influence stakeholders can have (e.g. mapping engagement against the International Association of Public Participation Spectrum).
- Consider workloads with consultation timings and giving advance notice of all consultations.
- Advertise engagement events widely and provide reminders to attendees of the event timings.
- Enable more participation of consumer advocates in formal consultations through verbal consultation submission sessions.
- Provide relevant materials to attendees at least one week before any public event, to allow attendees to participate from an informed position.

### 3.3.4 Transparency

We are committed to building trust through transparency, and we will seek to:

- Publish all non-confidential submissions received, that meet the requirements outlined in our Consultation Submissions Guidelines<sup>7</sup>.
- Provide transparency to all stakeholders about attendees, by including these in the minutes of events or recordings.
- Clearly respond to stakeholder input, including submissions, by explaining any changes made, or stakeholder recommendations/arguments that have not been accepted.
- Provide stakeholders with transparency on the progress of key issues throughout the program, including when and how decisions are made.

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<sup>6</sup> Appendix A of this plan outlines the ISP regulatory framework, including provisions in the National Electricity Rules (NER) and relevant Australian Energy Regulator (AER) guidelines.

<sup>7</sup> Available at: [https://aemo.com.au/-/media/files/stakeholder\\_consultation/working\\_groups/industry\\_meeting\\_schedule/aemo-consultation-submission-guidelines---march-2023.pdf](https://aemo.com.au/-/media/files/stakeholder_consultation/working_groups/industry_meeting_schedule/aemo-consultation-submission-guidelines---march-2023.pdf)

- Where practicable, incorporate relevant learnings and insights from forums and engagements that could benefit the ISP (not just from ISP-related forums).

### 3.3.5 Tailoring material for the audience

We are committed to improving accessibility, and we will seek to:

- Where practical, work with particular stakeholder groups, such as consumer representatives or community groups, to ensure technical material and engagement scope and questions are made as accessible as possible to support effective engagement.
- Develop an engagement toolkit to help stakeholders better understand the engagement process and the information we produce as we are aware that different stakeholders have varying time, knowledge, ability, and capacity to engage in the ISP, which is inherently highly technical in nature.

### 3.3.6 Closing the feedback loop

We are committed to showing we are listening, and we will seek to:

- Increase communication that summarises what we've heard (informal through to formal consultation submission reports), and feedback impact.
- Ensure that consultation summaries are provided in an accessible format and a timely way.

## 4 Approach

This section provides detail on what is in and out of scope for this engagement, the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation spectrum alignment, key stakeholders that we have identified and what engagement and communication methods we will use.

### 4.1 Scope

This scope of our engagement on the 2026 ISP will include the following levels of engagement aligned to the IAP2 spectrum shown in Table 1.

- **Inform** stakeholders about the general progress and outcome of each of the seven key stages of the two-year ISP development period (refer to Figure 1 2026 ISP Stages) and how we consider feedback to formal consultations through regular communication and consultation summary reports.
- **Consult** stakeholders for feedback and input on proposed modelling, methodology, analysis, inputs, assumptions, scenarios, sensitivities, expansion options and alternatives.
- **Involve** the ISP Consumer Panel and other key stakeholders as required on key topics such as the scenario design, transmission cost, consumer sentiment and consideration of the treatment of consumer energy resources and distributed energy resources.
- **Collaborate** with key expert stakeholders to identify and plan for network augmentation design (joint planning). Development of this engagement plan has also been in collaboration with the ISP Consumer Panel.

Find out more about how AEMO engages by stakeholder group in section 4.3. The scope of this engagement program will not include:

- **Empower** stakeholders to decide on outcomes such as the Optimal Development Path.

### 4.2 IAP2 Spectrum alignment

The International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) Spectrum is a globally recognised framework that we continue to apply in our engagement approach.

We have outlined our intended application of the IAP2 Spectrum for this engagement above in reference to the levels included in Table 1 below and indicate that we intend to work with our stakeholders throughout this plan; particularly at the Inform, Consult, Involve and Collaborate levels.

This means we will look to stakeholders for advice in formulating solutions and stay agile to respond to and incorporate advice into our decisions during planning (where possible).



**Table 1 IAP2 levels of engagement<sup>8</sup>**

	<b>Inform</b>	<b>Consult</b>	<b>Involve</b>	<b>Collaborate</b>	<b>Empower</b>
<b>Engagement goal</b>	Provide balanced and objective information to assist understanding of the problem, alternatives, opportunities, and solutions.	Obtain feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	Work directly with key stakeholders throughout the process to ensure concerns are consistently understood and considered.	Partner with some stakeholders during decision making, including development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	The final decision is made by select stakeholders.
<b>Engagement promise</b>	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to, and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how input influenced our decision.	We will work with key stakeholders to ensure their concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how their input influenced the decision.	We will look to some stakeholders for advice in formulating solutions and incorporate their advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what select stakeholders decide.

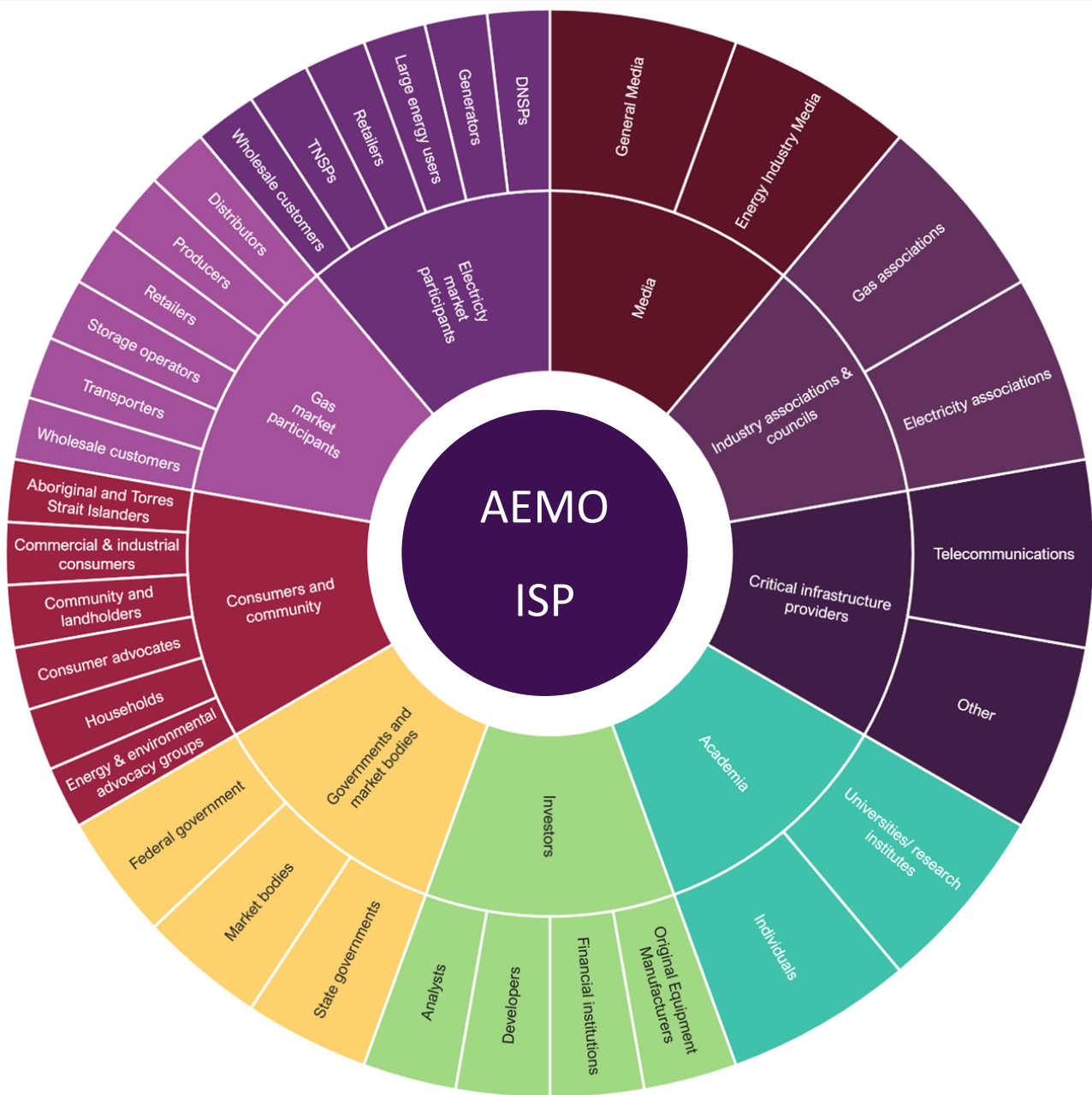
<sup>8</sup> For further information about IAP2’s Public Participation Spectrum please visit: <https://iap2.org.au/resources/spectrum/>

### 4.3 Key stakeholder groups

This ISP is the result of a two-year journey with energy industry, consumer and community representatives, governments, energy market authorities, investors and developers, network planners, industry bodies and science and technology institutions.

Figure 2 below highlights the stakeholders that are integral to or may be interested in our 2026 ISP engagement opportunities and communications. There is potential for the decisions made in the ISP to affect them or they have an interest in the outcome. This list is not intended to be comprehensive, and we welcome input from a wide range of voices.

**Figure 2 Key stakeholders involved in the 2026 ISP**



We seek to ensure all interested stakeholders can contribute to the development of the 2026 ISP, including those not previously involved.

The following section outlines how AEMO engages under the National Transmission Planner function, engagement with the ISP Consumer Panel and the Consumer and Community Reference Group.

### 4.3.1 AEMO's National Transmission Planner function

AEMO provides the detailed, independent planning, forecasting, and modelling information and advice that drives effective and strategic decision making, regulatory changes, and investment.

As part of AEMO's national planning function, including the functions related to preparing and publishing the ISP, AEMO must consult with jurisdictional planning bodies through joint planning to share reasonable information necessary to prepare the ISP; primarily engaging with Transmission Network Service Providers (TNSPs) and state bodies responsible for developing and planning Renewable Energy Zones (REZs).

This includes considering and reviewing credible network and non-network options and incorporating the most-recent information from Transmission Annual Planning Reports, REZ design updates, or other material changes.<sup>9</sup>

### 4.3.2 ISP Consumer Panel

Under the National Electricity Rules, AEMO is required to establish an ISP Consumer Panel. The Panel plays an important role in bringing a consumer-focused perspective to the development of each ISP. AEMO will engage with the 2026 ISP Consumer Panel on a continuous and ongoing basis, seeking advice and input on matters of both substance and process.

During the development of the 2026 ISP, the Panel's responsibilities are to:

- Provide an assessment of the evidence and reasons supporting AEMO's conclusions in the Inputs, Assumptions and Scenarios Report (IASR) and the Draft 2026 ISP.
- Support AEMO's engagement with key stakeholders as required.

The Panel will provide two formal reports as part of the 2026 ISP development cycle (a prescribed function of the Panel under the National Electricity Rules) and other consultation submissions as required. Past submissions from the 2024 ISP are available on the Panel's page of AEMO's website<sup>10</sup>.

The input we have received and continue to receive from Panel members has helped improve the IASR, the ISP, and our engagement approach over time. We look forward to continuing to work closely with the Panel and drawing on Panel members' expertise in both designing and undertaking stakeholder engagement.

For more information about the 2026 ISP Consumer Panel, visit our 2026 ISP Consumer Panel webpage<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> Further information is available at: <https://aemo.com.au/about/what-we-do>

<sup>10</sup> Reports and submissions made as part of the 2024 ISP development cycle are available at: <https://aemo.com.au/energy-systems/major-publications/integrated-system-plan-isp/2024-integrated-system-plan-isp/isp-consumer-panel>

<sup>11</sup> See: <https://aemo.com.au/energy-systems/major-publications/integrated-system-plan-isp/2026-integrated-system-plan-isp/2026-isp-consumer-panel>

“The evolution of consultation at AEMO has been highly valued by the Panel. It’s allowed the Panel and the consumer groups we represent to have a meaningful input to the ISP development process.” Mark Henley, 2026 ISP Consumer Panel Chair.

### 4.3.3 Consumer and Community Reference Group

As part of its commitment to engaging our stakeholders and putting people at the centre of the energy transition, AEMO has established a Consumer and Community Reference Group (CCRG)<sup>12</sup>.

As a diverse cohort of consumer and community advocates, the CCRG provides strategic insights and advice to AEMO on a range of energy issues related to AEMO’s system planning, reforms, and operations. Members provide input based on their area of expertise, interest and capacity to enhance AEMO’s understanding of consumer and community perspectives.

The CCRG complements existing stakeholder panels and forums on the ISP, such as the 2026 ISP Consumer Panel, by providing advice and context on specific issues, such as Consumer Energy Resources (CER), First Nations perspectives, or community sentiment towards the energy transition and new infrastructure.

The CCRG represents an evolution of AEMO’s former Advisory Council on Social Licence (ACSL), with the change in format mutually agreed with members to better enable more targeted consultation opportunities and a greater consumer impact on AEMO’s decision making and outcomes.

For more information visit: AEMO’s Consumer and Community Reference Group webpage<sup>12</sup>.

## 4.4 Engagement and communication methods

We will offer a range of opportunities for stakeholders to engage with us and communicate through several channels. We have summarised the main engagement and communication methods to be utilised for this program in Table 2.

AEMO’s opportunities for engagement will be updated on the 2026 ISP webpage<sup>13</sup>, and stakeholders are encouraged to subscribe to 2026 ISP email updates via AEMO’s website<sup>14</sup>.

**Table 2 Engagement and communication methods**

Method	Intent	Indicative timing or frequency
Consultation	<b>Formal consultation</b> on the Draft 2025 IASR, Draft ISP Methodology review and Draft 2025 Electricity Network Options Report and Draft 2025 Gas Infrastructure Options Report, including the opportunity for submissions.	July 2024 – July 2025 (inclusive)
	<b>Formal consultation</b> on the Draft 2026 ISP, including the opportunity for submissions.	December 2025 – February 2026 (inclusive)

<sup>12</sup> See <https://aemo.com.au/consultations/industry-forums-and-working-groups/list-of-industry-forums-and-working-groups/social-licence-advisory-council>

<sup>13</sup> At: <https://aemo.com.au/energy-systems/major-publications/integrated-system-plan-isp/2026-integrated-system-plan-isp/stakeholder-engagement>

<sup>14</sup> At: <https://aemo.us10.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=eae433173c2b1acb87c5b07d1&id=37df37c168>

Method	Intent	Indicative timing or frequency
	<b>Consumer advocate verbal submissions to formal consultations</b> to allow consumer advocates to contribute in a way that does not require the resources necessary to produce a written submission.	During all major engagements (See Section 5)
	<b>Dedicated topic engagements</b> – previous examples include consumer risk preferences, Transmission Cost Database, discount rates (all to be confirmed for the 2026 ISP).	As required
Forums	<b>AEMO Consumer Forum</b> to engage with consumer advocates on all aspects of our work, will discuss the 2026 ISP at key stages during the development cycle.	Quarterly meetings
	<b>ISP Consumer Panel</b> , a dedicated consumer advocate advisory panel on the ISP that works closely with AEMO throughout the development of the 2026 ISP.	Fortnightly meetings (or as required)
	<b>Consumer and Community Reference Group</b> , to provide specific advice on the approach to social licence in the 2026 ISP.	As required
	<b>Forecasting Approach Register</b> , available to track any ideas or issues not captured through other formal consultation processes.	Available anytime at AEMO’s website <sup>15</sup>
	<b>Forecasting Reference Group (FRG)</b> , AEMO’s forum dedicated to specialist forecasting discussion and engagement.	Monthly meetings (more frequent as required)
	<b>Joint planning with Transmission Network Service Providers</b> , facilitating ongoing and targeted engagement between AEMO and other transmission planners.	Monthly meetings (more frequent as required)
	<b>Distributed Network Service Providers</b> , joint forecasting, and planning for development of CER and distributed resources, and accounting for distribution network costs.	Periodic as required
Meetings	<b>Targeted one-on-one meetings with key stakeholders</b> , where these are requested to explore specific issues.	As required during engagement
Newsletters	<b>ISP Newsletter</b> sent to the ISP mailing list including both announcements about milestones and tailored newsletter communications that provide an accessible summary of relevant information.	Quarterly publication
Fact sheets	<b>Summary ‘consumer friendly’ fact sheet/infographic</b> for the draft and final 2026 ISP.	December 2025 & June 2026
Surveys	<b>Scenario weightings</b> , a process to inform the ISP scenario weightings.	August – September 2025
	<b>Direct surveys</b> of participants’ satisfaction in the ISP consultation process.	At key milestones (see Table 4)
Website	<b>Website content</b> published in an easily accessible, comprehensive, and timely manner.	Regularly and as required

<sup>15</sup> See <https://www.aemo.com.au/energy-systems/electricity/national-electricity-market-nem/nem-forecasting-and-planning/forecasting-approach>

Method	Intent	Indicative timing or frequency
Workshops and webinars	<b>Government workshops and briefings</b> , to support both the development and use of the ISP.	At all key milestones
	<b>Public workshops and webinars</b> , including virtual and in-person engagement. Along with live webinars, we will publish recordings to ensure that stakeholders can engage at a time and in a way that suits them. We will aim to maximise question time where practical and use Slido to prioritise questions.	During all major engagements (see Section 5)
Capacity building toolkit	<b>Easy explainer</b> for key ISP materials to enable better understanding of the planning process and who does what across the industry,	Share through key consumer channels and AEMO channels throughout the development process

# 5 Engagement schedule

The 2026 ISP will be developed across four key stages. The opportunities for engagement across these stages will be published on the 2026 ISP Stakeholder Engagement webpage. Table 3 below shows a high-level view of the milestones, timing and communication and engagement channels.

Not included in Table 3 are a range of regular engagements we have with industry and specialists, for example our network Joint Planning Committees and Forecasting Reference Group which are deeply involved at most milestones.

**Table 3 2026 ISP consultation and engagement schedule**

ISP milestone	Opportunity	Time	Consultation submissions	ISP Consumer Panel	Public webinar	Feedback Survey
<b>ISP Engagement Plan</b>	ISP Engagement Plan	Sep - Oct 2024	Written	✓	✓	
<b>Inputs, Assumptions &amp; Scenarios Report (IASR) Consultation &amp; Development:</b> Provide input or feedback on AEMO’s inputs, assumptions and scenarios, for example, consumer energy resources, energy efficiency, electrification and other factors that inform the modelling.	Scenarios Consultation Paper published	17 Jul 2024		✓		
	Consultation, webinar and verbal submission	Jul - Aug 2024	Written & verbal	✓	✓	
	Input development (consultancies)	Aug – Nov 2024	(informal - Forecasting Reference Group)	✓		
	Draft 2025 IASR publication	11 Dec 2024 (first stage) and 28 Feb 2025 (second stage)				
	Consultation, webinars, and verbal submission	Dec 2024 - Mar 2025	Written & verbal	✓	✓	
	Submissions reflection webinar	Apr 2025		✓	✓	✓
	Final IASR published	By 31 Jul 2025		✓		✓
	Webinar	Aug 2025			✓	
	<b>ISP Methodology Consultation &amp; Development:</b> Provide input or feedback on changes to the Methodology that impact the way we model and plan.	ISP Methodology Issues Paper published	23 Oct 2024		✓	
Consultation, webinars, and verbal submission		Oct - Nov 2024	Written & verbal	✓	✓	
Draft ISP Methodology published		13 Mar 2025		✓		✓
Consultation, webinars, and verbal submission		Mar to Apr 2025	Written & verbal	✓	✓	
Final ISP Methodology published		25 Jun 2025		✓		
Publication webinar		Jul 2025			✓	
<b>Electricity Network Options Report and Gas Infrastructure Options Report Consultation &amp; Development:</b>	Draft 2025 Electricity Network Options Report and Draft Gas Infrastructure Options Report	22 May 2025		✓		

## 2026 ISP Stakeholder Engagement Plan

ISP milestone	Opportunity	Time	Consultation submissions	ISP Consumer Panel	Public webinar	Feedback Survey
Provide input or feedback on conceptual transmission and distribution network expansion options and gas infrastructure options to be used as inputs to the 2026 ISP.	Consultation, webinars, and verbal submission	May - June 2025	Written & verbal	✓	✓	
	Final report published	By 31 Jul 2025		✓		✓
	Webinar	Aug 2025			✓	
<b>2026 Integrated System Plan Consultation &amp; Development:</b> Provide input or feedback on the Draft ISP document, including on network projects, non-network options, industry developments, and implications on the long-term interests of consumers.	Draft 2026 ISP published	10 Dec 2025		✓		
	Consultation, webinars, and verbal submission	Dec 2025 - Feb 2026	Written & verbal	✓	✓	
	Final ISP published	25 Jun 2026		✓		
	Publication webinar	Jul 2026		✓	✓	✓

## 6 Evaluation

In everything we do, we seek to improve how we engage with stakeholders through regular evaluation.

We want to continue to build our understanding of stakeholder perspectives, imperatives, and positions as best as possible. We have outlined success and evaluation tools in Table 4 that will guide our evaluation of this plan.

These measures are designed to gauge achievement of the engagement goal and principles.

**Table 4 Success measures and evaluation tools**

What we are measuring	Success measures	Measurement tools
Time	Majority (>70%) of stakeholders surveyed are satisfied that AEMO was willing to engage and respected stakeholders' time.	Across ISP engagement surveys
Transparency	Majority (>70%) of stakeholders surveyed are satisfied that AEMO was accountable to stakeholders and clear on decision making.	Across all ISP engagement surveys
	ISP Consumer Panel reporting and feedback on AEMO's engagement demonstrates satisfaction with the approach.	Engagement plan evaluation – July 2026
Accessibility	Majority (>70%) of stakeholders surveyed are satisfied that information was provided in a clear, concise, and timely manner.	Across all ISP engagement surveys
	Compliance with the Forecasting Best Practice Guidelines is achieved (refer Appendix A)	Forecasting Best Practice Compliance Reports
Listening	Majority (>70%) of stakeholders surveyed are satisfied that AEMO demonstrated how stakeholder feedback was considered and used.	Across all ISP engagement surveys

### 6.1.1 Measurement method

Success will be measured using feedback collected in the following methods:

- Direct feedback at stakeholder engagement events,
- Informal debriefs with key stakeholders for direct feedback on engagement events,
- Assessment of feedback provided in consultation submissions,
- Capturing balanced feedback from a diverse range of stakeholder cohorts involved,
- Post-engagement surveys with the key stakeholder groups that are involved,
- Anonymous post-consultation stakeholder survey, and
- ISP Consumer Panel review against measures of success.



We will conduct four stakeholder surveys, following publication of:

- Post-consultation on the Draft 2025 Inputs, Assumptions and Scenarios Report (IASR) and Draft 2026 ISP Methodology – early 2025.
- Post-release of the 2025 Inputs, Assumptions and Scenarios Report (IASR) and 2026 ISP Methodology – August 2025.
- Post-consultation on the Draft 2026 ISP – early 2026.
- Post release of the final 2026 ISP – July 2026.

All satisfaction surveys will include quantitative measures and optional qualitative feedback.

### 6.1.2 Evaluation process

To evaluate the success of this plan we will:

- Measure regularly and at each stage of the program
- Use a combination of formal and informal measurement methods
- Evaluate both quantitative and qualitative data
- Demonstrate how engagement is influencing our decision making
- Identify stakeholder satisfaction with engagement activities, and
- Be transparent and share results with stakeholders.

In addition to the formal evaluation process, we welcome feedback and input on an ongoing basis and will make changes to our engagement approach based on input received.

Following the final survey, we will publish insights from the evaluation and suggestions for improvement to future engagement activities.

# Appendix A: Regulation and guidelines

This section provides information about the ISP development process and the key regulatory requirements and guidelines used to inform our engagement approach for the 2026 ISP.

## Regulatory framework

The ISP development process is extensively prescribed in both the Australian Energy Regulator's (AER) Cost Benefit Analysis Guidelines (CBA Guidelines)<sup>16</sup> and Forecasting Best Practice Guidelines (FBPG)<sup>17</sup>.

Rule 5.22 of the National Electricity Rules (NER)<sup>18</sup> outlines aspects of the ISP process, including the:

- ISP's purpose, including the specific power system needs that the ISP must plan to meet,
- Publication of a timetable for the ISP development process,
- Development, content, and application of the CBA Guidelines and the FBPG (see below),
- Development of the ISP Inputs, Assumptions and Scenarios Report (IASR) and ISP Methodology,
- Contents and development of the ISP, including the Draft ISP,
- Consideration of non-network options,
- Creation, purpose, and operation of the ISP Consumer Panel, and
- Australian Energy Regulator's (AER) reviews of the IASR and the Draft ISP.

## Relevant guidelines

The CBA Guidelines and FBPG, provide AEMO, in developing the ISP, flexibility in how it identifies the optimal pathway for the National Electricity Market.

The guidelines also provide AEMO with requirements to:

- Publish a set of guidelines to provide clarity to anyone who makes a submission to our consultation processes about how each submission will be treated,<sup>19</sup>
- Engage closely with stakeholders,
- Be transparent and explain how it applies its judgement, and
- Undertake a robust market-wide cost benefit analysis<sup>20</sup>.

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<sup>16</sup> Cost benefit analysis guidelines to make the ISP actionable, available at: <https://www.aer.gov.au/system/files/AER%20-%20Cost%20benefit%20analysis%20guidelines%20-%202025%20August%202020.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> See <https://www.aer.gov.au/system/files/AER%20-%20Forecasting%20best%20practice%20guidelines%20-%202025%20August%202020.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> For more information on the National Electricity Rules visit <https://energy-rules.aemc.gov.au/ner>

<sup>19</sup> For more information see: [https://aemo.com.au/-/media/files/stakeholder\\_consultation/working\\_groups/industry\\_meeting\\_schedule/aemo-consultation-submission-guidelines---march-2023.pdf](https://aemo.com.au/-/media/files/stakeholder_consultation/working_groups/industry_meeting_schedule/aemo-consultation-submission-guidelines---march-2023.pdf)

<sup>20</sup> For more information see: <https://www.aer.gov.au/networks-pipelines/guidelines-schemes-models-reviews/guidelines-to-make-the-integrated-system-plan-actionable>



## Cost Benefit Analysis Guidelines

Clause 5.22.5 of the NER requires the AER to produce the CBA Guidelines, to be used by AEMO in preparing the ISP, and to be used by Transmission Network Service Providers (TNSPs) in applying the Regulatory Investment Test for Transmission (RIT-T) to projects identified as ‘actionable’ in the ISP. The AER is empowered to specify that any part of the CBA Guidelines is binding on AEMO or TNSPs.

The CBA Guidelines give AEMO flexibility to exercise its professional judgement in developing the ISP, while also ensuring that all decisions are transparent, informed by stakeholder consultation, and subject to consistent and robust economic analysis.

This includes requiring AEMO to explain how the recommendations in the 2026 ISP give effect to consumer preferences and support consumers’ long-term interests.

In addition, the Guidelines require AEMO to:

- identify several candidate development paths and estimate their costs and benefits
- rank the development paths in a transparent manner under various scenarios, and
- consider how development paths mitigate key risks and align with consumer preferences.

The Guidelines also require that AEMO use evidence-based decision making when selecting an optimal development path (we may rank development paths differently based on assessment of risk). We must also be transparent about the final decision making approach(es) selected and how this/these result in the selected optimal development path. In addition, we are required to benchmark our choice against a maximum net benefit approach and explain how it aligns with consumer preferences.

## Forecasting Best Practice Guidelines

Clause 5.22.5(i)<sup>21</sup> of the NER requires the AER to include in the Forecasting Best Practice Guidelines (FBPG) guidance for AEMO’s forecasting practices and processes as they relate to the ISP and the process, including consultation requirements, to be used for an ISP update.

As well as covering numerous technical aspects of the forecasting process, the FBPG sets out several consultation principles that AEMO must have regard to when developing the ISP which are summarised in Table 5 below.

**Table 5 FBPG Consultation principles – 2026 ISP**

Principle	Effect
Facilitate effective discussion	Facilitate effective discussion at workshops, public forums, and engagement with individual stakeholders by providing sufficient time to digest any materials or information beforehand. This aligns with the principle of recognising that adequate time and resources are necessary for consumers to engage effectively.

<sup>21</sup> For more information see version 200 (page 657) of the National Electricity Rules at: <https://energy-rules.aemc.gov.au/ner>

Principle	Effect
<p><b>Account for stakeholder time and resource constraints</b></p>	<p>Account for the time and resource constraints that consumer groups and other stakeholders face when developing a consultation plan or program. For example, facilitate consumer engagement by dedicating specialist internal resources to this task and/or by sufficiently resourcing the ISP Consumer Panel. This aligns with the principle of proactively building consumers’ capacity when complexity is hindering engagement. Capacity building, in this context, should recognise the importance of long-lasting relationships with consumers to improve their skills and understanding of the material.</p>
<p><b>Tailor stakeholder involvement when required</b></p>	<p>Be aware of when more stakeholder involvement or collaboration is warranted, rather than relying too heavily on more base-level forms of consultation (such as informing/reporting), so AEMO can tailor its engagement approach to achieve desired objectives. Ideally, these factors form part of a consumer engagement plan developed in consultation with stakeholders. It is best practice to be clear about which engagement approach is being adopted and why (via reference to the IAP2 Spectrum).</p>
<p><b>Employ a wide range of engagement strategies</b></p>	<p>Employ a wide range of engagement strategies to receive appropriate feedback from individual stakeholders with unique detailed perspectives up to and potentially including large, facilitated workshops. In doing so, be flexible, with a view to meaningfully bring stakeholders into the process.</p>
<p><b>Seek regular feedback</b></p>	<p>Seek regular, considered feedback from stakeholders on the efficacy of the engagement process.</p>
<p><b>Provide information to serve stakeholder objectives</b></p>	<p>Make relevant and timely information available to stakeholders with a view to achieving stakeholder-centric objectives. For instance, information provision in the ISP context should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• allow stakeholders to understand the key inputs and assumptions driving the results, so that they are capable of replicating and/or interrogating the results</li> <li>• provide accountability by ensuring the mechanics and assumptions behind AEMO’s analysis are transparent</li> <li>• provide stakeholders with the opportunity to provide timely input throughout the process, so they are capable of positively influencing the results (where possible), and</li> <li>• subject to confidentiality obligations, allow stakeholders to access similar data to promote balanced discussion, where otherwise some stakeholders would have materially more influence than others.</li> </ul>

## Appendix B: 2024 ISP engagement evaluation

Throughout development of the 2024 ISP, AEMO conducted three engagement satisfaction surveys seeking feedback from stakeholders across the 2024 ISP engagement objectives and commitments.

2024 ISP Stakeholder Engagement Satisfaction surveys:

- Survey 1: post 2023 IASR (21 September – 7 October 2023)
- Survey 2: post Draft 2024 ISP (5 March – 2 April 2024)
- Survey 3: post 2024 ISP (26 June – 17 July 2024).

The purpose of these surveys was to check in with stakeholders on their experience for AEMO to better understand gaps and opportunities for improvement during the engagement program, to enable incremental improvement without waiting until the end of the engagement program.

Overall, across the three surveys conducted, AEMO achieved an overall engagement satisfaction of 8/10. This result met our original target, and we recognise this is a journey to improve and evolve engagement with stakeholders. Stakeholders provided feedback across a number of areas to inform continuous improvement. This feedback, along with recommendations from the Federal Government ISP Review, has resulted in amendments to our 2026 ISP Stakeholder Engagement Plan principles and commitments (Section 3.3).

Table 6 below includes the results from each survey, along with the average overall result against seven key engagement dimensions.

**Table 6 2024 ISP Stakeholder engagement satisfaction results**

Survey question	S1	S2	S3	Trend	Av.	Target
1. Overall engagement satisfaction	7.3	8	8.6	▲	7.89	(>60%)
2. Engagement experience	6.91	8	7.14	▲	7.26	(>60%)
3. Providing clear, timely and consistent engagement information and materials	7.13	8.5	8.25	▲	7.54	(>60%)
4. Genuinely listening and considering stakeholder feedback and ensuring stakeholders felt heard	6.87	8	7.88	▲	7.22	(>60%)
5. Effectively identifying, communicating, and consulting on future electricity system needs	7.04	8	8.13	▲	7.08	(>60%)
6. Ensuring accessibility and transparency in the engagement approach	6.96	8	7.88	▲	7.41	(>70%)
7. Enough opportunity to engage (% of 'yes')	75	60	70	▷	81	(>70%)
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>10</b>	▼	<b>43</b>	n/a



All survey results are av. / 10, with the total sample size across all three surveys low at n = 43.

In the analysis, a range of positive themes emerged through the feedback including AEMO’s effort to engage, transparency, professionalism, and commitment to improvement over time. Stakeholders also provided a range of feedback in relation to opportunities for AEMO to improve clarity on the scope and objective of engagement, accessibility, share and range of voice, cost transparency and demonstrating engagement impact.

Table 7 below highlights the key themes provided by stakeholders through verbatim feedback.

**Table 7 2024 ISP Stakeholder engagement satisfaction – verbatim feedback**

Survey dimension	Verbatim feedback (themes)
Satisfaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Excellent effort by AEMO to be transparent, a range of engagement opportunities to broaden the range of people engaged.</li> <li>AEMO team members are professional and clear in their communications and are willing to “tackle the hard questions” on the spot.</li> </ul>
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More imagery, better outlining of engagement purpose.</li> <li>Provide clear guidelines on what kind of feedback is most helpful and offer templates or prompts to assist people in structuring their responses.</li> </ul>
Clear, timely, consistent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The engagement process needs to be clearer (scope).</li> <li>Stakeholders might not be sure what kind of feedback AEMO is looking for or how their input will be used.</li> <li>Important information can be released too late to allow for informed participation, particularly for complex topics.</li> </ul>
Listening, feeling heard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More clarity and needs to identify how far we have come on the journey, and the next steps of that journey.</li> <li>Lack of acknowledgement or clear summary of feedback provided, leaving people wondering if it's having any impact.</li> </ul>
Effectiveness / future system needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Detail the total system cost, including Consumer Energy Resources.</li> <li>Explain the cost of non-action, and show it as the cost per consumer or family, "who pays?"</li> <li>More clearly explain the future challenges facing the electricity grid and why public input is important.</li> </ul>
Accessibility, transparency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to broaden the range of 'end consumer' perspectives engaged, particularly lower income households.</li> <li>Complex language, jargon or overly complex explanations exclude people without a strong background in energy issues.</li> </ul>

Following analysis of all three surveys, AEMO has identified a range of actions that have informed the 2026 ISP Stakeholder Engagement Plan principles and commitments (Section 3.3) and will continue to be a focus for engagement throughout the development of the 2026 ISP.

**Table 8 2024 ISP Stakeholder engagement satisfaction – actions**

Dimension	Action
Time	Increase amount of notice: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Start to set webinar timings alongside the ISP timetable release.</li> <li>Continue to allow significant Q&amp;A time in webinars.</li> </ul>
Opportunity	Improve clarity on scope and purpose: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to clearly articulate the IAP2 level, and scope and purpose of engagement.</li> <li>Continue to emphasise what feedback is ‘most useful’ at each consultation stage.</li> </ul> Increase share of stakeholder voice: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to provide more clarity on which stakeholders are most impacted and should engage.</li> <li>Continue to rotate question time during webinars so the loud stakeholders don’t take “all the space”.</li> </ul>
Meaningful input	Improve communication of complex material: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to develop materials that better communicate technical topics.</li> <li>Continue to show where each consultation ‘fits’, (especially GenCost and similar consultations).</li> <li>Start being more transparent on cost and cost impact.</li> </ul> Improve engagement listening: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to increase communication that summarises what we’ve heard.</li> <li>Continue to increase reporting on feedback impact (informal &gt; consultation submission reports).</li> </ul>
Efficiency	Improve submission process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Start to use a digital consultation ‘cover sheet’ to aid submission.</li> <li>Start to provide submission and feedback acknowledgement notification.</li> </ul>
Outcome	Increase energy transition communication: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Start to communicate how the 2024 ISP relates to and delivers on the broader energy transition.</li> </ul>

AEMO is committed to continue to measure, evaluate, and improve its engagement approach and we welcome feedback and input on an ongoing basis. A range of surveys will be conducted throughout the 2026 ISP engagement program, and we will publish insights from the evaluation and suggestions for improvement to future engagement activities.

For more information about the evaluation measures for the 2026 ISP, see Section 6.