

SA Power Networks' Regional and Remote Advisory Group

Meeting Details

Organiser Alex Lewis

Date Tuesday 11 March 2025

Time 1.30-4.00pm

Location Online via Teams

Members

Mike Leane	Chair
Susan Chase AM	Regional Representative
Chris Marsden	Community representative
Jason Huang	C&J Accountants
Penny Williams	Regional Representative

SA Power Networks

Kim Williams, Network Reliability Manager
Matthew Napolitano, Head of Asset Operations
Vlora Dzeladini, Network Emergency Manager
Greg Eyers, Regional Ops Manager – Eyre
Ben Trewartha, Customer Solutions Manager
Alex Lewis, Stakeholder Engagement Manager

Guests/ Presenters

Jordan Theodorous, Telstra
Jay Starrs, CX Business Partner

1. Welcome and Introductions

Welcome and Acknowledgement of Country

Mike welcomed all members to the meeting and acknowledged the traditional owners.

Apologies were noted from Jason Huang, Penny Williams and Vlora Dzeladini.

CAF update

Mike provided an overview of the key discussion from the February CAF meeting including:

- Innovation Advisory Group and seeking interest from members to nominate.
- Upper North outage review (customer led) – refer to agenda item 4).
- Mike and Alex presented at the West Coast and Eyre Peninsula ZEMC and EPLGA Conference in Streaky Bay at the end of February. It was a good networking opportunity. Valuable input from Telstra on plans for comms to handset via Star Link low Earth orbit satellites.

Customer Outcomes

Alex provided an overview of the desire for each advisory group to have an outcome under each theme

- Reliable, safe and resilient network – discussion regarding farm safety and engagement with key stakeholders eg. Grain producers, dairy industry.
- Clean and green energy – input into trials such as community battery trial and knowledge sharing.

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- Customer experience and empowerment – seeking feedback from worst serviced customers through various avenues.
 - Affordable and equitable supply – need to include SAIDI/SAIFI measures as part of Regulatory Proposal expenditure. Kym W to provide numbers on expected improvements in SAIDI/SAIFI

Plus, an outcome for

- Innovation – invite Paul Topping to present on Innovation Framework to next meeting.
- Advocacy – telecommunications and working collaboratively with telco's eg. Kimba battery project.
- Data/ Know your customer – further work required.

2. Community resilience batteries

Alex provided an update on the project. All Councils are supportive and SAPN has confirmed all locations for the EV fast charger and community resilience batteries.

A combined resilience solution will be developed for Kimba with SAPN, Council and Telstra working collaboratively together. Residents will gain access to a refuge area equipped with mains power and a robust communications network capable of operating for at least eight-hours during grid disruptions.

There was a query about EV charger on poles following some recent media. Alex to follow up and send info.

3. Telstra presentation – overview of work in SA and effectiveness of communication channels during outages

Jordan Theodoros, Emergency Response Manager, provided an overview of Telstra's emergency response, including the management phases, 3/3/3 Recovery Strategy, restoration priorities and emergency deployment capabilities.

Key discussion:

- What is defined as the core network?
- The level of infrastructure serving regional communities? Is there an average back-up? The back-up varies between 2 and 24 hours.
- Greg commented that in his 40 years at SAPN this was the first presentation he'd received on Telstra's emergency response and the information was appreciated.
- The importance of collaboration between Telstra and SAPN was noted. Questions around who is responsible in each organisation to enact this collaboration.
- Starlink had been a game changer for SAPN and others, allowing comms via low Earth orbit satellite for all field vehicles.
- New technology being investigated eg. SAPS.
- Comms coverage is critical for switching in remote areas.
- Opportunity for SAPN ops supervisors to chat with Telstra to understand worst served areas and key sites. This would enable collaboration for worst served areas for power outages and comms back-up.
- Further discussions with SAPN and Telstra to identify priority sites and seek funding for 2030-35. The importance of collaboration in relation to critical infrastructure.

4. Upper North review

A consumer-led review through ECA's Participation Grants is being explored by First Nations Clean Energy Network, Flinders Ranges Council and Outback Communities Authority.

The aim of the review of the Oct 2024 power outage in the Upper North is to

- Look at positive improvements going forward
- How community resilience can be improved given the frequency of such events is increasing.

Discussion:

- Other key stakeholders to invite include the Upper North RDA.
- The extent of outages in the First Nations communities and clarifying how long till generation was provided or power restored in various communities including Nepabunna and Copley.
- Noted that significant investment to improve reliability has occurred over the last 5-10 years in Hawker and Nepabunna.

5. Mobile Emergency Response Vehicle

Jay provided an overview of feedback from the customer survey on design features for the community response vehicle. To date 43 responses have been received, with the charging stations, in built drinks machine/ fridges and comms being the priorities identified by customers.

A naming competition is currently underway internally. The top 5 short-listed names will be taken to customers to vote.

6. Field Days and Country Shows for 2025

Jay provided an overview of the Field Days and Shows program of events for 2025.

The RRAG are keen to align one of their meetings with a Field Day or Country Show and the Riverland Show in September looks to be the most feasible for members.

RRAG members also expressed interested in being provided the opportunity to attend one or more of the other shows to speak directly with customers about their concerns. Alex to discuss internally, possible attendance by RRAG members at shows/field days and provide further info on events.

7. Priorities for RRAG during 2025

The following were suggested:

- Update on ITP microgrid study and where to from here.
- Low wires and investment – RRAG feedback on our approach to be sought.
- Review of River Murray response. In the absence of feedback from State Govt, the RRAG are keen to understand SAPN's Post Implementation Review and what worked and what didn't.
- Collaboration and engagement – opportunities for partnerships and further collaboration eg. ZEMC, Telco's.
- Accountability – expenditure over 2020-25 Regulatory Period on regional reliability programs and measurable benefits for customers.

Alex to email RRAG link to powerline safety and heights article.

8. Other business

No other business was raised.

9. Next meeting

The meeting schedule for 2025 was proposed:

- 24 June 2025
- 12/13 September to align with the Riverland Field Day
- EOY Drinks and possible meeting in Nov 2025

Current action Items:

Meeting	Action	Who	Due Date
Aug '23	Outcomes and actions from review of River Murray flood response – lessons learnt and what may have changed.	TBC	TBC
Nov '23	Progress on assessment of microgrid (SAPS) opportunities following ITP Renewables project funded by RDA.	Mark P	June 2025
Nov '24	Seek clarification on cooperation between SAPN and SA Gov Emergency Management mechanisms	Alex/Mike	2025
Nov '24	Updates re split of responsibilities between ElectraNet-SAPN-DEM for restoration of supply after major outages and long-term planning – form part of Upper north review	Vlora	2025
March '25	Innovation – invite Paul Topping to present on Innovation Framework to next meeting.	Alex	June 2025
March '25	Farm safety messaging and low wires investment	Matt N	June 2025
March '25	River Murray PIR (Vlora) – what worked, what didn't from a SAPN perspective.	Vlora	June 2025
March '25	Expenditure over 2020-25 Regulatory Period on regional reliability programs and benefits for customers. Provide expected improvement in SAIDI/SAFI numbers	Kym	September 2025
March '25	Coordinate with First Nations Clean Energy Network re review of impact on consumers of Oct 2024 far north outage and advise RRAG members of forum dates	Alex/Mike	Out of session
March '25	Provide update on pole mounted EV chargers	Alex	Out of session
March '25	Outcome of further discussion with Telstra re priority areas for both parties	Kym	June 2025
March '25	Follow up possible increased collaboration with SES/ZEMCs	Alex/Mike	June 2025
March '25	Provide info on possible attendance of shows/field days by RRAG members	Alex	Out of session

Ongoing and procedural action items:

Meeting	Action	Who	Due Date
	Resilience of telecommunications during electricity outages. Update to meeting.	Vlora	Nov meeting
Aug 2024	Track actual spending and resultant improvements in reliability for worst served customers	Kym W	2025
Aug 2024	Monitor Talking Power for comments/concerns expressed by regional and remote customers	Alex	Ongoing

