

Media Release—for immediate distribution
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ENA “energy white paper important first step”

The Energy Networks Association (ENA) welcomes the release of the Draft Energy White Paper as the first step towards a more informed debate about long-term energy policy.

“The energy policy debate has naturally been dominated by carbon pricing. It is timely to refocus on the other issues facing Australia’s energy sector”, said ENA Chief Executive, Malcolm Roberts.

“The draft white paper confirms that Australia will need to make unprecedented investments across the energy supply chain to meet future needs”.

“The need for re-investment is possibly greatest in our transmission and distribution networks. Independent analysis for the government suggests as much as \$144 billion may need to be invested in networks to 2030, considerably more than in generation”.

“Attracting this investment will require stable policy. Investors will simply not commit billions over coming decades into long-lived assets without confidence in the stability of regulation. This fact should not be lost in the raft of regulatory reviews underway at the moment”.

“The draft white paper rightly identifies containing the growth of peak demand as a major issue”.

“With the cost of meeting peak demand rising, network businesses are looking for alternatives, such as demand side management, to reduce costs and give customers more control over their energy use”.

The draft white paper recognises that new technology, such as smart meters, and policy reforms, such as lifting retail price caps, will be important to tackling the peak demand challenge”.

Network businesses understand that the community must support such changes, with particular attention given to vulnerable customers”.

“The proposal to review the large number of so-called complementary Commonwealth and State policies is welcome. The Council of Australian Governments has done little to wind back the growth of these often ad hoc policies. These policies impose significant cumulative costs on customers”.

ENA welcomes the opportunity to provide input into the consultation process for the Draft Energy White Paper and will be providing a submission to the Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism.

Ends.

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ENA is the peak national body for Australia’s energy networks; and represents gas distribution and electricity network businesses on economic, technical, environment and safety regulation as well as national energy policy issues.