

## **Minutes of the meeting of the Network Connections Technical Group**

**Held on 4 March 2025, 12.00 to 4.00pm  
EA Office, Level 7 AON Centre, 1 Willis Street**

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**Members present:** Grant Benvenuti (Chair), Gavin Bonnett, Ronald Beatty, Michael Gibbs, Paul Blue, Tim Edmonds, Trent Tscheuschler, Stuart Johnston, Tim Calder (observer)

**Apologies:** Anna Li, Rupert Holbrook, Suzanne Doran, Howard Wood, Matt Gazzard

**Authority attendees:** Allen Davison, Seran Ramanathan

### **Introduction**

- 1.1. The Network connections project is still scheduled for June 2025 board decisions.
- 1.2. The Authority has decided to release an exposure draft of the Code, post decisions. We proposed many changes, as did the Network pricing team, and we will make changes in response to feedback, so we feel this is appropriate.
- 1.3. We will consult on the exposure draft of the Code, seeking feedback on issues such as errors, omissions, corrections and inconsistencies. This process will take time, thereby pushing out the date when Part 6 changes come into effect. In consultation, the Authority proposed a maximum 12 months after the Code is amended, although we are still considering submissions so this could change.

### **General discussion**

#### **Medium load**

- 1.4. The group agreed the size of connection is less of a concern than the vastly greater complexity of connections that occur when you approach and pass a load threshold. The group concluded the upper 300kVA threshold should increase to 500kVA. The Authority said it would consider this.
- 1.5. The group discussed applications for sites with numerous ICPs. It was thought the network pricing proposals would shape applicant behaviour in this area. The Authority said this issue had been raised in submissions and we would consider how to respond.

- 1.6. Members discussed applicants requesting a certain level of capacity and not fully using it. One member noted they sometimes provide a certain capacity to an applicant but make it conditional upon several factors – which cover costs down to a minute level.
- 1.7. The group agreed the Code should drive greater efficiency but also allow flexibility for distributors and applicants, rather than be too prescriptive.
- 1.8. One member suggested specifying milestones in the Code to push applications along faster. The Authority thought this was best addressed through the queuing and management policy.
- 1.9. The group questioned the ability to resubmit an application at no cost, noting the benefits but also the cost implications. The Authority said it is considering submissions on this issue and possible changes (eg, caveats).

### **Large load**

- 1.10. The group discussed whether replicating the DG process for load was warranted and whether an interim stage should be included (as it is for DG). Members agreed this was appropriate, noting flexibility in the Code to skip the interim stage if parties agree.
- 1.11. The importance of the pre-application phase was discussed. The Authority noted this is outside the Code, but the Streamlining connections programme is delivering valuable work products in this area. It was noted applicants can use the pre-application process to garner all the information they need, and don't have to proceed with the application.
- 1.12. The group discussed how time extensions can be sought for any reason and, to ensure applications progress readily, they should apply in certain instances only (eg, awaiting network studies). The Authority said it will consider this.
- 1.13. The group discussed the need for distributors to 'act reasonably' in respect of extensions. Members thought the Code should specify distributors must act reasonably' and external guidelines could be developed to support this.

### **Network connections pipeline**

- 1.14. The Authority noted the network connections pipeline is loosely modelled on Transpower's dashboard.
- 1.15. The group discussed the benefits of the proposed pipeline, recognised they had been effective overseas, and supported its introduction in NZ. However, they raised concerns about commercial sensitivity. One member suggested a tick box for applicants to consent to their information in the pipeline, otherwise basic information is published.
- 1.16. The group raised no concerns about providing information to the Authority.

## **Network capacity information**

- 1.17. The group supported publishing network capacity information but thought this needed to be in a consistent format to be valuable. It was suggested the ENA could host this information on behalf of all distributors. The Authority said it welcomes the ENA/EEA developing best practice information disclosure guidelines.
- 1.18. The Authority noted submitters thought the published data would be too granular and difficult to understand.

## **Regulated and prescribed terms for load**

- 1.19. The Authority noted there are a lot of issues associated with the regulated and prescribed terms for load, and contractual terms. The Authority noted it will likely re-approach this subject in Stage 2 of the Network connections project.
- 1.20. The group noted the time and effort required to develop and amend the Default Distributor Agreement, and the Authority should consider this.
- 1.21. The group thought the proposed Part 6 prescribed terms could operate effectively.

## **Obligation to connect**

- 1.22. The Authority sought feedback on an obligation to connect.
- 1.23. It was noted distributors rarely say no to connecting a customer – they merely charge them appropriately based on the scale and complexity of the connection, based on its requirements.
- 1.24. The group had a general discussion about the issues associated with an obligation to connect, including funding approaches for connections and financial risks for distributors and network users.

## **Next steps**


- 1.25. Allen to consider the feedback from this session.

## **Next meeting**

- 1.26. The Authority noted the NCTG will not meet again until stage 2 of the Network connections project has started.
- 1.27. The meeting concluded at 4pm.

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Confirming that the NCTG has approved that the meeting minutes are a true and correct record. Dated: 30 May 2025



Grant Benvenuti, Chair