Ag Energy Taskforce
Record of meeting

13 November 2025

10.00 am – 12.30 pm *(virtual meeting)*

Item	Topic
Item 1	**Chair welcome: Joy Thomas** Present: Stephanie McKechnie (QFF), Chris Gillett (Qld Canegrowers), Nick Savage (NSW Farmers), Greg McCarron (Central Irrigation Trust, SA), Ian Olmstead (Dairy Australia), Janine Waller (Australian Dairy Products Federation), Caleb Connor (Farmers for Climate Action), Karin Stark (Farm Renewables Consulting), Simon Maddocks (Chair, Primary Producers SA), Sam Forsizi (AgForce Qld), Nathan Pope & Shehara Pillai (Australian Dairy Farmers), Sophie Macaskill (Dairy Australia), Glen Hepburn & Tobias Campbell (VFF), Steven Ford (Pioneer Valley Water), Sabiene Heindl and Lisa Penson (The Energy Charter), Joy Thomas (Ag Energy Taskforce/Ag Energy Social Licence R/table). Apologies: Jennifer Brown (Cotton Australia), Dale Holliss (Bundaberg Regional Irrigators' Group), Nathan Calman (Tas Farmers), Chris Souness (Wimmera Southern Mallee Development)

Item 2	**Joy Thomas: update**
	The Tasmanian Govt has announced a Strategic Benefit Payment Scheme where eligible landholders housing transmission will receive $200,000 per km – paid as part of Stage 1 of the North-West Transmission Developments as part of Project Marinus.
	• Tas Farmers advise that most larger landholders are fully onboard with the outcome; some smaller landholders who will receive less compensation / smaller SBP are less happy.
	• The land access powers in Victoria continue to cause angst; AusNet to join the meeting later.
	• RELA, who have previously engaged Taskforce members, was recently named the Winner of the 2025 Australian Financial Review Energy Award Acknowledging that when landowners are given a seat at the table, with tools and information to find alignment, a more positive experience results.
	• Cheaper Home Batteries Program, launched on 1 July; around 100,000 batteries representing close to two gigawatt-hours of storage capacity have been installed since July under the initiative; suggesting an average capacity of 21 kWh. $2.3 billion for the program in this year's federal budget
	• Australian Govt announced that households will be able to access free electricity for three hours every day, to encourage energy use when excess solar power is being fed into the grid. This requires retailers to offer free electricity to households for at least three hours in the middle of the day, when surplus electricity generated. The Solar Sharer scheme will initially be introduced in default market offer (DM)) regions like NSW, south-east Qld and South Australia from July 2026; there will be consultation to extend the scheme to other jurisdictions by 2027.
	
	The Energy and Climate Change Ministerial Council (ECMC) met on 15 August: key issues:
	• The Default Market Offer (DMO) that came into effect on 1 July, will apply up until 30 June 2026; it is the maximum price a retailer can charge standing offer customers in NSW, SE Qld and SA.
	• The former Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner's (AEIC) Community Engagement Review and recommendations; 154 of 172 activities agreed by ECMC in its response to the Review now completed, underway or being progressed. *(*Taskforce submission to the Review)*
	  ○ Final report and response to the Community Engag'ment Review, to Ministers by end 2025
	  ○ One of the recommendations, the Developer Rating Scheme Pilot: Equifax Australasia Credit Ratings P/L appointed to design, develop, implement, and operate the Scheme.
	• Ministers agreed to principles for the design of a potential new investment mechanism following the conclusion of the Capacity Investment Scheme. Next phase of work to focus on institutional governance, legal framework, cost recovery arrangements for future consideration by Ministers.

	• Ministers supported work around the growth in data centres, while managing the implications for Australia's electricity systems. C'wealth, state / territory officials and energy market bodies to consult stakeholders to develop advice for Ministers; to be finalised later in 2025 with circumstances of each jurisdiction considered.
	• Gas supply shortfall risks over the medium term; Ministers agreed to further work on projecting gas demand and opportunities for households and businesses that are seeking to transition away from gas to other forms of energy as part of the energy transformation.
	• Ministers agreed to continued work by jurisdictions on options for a National Renewable Gas policy and to see feedback from industry on measures that would best support growth of this new industry.
	• AEMO's development of the Integrated System Plan (ISP) 2026; Joy to provide input on the social licence aspects for the Appendix to accompany the ISP 2026.
	• A briefing has been sought from AEMO on utility scale battery technology and capability.
	  ○ This week, the Waratah super battery, still under construction north of Sydney suffered a major failure of one of 3 huge transformers, putting pressure on the transition.
	  ○ As previously noted, the Eraring coal plant (Origin Energy), is extended to August 2027.
	• the Qld Government recently announced its 5 year Roadmap.
	• Energy costs remain front and centre of the energy debate; cost issues the driver to establish the Ag Energy Taskforce in 2014.
	  ○ Federal and Qld govts investing up to $600 million to support Glencore's Mount Isa Copper Smelter and Townsville Refinery; not a happy picture when govts are required to step up and support industry, weighed down by unsustainable energy costs.

Item 3	**Sabiene Heindl, CEO, The Energy Charter**
	• 2026 Ag Energy Taskforce agenda to focus on farm micro grids, to be led by Karin Stark, Convenor of the Renewables in Agriculture Conference.
	• Charlie Prell to provide his insights on the Developer Rating Scheme as the Independent Chair of the Lived Experience Panel.
	
	The Regional Energy Accord roundtables were held in Victoria; Gippsland led by Karen Cain (former CEO, La Trobe Valley Authority); North-East Vic led by Matthew Charles-Jones, President of Totally Renewable Yackandandah, and Cathy McGowan; and Wimmera Southern Mallee Dev'mnt, led by Chris Sounness.
	• AEIC, Tony Mahar attended the Wimmera Southern Mallee R/table
	• Three strong themes emerging from the Roundtables.
	  ○ Firstly, a Regional Energy Accord must be led by regional communities.
	  ○ Secondly, focus on national architecture, recognising the significant work in many regional communities; need to leverage that work and enable people to understand what's already occurring in other places for the benefit of their community.
	  ○ And the need for place-based agreements that would more fully represent the interests of people on the ground, with the Accord as an overarching agreement between regional Australia (ag sector, business & others) and energy businesses.
	• Next is NSW with Wagga late November with a focus on the SW region and the REZ.
	• February / March 2026, to Central West Orana; then Upper Hunter and then to Armadale.
	• Also looking at the Illawarra, yet to be announced as a city REZ, an interesting concept.
	• NSW Roundtables largely led by NSW Regional Development Authorities (RDAs).
	
	Energy Charter businesses will report on the Better Practice Social Licence Guideline at today's meeting; several Taskforce members were part of Community Outcomes Group (COG) in the design of the Guideline in May 2023. There was a six-month accountability checkpoint with the COG; Guideline released May 2024.
	• An independent accountability report was completed by Nine Creeks Consulting. Next year the 18-month Accountability Review is due; Nine Creeks is unable to do the review, now in the process of identifying another entity to undertake the Review.

	Stephanie, QFF advised that the Qld TNSPs (transmission network service providers) who previously provided an annual report back with achievements etc. have decided this year not do that; the interactive sessions have been helpful with energy businesses in the room, for questions to be put to challenge the things they were putting in their statements. Now that coordination is not there. Seeking the Energy Charter's perspective on that? Sabiene advised she was not aware that the Qld forum was not occurring this year; it was a great initiative, largely led by the Qld companies, to come together for this purpose. **ACTION**: Sabiene to take on notice Sabiene reiterated the Energy Charter role in undertaking an accountability process annually with Charter members with CEO's involved, and targeted on the priority commitments for the ag sector; as noted an independent review is due and seeking the right person to do that; hoping that Taskforce members (representing your organisations) would be happy to be interviewed to provide genuine feedback to ensure the Guideline has teeth. The review report will include a traffic light system, followed by ongoing commitments from the transmission businesses to do better, which forms part of the Energy Charter's accountability and transparency and but also continuous improvement. Joy noted the AEIC's Position Statement on Renewable Energy Assets at end of life, circulated to Taskforce members, to give clarity around landholder agreements, regulatory requirements, financial security for landholders and to support community confidence.
Item 4	**Charlie Prell, Independent Chair of the Lived Experience Panel, Developer Rating Scheme** The lived experience panel set up by the Energy Charter to advise the Federal Minister for Energy and Climate Change as he implements recommendations from former AEIC's Community Engagement Review. • The former AEIC was scathing about the engagement and communication practices of the renewable developers with regional communities and individuals. • The Panel is a group of regional leaders from across Australia who have all undertaken commercial negotiations with renewable energy developers, and opted to share their experiences, with the intention of improving developer behaviour and thereby building support for the energy transition. • There are eleven farmers on the Panel who are, or will be, hosting solar farms or wind farms or will have new transmission lines running through their farms; they are from different states from a diverse range of commodities and a varied suite of experience; they have an opportunity to improve the design and implementation of the Scheme, to improve the behaviour of renewable developers as the industry matures. • Five meetings during 2025, extensive Panel discussions with DEECW as they grapple with the challenge of designing and implementing the Scheme; a determination that the Scheme will be a genuine rating scheme and a useful resource for farmers and regional communities. • The success of the Scheme will be dependent on endorsement from the Panel because it is Panel members who live in the communities impacted or affected; Panel members understand their role in the development of the Scheme. • Critical that regional communities have the best outcomes from infrastructure built on farms across Australia and important that the Scheme has integrity and teeth and will be integral to the acceptance by regional communities of the transition. • A developer seeking to build infrastructure or install a battery system on a farm, must have appropriate approval and/or qualifications to undertake that work, similarly as with tradespeople. • The energy transition is now unstoppable and driven by economics and not ideology; Australians should embrace this; it is better to adapt to change and not resist it. • To get the best possible outcome for as many people is challenge during this economic transition; the Lived Experience Panel thinks the same way. Steven Ford inquired whether there were dissenters on the Panel or if everyone was in favour of the renewable march to the future? Charlie noted there are some Panel members, mainly relating to

	transmission lines and solar farms, who oppose individual projects, but they believe the best outcome is not to oppose and try to stop those developments; they're working with the companies and with their local communities and neighbours to get the best possible outcome. Steven expressed concern that Australia is rushing headlong into accepting the chaos of renewable energy; significant money is spent on renewables and many are blindly accepting that renewable energy, wind and solar, is the only way forward; we are witnessing small businesses and industries going out of business and many large industries going offshore; nuclear meets all the requirements. Charlie observed the link between energy prices and renewables is tenuous, not verified by facts; The main driver of the price of energy in Australia is the price of gas which has tripled since Russia invaded Ukraine. • Every independent analysis reveals that new energy generation build in Australia, including storage, is the cheapest generation built. • Those opposing the renewable transition have not put numbers together about the cost of the nuclear policy presented at the last federal election; nobody talked about the cost. Discussion around the comparative costs of building renewable generation and independent analysis suggesting it is cheaper than continuing with fossil fuels, or with a new generation of fossil fuel. Charlie advised that the Developer Rating Scheme is in development in conjunction with Equifax, no draft at this stage; the timeline for the Scheme to be developed is by March 2026. Nick, NSW Farmers, inquired whether the Scheme would include developer impacts on agriculture and regional communities; will the Scheme be updated? Will the Scheme look at neighbourhood agreements / third parties on what they feel is fair from a developer perspective? Charlie advised that the Lived Experience Panel is only one party providing input into the design of the Scheme; Equifax is to focus on community engagement and communication with regional communities. The implementation of the Dyer Review (former AEIC Review of Community Engagement) was specifically focused on community engagement and regional benefits and communication. • Benefit sharing with neighbours is a critical component of the renewables rollout with transmission lines, and wind and solar; substantial payments going to farmers who host transmission lines, and neighbour payments and community benefits, which will feed billions of dollars into regional Aust. Sabiene advised that Equifax runs the Independent Construction Industry Rating Tool (iCIRT) certification for builders and other construction professionals in NSW, a rating system that assesses a company's financial stability, track record, and quality of work. • Similar criteria to be applied to the Scheme; it will be high level including character, capability, conduct, capacity, capital and counter parties; and the ability of developers to do what they say they will do from a financial perspective; due diligence to examine the directors and owners of the business – eg whether there are legal cases or other cases against directors; and the conduct piece, with the landholder and with the neighbour, and then community engagement. Charlie added that the Scheme will be dynamic; renewable developers will need a licence to operate which would be reviewed every so often; they will need to demonstrate the credibility of their engagement practices and hopefully improve them over time. Sabiene added that it would be a 12-month review, where developers would need to pay to do this with companies being required to provide significant data.
Item 5	**National, jurisdictional and industry updates on key issues** Karin Stark, Farm Renewables Consulting

- Key focus on the Agrisolar Cooperative Research Centre (CRC); a 10-year industry led initiative connecting industry, landholder organisations, government and research partners through collaboration to initiate nature-positive, socially responsible, and innovative adoption of agrisolar projects in Australia at commercial scale.
    - The project has reached a second stage with forthcoming interviews; looking towards a whole new sector being built; second stage interviews in a couple of weeks; against the backdrop of conflict between the agricultural sector and the energy sector, the need to bring the two together and create a whole new manufacturing and agrisolar sector.
- Organisation now underway for the 2026 Renewables in Agriculture Conference in Orange, NSW, 12 August; will include a farmer peer to peer learning opportunity the day prior to the Conference for farmers to share their respective projects as part of reducing costs, as well as hosting solar or wind.

Queensland: Stephanie McKechnie, Queensland Farmers' Federation

- Qld Govt has released its 5 Year Energy Roadmap ; QFF working on a submission for the Energy Roadmap Amendment Bill and consulting stakeholders as part of this; awaiting a key enabler to come out of that which is the developer code of conduct; expecting a key element to be how renewables are rolled out in Qld; and a bigger role for gas for firming capability and storage
- The Govt also released a social license toolkit for local government following the passing of the legislation, which provides more authority for local councils to agree community benefit arrangements; the suite of guidance material helps local government make sense of how to do that.
- Watching the development of the Developer Rating Scheme, providing thoughts from a Qld view.
- Provided QFF perspectives at Insurance Council of Aust roundtable looking at regulatory balance.
- Working with Energy Qld to better understand farmers' power usage, particularly those connected to Single Wire Earth Return (SWER) lines; completed initial online & phone surveys, now site visits; working with Ergon to see how some customers can be better supported on that part of the grid.

Chris Gillett, Canegrowers

- The Qld Govt Energy 5-year Roadmap launched recently, resetting the timeframe for Qld's transmission; diverse range of views on how the transition should occur; Qld Govt seeking to put energy affordability as the guiding principle and utilising the full technical lifespans of all existing generating assets, including coal power stations right to the end of their technical life; representing changing the targets and net zero goals, a trade-off for affordability. Batteries for storage remain in play, but in terms of pumped hydro, breaking into smaller more manageable projects.
- Renaming of REZs to Renewable Energy Hubs.
- Qld Parliamentary Inquiry into Sugarcane Bioenergy Opportunities to identify how to unlock new investment, overcome regulatory barriers and create new markets for sugar growers by diversifying into bioenergy products like biofuels, biodiesel, and sustainable aviation fuel.

Steven Ford, Pioneer Valley Water (Mackay, Q):

- Expressed doubt that energy suppliers will participate in the Fed Govt's Solar Sharer Scheme in a goodwill way; concern about large amounts of funds being spent on renewable energy rollout and Govts providing subsidies to alleviate consumer energy costs.
- Qld Govt community cabinet meeting held recently in the Mackay Region; discussion with Govt re potential micro grid based at Racecourse Sugar Mill, using existing power lines and infrastructure with the objective to reduce power costs to sugar producers in the valley, quite positively received.

Sam Forzisi, AgForce

- Comforted hearing the conversation strongly supporting landholders and the importance of understanding land purpose and use in Qld;

- Qld Govt has a target of $30 billion for primary production output by 2030, a goal supported by **Primary Industries Prosper 2050** strategic plan which sets narrative about balancing all aspects of different sectors towards that kind of growth possibilities; part of that will mean affordable energy.
- Need to understand the true cost of renewable energy and life cycle of renewable infrastructure.
- Support the Taskforce in ensuring the landscape is prepared for what is required to ensure all parties are protected and keeping producers front and centre.
- Attended a recent meeting where the work of Rattain Lai (who won the 2020 World Food Prize for his work as a soil scientist) was discussed and his comments that agriculture is the solution to climate change and not the problem, and that balance must be found.

New South Wales: Nick Savage, NSW Farmers

- Considerable angst in NSW with Energy Co at the centre; the optimal path change around Walcha now means farmers, not previously affected, are now impacted; a PR disaster in the area.
- Gas issues coming to the fore; Santos around Narrabri is contested; Govt seems keen to go ahead.
- Discussions underway regarding NSW Farmers securing a funded position through Energy Co who are keen to develop another MoU with NSW Farmers.
- Key issues in play include insurance, rehabilitation, housing and regional impacts; local govt on how they interact with developers, including around road access and those sorts of approvals.
- Responding to EIS is still a key issue.
- NSW Farmers to undertake a series of regional meetings with experts to provide information/advice to keep people informed; some unwilling to speak with Energy Co, perhaps to their detriment.

Jenny Brown, Cotton Australia (in absentia)

- Last quarter key highlight was annual World Cotton Day, https://www.worldcottonday.com/. This year, Cotton Australia coordinated Channel 7's Weekend Sunrise live weather broadcast from the McVeigh family farm & Louis Dreyfus Co, Dalby Gin, sharing a positive story of Australian Cotton.
- The industry also released its fourth 5-yearly Sustainability report, Cotton Australia Sustainability | The Australian cotton industry… to showcase industry achievements and goals.
- Coexistence of agriculture with other land users continues to be an issue. In Qld, it is CSG and renewable infrastructure; currently in NSW it is just renewables. Proposed reforms to the federal Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act are being closely watched.

Cotton Australia submissions include:

- Australian Energy Market Commission's (AEMC) Consultation on the Integrated Distribution System Planning (IDSP) rule change
- National Bioenergy Feedstock Strategy: discussion paper advocating that cotton seed oil be included on that list
- **National Ag Day** on 21 November https://agday.org.au/

Victoria: Nathan Pope, Australian Dairy Farmers (ADF)

- Submissions provided to recent consultations, including on the Victorian renewables rollout; and working with Dairy Australia on submissions.

Sophie MacAskill, Dairy Australia

- Consultations open from Vic Grid around community expectations of project developers; Dairy Australia submission highlighting some of the more specific agricultural considerations needed in negotiations between landholders and project developers, to ensure fairness and transparency.
- Vic Grid investing in substantial effort to engage with community, following the issues that occurred with VNI West; an opportunity to feed into the process; input seems to have been taken on board.
- Shehara Pillai (present at this meeting) was the author of that last submission.

	Nathan added that one of the biggest issues for many rural industries currently relates to housing on farm, particularly for the dairy industry; seeking to work with the state Govt on this. Shehara Pillai, Dairy Australia • Disputes over land access for energy transition projects in Victoria and many of those issues are with VCAT (Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal); seeking a more robust process for resolving issues between developers and landholders; hopefully they won't go into a multiple year dispute resolution process through VCAT. **South Australia:** Greg McCarron, Central Irrigation Trust, SA • Like everyone, dealing with similar issues; currently two pricing path reviews underway in SA. • Also, increasing demand with assets needing to be built to meet that demand. • Seeking to get the best outcome out of costs; from a state point of view, need more industry in the state, more development, and need to ensure that demand can be met without infrastructure becoming a white elephant; the infrastructure assets need to be used. • Current discussions regarding proposed transmission lines: one running north from Adelaide to the Spencer Gulf; Electronet are consulting on development paths. • State Govt has announced the Firm Energy Reliability Mechanism (FERM) as part of the State's transition; *'FERM is designed to ensure ongoing availability of sufficient long-duration dispatchable electricity capacity through a combination of capacity commitments, targeted financial support and contracting obligations'.* The Govt is currently tendering for companies to lock that in. Greg McCarron: South Australia joint electricity buying group Following the closure of the last coal fired power plant at Port August in 2016, energy prices skyrocketed. • In 2016, a bulk-buying consortium led by SACOME (South Australian Chamber of Mines and Energy) achieved success for its partners, concerned about high energy costs and supply reliability. • In 2017, the ACCC gave the green light for the SACOME joint purchasing electricity group; and in 2018 SACOME was awarded an eight-year supply contract to a renewable energy retailer to reduce the cost of electricity for their members; eight entities in the original group included farming related businesses, supermarkets, mining businesses, chemical companies, other industrial businesses. • Now, with current contracts ending, the consortium was keen to establish a renewed buying group. • The ACCC in October 2025 issued a final determination granting authorisation to enable SACOME and participating members to form a joint electricity buying group, to pool their electricity demand, conduct a joint tender, and individually enter into electricity supply agreement with the chosen electricity supplier. • The ACCC has granted authorisation for the group for 12 years, until 13 November 2037. • Sharing information around the group is one of the benefits; because of the group's size, greater capacity to talk to more people and a closer relationship developed with the energy company.
Item 6	**Energy Charter businesses, accountability reports** The Energy Charter's Lisa Penson, introduced the following Charter members to present their social licence accountability reports to Taskforce members with slide presentations and discussion to follow: • AusNet: Mark Hogan; Transgrid: Trish Marinozzi; TasNetworks: Sonya Booth; Powerlink: Gerard Reilly and Marinus Link: Mark Lindsay *(*reports attached to these notes)*
Item 7	**Liz Kenwrick, Energy Qld, Angela Day and Tom Cole, Yurika and Martin Siri, Ergon Energy** Requirement for smart meters and impacts on agricultural customers: understanding the technology capability and potential costs. Chris Gillett, Canegrowers opened the discussion outlining the problem. New smart electricity meters are required to adhere to the Australian Standard 62052, which stipulates an 80amp HRC fuse limit to the meter. Old meters have about 100amp capacity, some report 125 amps.

- Some irrigators are finding their system is impacted when new smart meters are installed; the pump motor, as it draws, will blow the fuse of the meter, preventing irrigation until the issue is resolved.
- One potential solution was for a rule change on meters to allow another type of fuse, which may take years with no guarantee that such a change would be accepted; another solution is an industrial type of metering, very expensive.
- There are cost implications in installing the smart mater; previously there was opportunity to refuse the meter change, but now legislation / rule change requires people to upgrade.
- To date, very few people impacted, but possibly 45 kilowatt motors causing the issue.

Liz Kenwrick, Energy Qld noted that the issue was brought to Energy Qld's attention who are keen to understand how many others are impacted and looking at how Energy Qld might address the issue.

Tom Cole, Yurika advised that where a customer's load exceeds the compliance metering capability, the customer can experience power outages due to the smart meter fuse blowing where there is lower capacity than the old electro-mechanical meters.

- Experienced by some ag customers when operating their pumps, not just on start, but if they're running for a prolonged period, the fuse can operate where customers can't reduce the load.
- Customers are required to upgrade to CT, which can cost between $12,000 and $20,000 per metering point; it also requires additional space which can be an issue on the switchboard; they need to request a network connection load upgrade which can add time and cost.
- Difficult to quantify the number of customers affected.

Liz Kenwrick described the case of an irrigator in far North Qld, since January 2021, where one of the meters on an irrigation pump had been faulty and not recording usage. The customer made multiple contacts with Ergon Energy Retail to provide self-readings; these could not be accepted due to the faulty meter. A meter fault notification had been issued for replacement which was looking at the new digital smart meters, but that could not accommodate the ampage.

Martin Seri, Ergon Energy noted that a smart meter change might come from a customer request or could be retailer led, or due to a faulty meter. Estimated self reads from a customer cannot be accepted. Ergon is working with a particular customer to calculate the fairest estimate possible but from an actual read perspective, there is no solution for this customer until either the CT metering is installed or until there is a technical interim solution that doesn't require the full CT solution being installed.

For someone moving from basic metering, which is built into their daily supply charge, they don't necessarily see the impact of that; shifting to CT metering represents an upfront cost of $20,000.

In terms of specifics from a technical perspective, Ergon is working with groups like Canegrowers, QFF and other industry bodies, to ensure communication is clear for constituents, and not to seek these meters until solutions are available. From a retail perspective, this issue is being pushed back to allow more time for a solution, noting the date for installation is 2030; don't believe a rule change will make a difference as it's the technical capacity of those meters to handle the load until there is an interim or intermediate solution. Until then, affected customers will be relying on estimated reads.

In response to a question regarding who owns this problem, the owner, the growers or the power supplier, Martin Seri, Ergon responded that because of the age of these meters, they will be owned and operated by the local network service provider. They haven't gone across to power of choice yet. However, there are obligations on Ergon within the rules that once these meters fail, they must be transitioned to a smart meter. The smart meters are appointed from the retail business through a metering coordinator and a meter data provider, which in regional Qld is Yurika metering. There will be other suppliers across different states dealing with different metering providers facing the same issue. Currently, the old basic meters are pre-

power of choice with some operating for 20 or 30 years, hence they are failing. Once that transition occurs, the obligations are on all market participants to ensure that the metering moves to a market compliance solution, which is power of choice and beyond.

Steven Ford suggested that it would then be incumbent on the power supplier to have meters that work, and if they don't work, why should customers be charged?

Stephanie, QFF inquired why this is a problem for growers; if it is infrastructure related to delivering power, and the grower doesn't own it or look after it, why would the customer be responsible for the cost of replacing the meter to the smart meter?

Angela Day, Yurika responded that the issue is around the power of choice rules and smart metering standards and rules; Yurika, as accredited metering providers, installs metering according to the rules.

Tom Cole, Yurika noted the rules and standards involved:

- Queensland Electricity Act and regulations state that all new and replacement electricity meters must be smart meters, replacing old meters by 2030, which is a national requirement.
- Smart meters must meet the minimum service specification in schedule 7.5 of the National Electricity Rules (NER https://energy-rules.aemc.gov.au/ner) and one of those requirements, the minimum services specification, is to have remote, disconnect and reconnect capability in the meter.
- Under the Australian Standard for meters, they must operate accurately up to 100 amps. Over 100 amps, they will be inaccurate and non-compliant. Smart Meters must be protected by 80A HRC fuses; it's that standard where this requirement is that the 80 amp fuse must be installed; that is to protect the remote disconnection and reconnection relay, which is a requirement mentioned earlier.
- The National metering installation requirements (MIRs) document '*describes the requirements of CMIG Metering Providers and is intended to promote a consistency in metering arrangements across the NEM, to better ensure that the installation of metering will proceed without issue, and that a metering installation can be safely accessed, maintained, and remain accurate as required by the NER'.*
- The MIRs state that low voltage loads greater than 80 amps require CT metering, and protection of whole current metering requires 80 amp maximum HRC fuses; this is the requirement for smart meters and the 80Afuses.
- In addition, the Qld Electricity Connection Manual (QECM) says that the metering provider can determine that 80A fuses are required for overload fault protection, and because it's mentioned in the standard, it must be ensured that that fuse is there; meter manufacturers also write into their documentation that their meters need to be protected by an 80A HRC fuse.
- If that is not done, Yurika would be liable for any damages.

Tom further advised that when customers need their meters changed, either through fault or an old meter, or the customer wants new or different tariffs, time of use demand that the old meters can't support with the data, the meter needs to be changed and it must be done with a smart meter; smart meters must be protected by that fuse; it is nothing to do with the customer, their meter has failed and needs to be replaced. All meters are going to be replaced in this legacy meter replacement program. Not wanting customers to be caught out by that, the fact that their meter is changed, and then the fuse will blow.

Liz Kenwrick sought advice from Taskforce members whether the issue is being experienced more broadly across the jurisdictions. Joy advised that inquires made had not produced any evidence of similar issues.

Steven Ford (Pioneer Valley Water, Mackay) noted that if irrigators are using 45 kilowatt pumps or bigger, many are, every time they turn the pump on, it blows the fuse, what's the point of having them, and

	particularly since they are so expensive to install in the first place; everyone will face this issue when they are required to go to smart meters. Tom Cole advised that the 80A value was set in the Australian Standard via an Australian standard committee that did the testing in 2019 – testing 100 amp fuses. Unfortunately, the 100 amp fuse couldn't clear fault current fast enough; it is an Australian Standard 62052; they tried to get the 100 amp fuse to work and it didn't, so they had to go to the 80 amp fuse to meet the fault current clearing requirements in less than 0.01 of a second. Joy suggested the discussion be continued offline at a separate meeting and thanked all for the contribution to the discussion.
Item 8	**Meeting closed at 12.40 pm**