



Memorandum of Understanding

Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner and Energy & Water Ombudsman (NSW) Limited

Purpose

The purpose of this memorandum of understanding (MOU) is to set out the shared aspirations and administrative arrangements that will guide ongoing coordination and collaboration between the Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner (AEIC) and the Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW (EWON) (the Parties).

The Parties acknowledge that this MOU is a non-binding expression of their mutual understandings and does not create legal obligations. To the extent of any inconsistency between this MOU and any law, legal instrument or document, this MOU is not to be of any effect.

The Parties have entered and published this MOU to:

- ensure and enhance the ability of each Party to fulfil their respective functions
- communicate transparently to all stakeholders our approach to efficient and effective cooperation
- improve complaints handling and dispute resolution practices in the renewable energy and transmission infrastructure sectors
- minimise duplication of effort by consulting, and collaborating where appropriate, on their work programs and other relevant activities, and on any specific issues of concern if and when they arise
- promote a consistent approach to addressing issues of common interest as far as possible
- ensure that relevant information and insights are regularly shared between the Parties, subject to any statutory restrictions and requirements, including the need to respect personal or commercial confidentiality
- assist in providing a nationally consistent framework for complaints/concerns to be resolved and addressed.

Parties to the MOU

Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner (AEIC)

The Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner (AEIC) is an independent role appointed by the Australian Government, reporting to the Minister for Climate Change and Energy and the Australian Parliament. The Commissioner is supported by a small team within the National Energy Transformation Division of the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment, Climate and Water (DCCEEW).

Under the Commissioner's Terms of Reference, the AEIC team:

- Helps people to resolve enquiries and complaints about new or existing wind farms, large solar farms, energy storage facilities (like pumped hydro or large batteries), and major powerline projects.
 - We do this by bringing the right people together, facilitating conversations and providing our view and recommendations on constructive ways to get good outcomes.

- Work with all levels of government, ombudsmen, regulators, industry, peak representative bodies, community groups (including First Nations) and individual community members, and we actively listen to their views and experiences.
 - Through this engagement, we share insights, promote transparency and drive best practice approaches to all stages of projects. Where we identify project-level and systemic issues we raise these and partner to see them actioned.
- Review available information about energy transition and specific projects and make it easier for people to find and understand. We look for and promote best practice examples from credible sources.

Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW (EWON)

EWON is the approved dispute resolution scheme for NSW electricity and gas customers, including those residing in embedded networks, water customers (where the water provider is a member of EWON), and landholders and community members impacted by renewable energy infrastructure projects (where the infrastructure entity/operator is a member of EWON). EWON provides free, fair and independent advice and information and receives, investigates and resolves complaints about electricity, gas and water entities that are members of the Ombudsman scheme.

EWON's principal responsibilities are:

- to handle energy and water related complaints independently, fairly, informally, expeditiously and free of charge to the consumer
- to promote EWON to residential and small business customers and communities
- to encourage and provide advice to members on good complaint handling practices to assist in reducing and avoiding complaints.

EWON is approved under the framework in the *Electricity Supply Act 1995*, the *Electricity Supply (General) Regulation 2014*, the *Water Industry Competition Act 2006* and the *Water Industry Competition (General) Regulation 2024*.

Information sharing

The Parties recognise the value of sharing information to enable the Parties to carry out their respective functions in a proper manner. The Parties agree to undertake all reasonable endeavours to enable such information to be shared, including obtaining complainant consent where appropriate.

The Parties recognise the importance of mutual consultation and acknowledge that decisions must be made independently.

Where appropriate and permissible, the Parties will endeavour to:

- a) Notify each other of any activities that may be relevant to the other Party and keep each other informed of the progress of those activities. This could include:
 - i. the receipt of a community member or landholder enquiry or complaint that is relevant to the other Party's objectives and functions;
 - ii. any public information relevant to the Parties' operating environment and/or the renewable energy and transmission infrastructure sectors;

- iii. changes to regulatory instruments; and
 - iv. outreach, awareness raising and media activities.
- b) Provide each other with copies of publications that may be relevant to the other organisation. It may also be appropriate to provide an advanced copy of, and briefing on, the publication prior to general release.
 - c) Where publication (such as a report or web page) by one party refers to the other, provide that party with an opportunity to comment on the reference prior to the finalisation and general release of the publication.
 - d) Respond promptly to any ad hoc requests (i.e. as required).

The Parties recognise that they each have statutory obligations, including obligations in relation to the protection of information, and will take reasonable steps to protect any confidential information from unauthorised use or disclosure. Nothing in this MOU will be taken to require or authorise the sharing of information between the Parties in a manner that is inconsistent with any legal or administrative requirement.

Meetings

In general, the Parties aim to meet at least quarterly to discuss matters of common interest including:

- a) updates and reports on consumer and community member complaints
- b) updates and reports from complaints and engagements that may demonstrate systemic issues, emerging trends or general concerns related to renewable energy and/or transmission infrastructure projects
- c) the performance of other entities operating in the energy sector and their compliance with their licence conditions and/or other best practice commitments
- d) information about any existing or proposed activities being undertaken by each party that may be of interest to the other party
- e) review of the referral of complaints and enquiries between the Parties
- f) reports on any other developments that may impact on the interests of the other party
- g) information on issues that are within the responsibility of their organisation.

This would include the Commissioner and the Ombudsman meeting at least annually.

Complaint coordination & referrals

The AEIC and EWON have overlapping jurisdiction in respect to renewable energy infrastructure entities. Community members and landholders may make complaints to either or both bodies about these entities.

The Parties agree to establish working procedures to ensure efficient and effective administration and communication in dealing with relevant complaints and/or subsequent direct or facilitated referrals.

To ensure that all complaint related correspondence between the Parties is appropriately recorded and actioned, the Parties will use the below email addresses:

- aeic@aeic.gov.au
- complaints@ewon.com.au

The Parties agree to specify any complaint process timeframes in any complaint correspondence and ensure efficient and timely action of complaint referrals.



The Parties acknowledge their respective jurisdictions and to ensure referrals are within the jurisdiction of the other party. As EWON is a membership based scheme, complaints about members of EWON will be directed to EWON. This includes complaints about energy network, transmission and other infrastructure entities that are members of EWON.

Referrals

Where one of the Parties receives a complaint that would be more appropriately referred to the other party, the receiving party will determine the necessary referral process.

Direct referral

Where appropriate, the Parties can elect to advise the complainant of the contact details of the other party and then the complainant can contact the other party directly.

Facilitated referral

The Parties can elect to facilitate referral of the complaint, including any documents the complainant may have submitted, and any supplementary and/or summary information the party has received and/or created. The Parties agree to facilitate this process in a timely manner by using the email address above.

The Parties will ensure all actions taken comply with their privacy policies and/or any relevant privacy legislation. This can include seeking the consent of the complainant before initiating the referral.

Management of MOU

This MOU will continue in force until another MOU is agreed and signed between the Parties or until this MOU is terminated. Either of the Parties may initiate a review of this MOU at any time.

This MOU will be published by the Parties on their respective websites.

The Parties will agree on and share a key contact for ongoing liaison.

Signed

Signed by the **Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner and Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW:**

Tony Mahar

Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner

Date:

20-9-25

Janine Young

Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW

Date:

30 September 2025