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## Secure supply and enable connections: Wollert

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Regulatory Investment Test for Distribution (RIT-D)

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Options Screening Report

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31<sup>st</sup> March 2026



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# 1. Executive summary

AusNet is a regulated Victorian electricity Distribution Network Service Provider (**DNSP**) that provides electricity distribution services to approximately 845,000 customers. Our electricity distribution network covers eastern rural Victoria and the outer northern and eastern Melbourne metropolitan areas.

The Regulatory Investment Test for Distribution (**RIT-D**) is an economic cost-benefit assessment and consultation process designed to identify the credible option that maximises net economic benefits for stakeholders in the National Electricity Market (**NEM**), for an identified need on the electricity network – the preferred option.

This RIT-D has been initiated by AusNet (the RIT-D proponent) to identify the preferred option to address the supply security limitations of the Wollert supply area, a rapidly developing region covering northern greater metropolitan Melbourne.

## Identified need

The Wollert supply area in Melbourne's outer northern suburbs is within the Whittlesea local government area (**LGA**) and the Victorian Planning Authority's (**VPA**) North Growth Corridor<sup>1</sup>. The area is located 7 km north of Epping and 12 km west of Doreen, and is a vast greenfield development zone covered by the Wollert Precinct Structure Plan (**PSP**)<sup>2</sup>. The PSP provides for a total of 15,605 dwellings, the majority of which will be new dwellings, as the precinct will transition from rural to suburban land use. A range of commercial and light industrial precincts are also envisaged.

There has been a significant increase in population in the Wollert area. According to the 2016 census<sup>3</sup>, there were 9,060 people living in Wollert and in 2021<sup>4</sup>, this was 24,407. This represents an average annual growth rate of approximately 22%.

It is expected that growth is likely to continue with the most recent forecast produced by Victoria's Department of Transport and Planning<sup>5</sup> predicting the population of the Whittlesea LGA (which contains Wollert) to grow from 231,800 to 265,970 from 2021 to 2026, an annual growth rate for the whole LGA of 2.8% per annum.

The Wollert supply area is serviced (for the most part) by AusNet's existing Epping zone substation (**EPG**) located on the southern boundary of the supply area, through a network of 22 kV distribution feeders.

AusNet has developed electricity demand forecasts for the supply area, updated to reflect the demands of recent summers, electrification activity, solar panels and battery installations, and the PSP development plans. AusNet has identified from these forecast maximum demands increasing levels of load-at-risk for the Wollert supply area, where the demand is exceeding the capacity of some parts of the network.

Of particular concern is the forecast growth on the existing EPG 22 kV feeders that service the Wollert supply area, including EPG13, EPG21, EPG33, EPG35 and EPG23. All of these feeders are expected to exceed their system normal (**N**) ratings between financial year (**FY**) 2026 and 2028. The amount of overload is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Distribution feeder forecast PoE10 overload (MVA) inc. available transfers and demand management**

Load-at-risk (MVA)	FY26	FY27	FY28	FY29	FY30	FY31	FY32
EPG13 (N)	4.3	10.2	11.5	12.8	14.2	15.6	17.1
EPG21 (N)	0.0	1.6	6.3	9.9	13.3	16.7	19.7
EPG33 (N)	0.0	1.7	3.2	4.7	6.2	7.6	9.1
EPG35 (N)	3.3	3.1	3.9	5.3	6.5	7.7	8.9
EPG23 (N)	0.0	0.0	2.0	2.9	4.5	6.2	6.2
<b>TOTAL (N)</b>	<b>7.6</b>	<b>16.6</b>	<b>17.8</b>	<b>35.6</b>	<b>44.7</b>	<b>53.8</b>	<b>61.0</b>

Approximately 61.0 MVA of additional capacity or demand reduction is required by 2032, rising from a present need of 7.6 MVA, through network augmentation or alternative non-network approaches (such as demand management, embedded generation, and/or storage). This is needed to avoid network overload and to maintain a reliable electricity supply to the Wollert supply area.

AusNet uses a probabilistic planning approach to quantify the reliability risk, represented by the expected unserved energy (**EUE**) under a do nothing (base case) investment scenario, to assess whether it is economically viable to invest in risk mitigation measures to reduce the forecast growth in EUE.

<sup>1</sup> [Victorian Planning Authority – The North Growth Corridor Plan](#), Victorian Planning Authority (VPA), 2012.

<sup>2</sup> [Wollert Precinct Structure Plan](#), Victorian Planning Authority (VPA), 2024.

<sup>3</sup> [2016 Wollert, Census](#), Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 2016

<sup>4</sup> [2021 Wollert, Census](#), Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 2021.

<sup>5</sup> [Victoria in Future](#), Victorian Department of Transport & Planning, 2023

A material level of EUE is emerging in the area as shown in Table 2. The EUE calculation considers available load transfers and the unavailability of network asset capacity, weighted using the industry practice of 30% contribution from the 1-in-10 year (**PoE10**) and 70% from the 1-in-2 year (**PoE50**) forecast maximum demands. The value of the EUE to customers is monetised using a locational Value of Customer Reliability (**VCR**).

**Table 2: Do nothing (base case) forecast expected unserved energy (EUE) and its cost to customers**

EUE (MWh p.a.)	FY26	FY27	FY28	FY29	FY30	FY31	FY32
EPG13	79.6	2,687	4,252	5,778	7,595	10,002	12,717
EPG21	0.0	42.2	858.5	3,370	9,817	20,432	31,586
EPG33	51.7	385.3	927.2	1,815	2,974	4,323	6,195
EPG35	197.6	181.5	564.7	1,275	2,355	4,284	6,556
EPG23	0.0	0.3	157.2	655.9	1,316	1,842	1,826
<b>TOTAL (MWh p.a.)</b>	<b>329.0</b>	<b>3,296</b>	<b>6,759</b>	<b>12,894</b>	<b>24,056</b>	<b>40,882</b>	<b>58,880</b>
<b>Total (\$m, 2025 p.a.)</b>	<b>12.1</b>	<b>139.2</b>	<b>273.9</b>	<b>501.0</b>	<b>905.4</b>	<b>1,512</b>	<b>2,161</b>

By 2032, the EUE and its financial impact on customers are forecast to be 58,880 MWh p.a. and \$2,161 million (real, \$2025) respectively. This presents a forecast deterioration in electricity supply reliability.

The identified need is to address forecast capacity shortfalls on the EPG 22 kV distribution feeders that are servicing the Wollert supply area, in order to maintain electricity supply reliability and facilitate forecast load growth.

## Potential credible options

For this RIT-D, AusNet proposes to investigate and evaluate the following network options<sup>6</sup> to address the identified need:

- Option 1: Wollert new zone substation, and four new distribution feeders
- Option 2: Third transformer and bus at Doreen zone substation, and four new distribution feeders

AusNet will also consider and evaluate any alternative, non-network or stand-alone power system (**SAPS**) proposals that are submitted by interested parties during this RIT-D consultation, that can credibly address the identified need. This includes those that can either be combined with another solution to defer or reduce in scope credible network options being considered, and/or mitigate the EUE in the lead up to implementing a network option.

## Submissions and next steps

The publication of this Options Screening Report (**OSR**) marks the first consultation step in the RIT-D process, in line with clause 5.17 of the National Electricity Rules (**NER**)<sup>7</sup> version 243 published by the Australian Energy Market Commission (**AEMC**), and section 4.2 of the RIT-D Application Guidelines<sup>8</sup>, published by the Australian Energy Regulator (**AER**).

AusNet welcomes written submissions on the credible options presented in this OSR and invites proposals from proponents of potential non-network or SAPS options (stand-alone or in conjunction with a network solution) that meet the identified need. Any credible non-network or SAPS options will be assessed alongside the network options at the next stage of the RIT-D.

Submissions should be emailed to [ritdconsultations@ausnetservices.com.au](mailto:ritdconsultations@ausnetservices.com.au) on or before 23 June 2026.

In the subject field, please reference 'RIT-D OSR Wollert'.

AusNet's preference is that these submissions would be published on its website and AEMO's website. If you do not want your submission to be made public, please clearly stipulate this at the time of lodgement.

Assessments of the options and responses to this OSR will be presented in the Draft Project Assessment Report (**DPAR**), which we expect to publish before the end of July 2026.

<sup>6</sup> An option to augment Epping zone substation (EPG) was considered but will not be progressed for this RIT-D on the basis that there are no spare circuit breaker bays for new feeders and transformers at this fully-developed zone substation, making the option for expanding EPG, prohibitively expensive and unlikely to be technically viable.

<sup>7</sup> [National Electricity Rules \(NER\)](#), Australian Energy Market Commission (AEMC), 2026.

<sup>8</sup> [Regulatory Investment Test for Distribution application guidelines](#), version 6, Australian Energy Regulator (AER), 2024.

## 2. Introduction

AusNet is a regulated Victorian electricity Distribution Network Service Provider (**DNSP**) that provides electricity distribution services to approximately 845,000 customers. Our electricity distribution network covers eastern rural Victoria and the outer northern and eastern Melbourne metropolitan areas.

The Regulatory Investment Test for Distribution (**RIT-D**) is an economic cost-benefit assessment and consultation process designed to identify the credible option that maximises net economic benefits for stakeholders in the National Electricity Market (**NEM**), for an identified need on the electricity network – the preferred option.

This RIT-D has been initiated by AusNet (the RIT-D proponent) to identify the preferred option to address the supply security limitations of the Wollert supply area, a rapidly developing region covering northern greater metropolitan Melbourne.

The publication of this Options Screening Report (**OSR**) marks the first consultation step in the RIT-D process, in line with clause 5.17 of the National Electricity Rules (**NER**)<sup>9</sup> version 243 published by the Australian Energy Market Commission (**AEMC**), and section 4.2 of the RIT-D Application Guidelines<sup>10</sup>, published by the Australian Energy Regulator (**AER**).

In accordance with those requirements, this document sets out:

- the identified need that AusNet is seeking to address, together with the assumptions used in identifying this need;
- a description of the potential credible network options that may address the identified need;
- the technical characteristics of each potential credible network option;
- the estimated construction timetable and commissioning date of each potential credible network option;
- the total indicative capital and operating costs for each potential credible network option and a high-level cost breakdown;
- the technical characteristics of the identified need that a non-network or stand-alone power system (**SAPS**) option would be required to provide; and
- information to assist non-network providers wishing to present alternative potential credible options including details of how to submit a proposal for consideration by the RIT-D proponent.

The appendices provide an overview of the RIT-D assessment and consultation process, and an NER compliance checklist.

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<sup>9</sup> [National Electricity Rules \(NER\)](#), Australian Energy Market Commission (AEMC), 2026.

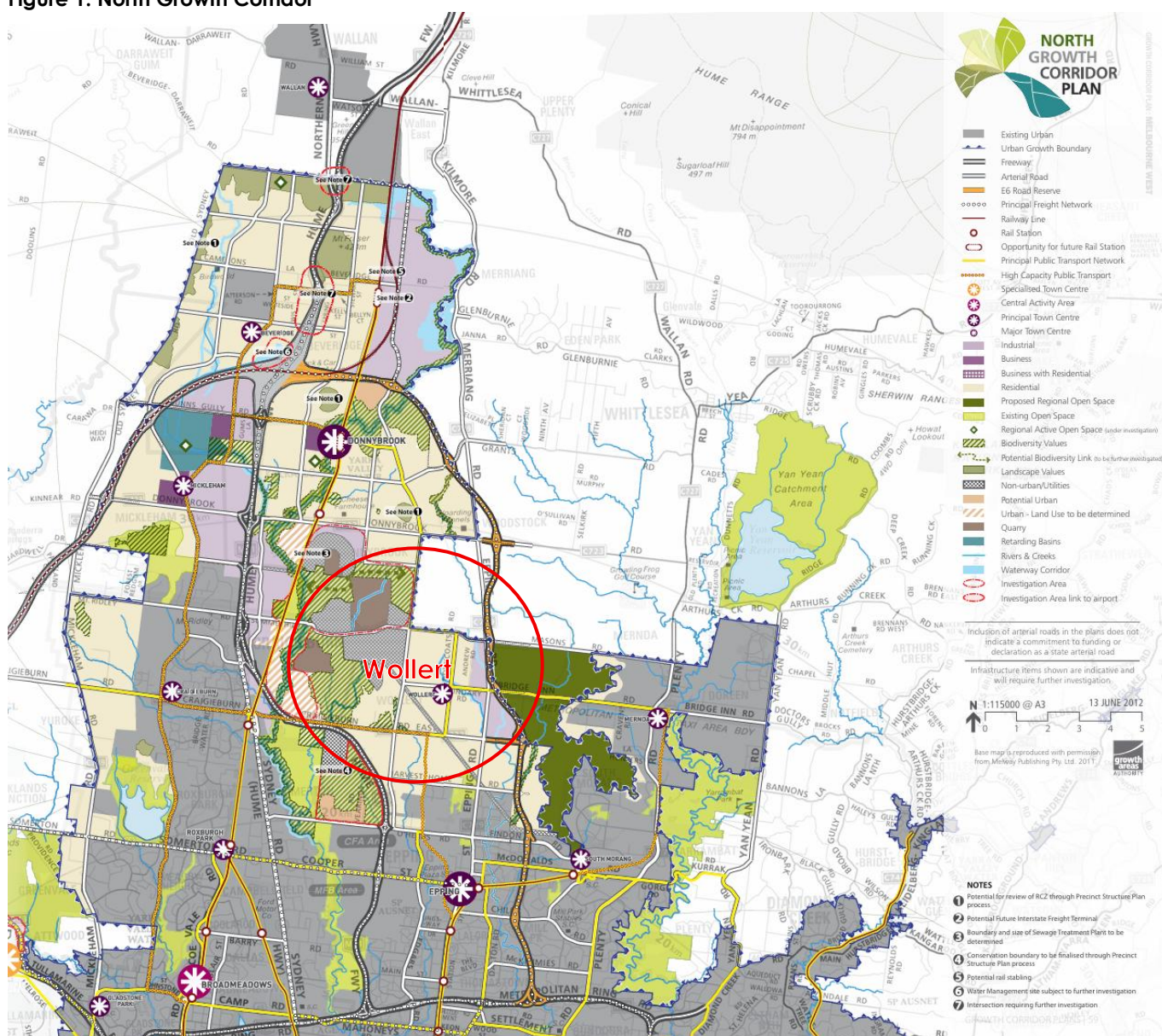
<sup>10</sup> [Regulatory Investment Test for Distribution application guidelines](#), version 6, Australian Energy Regulator (AER), 2024.

# 3. Background

The Wollert supply area in Melbourne's outer northern suburbs is within the Whittlesea local government area (LGA) and the Victorian Planning Authority's (VPA) North Growth Corridor<sup>11</sup>. The area is located 7 km north of Epping and 12 km west of Doreen, and is a vast greenfield development zone covered by the Wollert Precinct Structure Plan (PSP)<sup>12</sup>. The PSP provides for a total of 15,605 dwellings, the majority of which will be new dwellings, as the precinct will transition from rural to suburban land use. A range of commercial and light industrial precincts are also envisaged.

There has been a significant increase in population in the Wollert area. According to the 2016 census<sup>13</sup>, there were 9,060 people living in Wollert and in 2021<sup>14</sup>, this was 24,407. This represents an average annual growth rate of approximately 22%. It is expected that growth is likely to continue with the most recent forecast produced by Victoria's Department of Transport and Planning<sup>15</sup> predicting the population of the Whittlesea LGA (which contains Wollert) to grow from 231,800 to 265,970 from 2021 to 2026, an annual growth rate for the whole LGA of 2.8% per annum. This area is illustrated in Figure 1 within the broader North Growth Corridor<sup>16</sup>.

Figure 1: North Growth Corridor

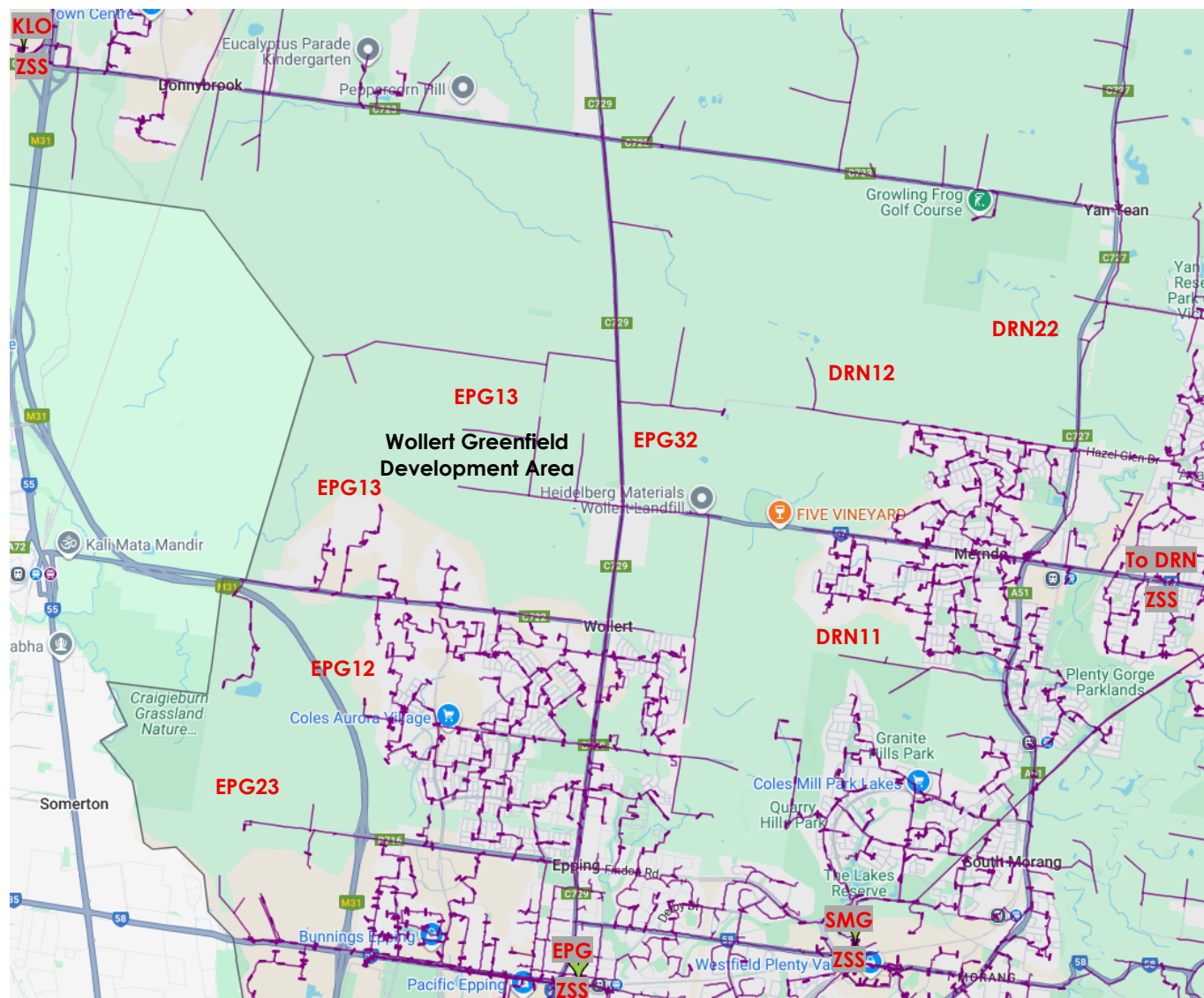


Source: VPA

<sup>11</sup> [Victorian Planning Authority – The North Growth Corridor Plan](#), Victorian Planning Authority (VPA), 2012.  
<sup>12</sup> [Wollert Precinct Structure Plan](#), Victorian Planning Authority (VPA), 2024.  
<sup>13</sup> [2016 Wollert, Census](#), Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 2016  
<sup>14</sup> [2021 Wollert, Census](#), Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 2021.  
<sup>15</sup> [Victoria in Future](#), Victorian Department of Transport & Planning, 2023  
<sup>16</sup> [Victorian Planning Authority – The North Growth Corridor Plan](#), Victorian Planning Authority (VPA), 2012.

Of particular relevance to this RIT-D are the parts of AusNet's electricity distribution network within the North Growth Corridor that supply the developing suburb of Wollert. The Wollert supply area is serviced (for the most part) by AusNet's existing Epping zone substation (EPG) located on the southern boundary of the supply area, through a network of 22 kV distribution feeders, as shown in Figure 2. Also adjacent to the supply area lie AusNet's existing zone substations Kalkallo (KLO) and Doreen (DRN) on the north-west and east sides respectively.

Figure 2: 22 kV network supplying Wollert and surrounds



AusNet has developed electricity demand forecasts for the supply area, updated to reflect the demands of recent summers, electrification activity, solar panels and battery installations, and the PSP development plans. AusNet has identified from these forecast maximum demands increasing levels of load-at-risk for the Wollert supply area, where the demand is exceeding the capacity of some parts of the network.

Of particular concern is the forecast growth on the existing EPG 22 kV feeders that supply into the Wollert development areas including EPG13, EPG21, EPG33, EPG35 and EPG23.

## 4. Identified need

This section provides information regarding the identified need of this RIT-D, and the assumptions used in quantifying the identified need.

### 4.1. Description of the identified need

The 22 kV distribution feeders EPG13, EPG21, EPG33, EPG35 and EPG23 that service the Wollert supply area are all expected to exceed their system normal (N) ratings between financial year (FY) 2026 and 2028.

The amount of overload from this forecast lack of network capacity is shown in Table 3.

**Table 3: Distribution feeder forecast PoE10 overload (MVA) inc. available transfers and demand management**

Load-at-risk (MVA)	FY26	FY27	FY28	FY29	FY30	FY31	FY32
EPG13 (N)	4.3	10.2	11.5	12.8	14.2	15.6	17.1
EPG21 (N)	0.0	1.6	6.3	9.9	13.3	16.7	19.7
EPG33 (N)	0.0	1.7	3.2	4.7	6.2	7.6	9.1
EPG35 (N)	3.3	3.1	3.9	5.3	6.5	7.7	8.9
EPG23 (N)	0.0	0.0	2.0	2.9	4.5	6.2	6.2
<b>TOTAL (N)</b>	<b>7.6</b>	<b>16.6</b>	<b>17.8</b>	<b>35.6</b>	<b>44.7</b>	<b>53.8</b>	<b>61.0</b>

The forecast demand in the Wollert supply area shows that there is currently very little capacity remaining within the distribution feeder network, having a total capacity shortfall of 7.6 MVA in 2026, forecast to increase to 61.0 MVA by 2032 with all assets in service.

The identified need is to address forecast capacity shortfalls on the EPG 22 kV distribution feeders that are servicing the Wollert supply area, in order to maintain electricity supply reliability and facilitate forecast load growth.

### 4.2. Quantification of the identified need

AusNet uses a probabilistic planning approach to quantify the reliability risk, represented by the expected unserved energy (EUE) under a do nothing (base case) investment scenario, to assess whether it is economically viable to invest in risk mitigation measures to reduce the forecast growth in EUE.

We have calculated the EUE by determining the amount of energy that would not be able to be supplied by the EPG13, EPG21, EPG33, EPG35 and EPG23 distribution feeders under system normal conditions. We use the forecast maximum demand of the feeder and multiply it by its normalised load duration curve to determine the energy-at-risk based on the amount of time that the forecast load is above the (N) rating, taking into account load transfer capacity.

The total EUE is weighted according to 30% of the EUE calculated using a 1-in-10 year (PoE10) maximum demand, and 70% of the EUE calculated using a 1-in-2 year (PoE50) maximum demand.

The cost of deteriorating reliability to our customers is determined by multiplying the total EUE by the Value of Customer Reliability (VCR). We have calculated the locational VCR by adopting the Australian Energy Regulator's (AER) 2024 VCRs<sup>17</sup> for the different customer segments, weighting them by the mix of customers' annual energy consumption, localised for each relevant network asset.

A material level of EUE is calculated for the Wollert supply area, as shown in Table 4.

<sup>17</sup> [Values of Customer Reliability - Final report](#), Australian Energy Regulator (AER), 2024.

**Table 4: Do nothing (base case) forecast expected unserved energy (EUE) and its cost to customers**

EUE (MWh p.a.)	FY26	FY27	FY28	FY29	FY30	FY31	FY32
EPG13	79.6	2,687	4,252	5,778	7,595	10,002	12,717
EPG21	0.0	42.2	858.5	3,370	9,817	20,432	31,586
EPG33	51.7	385.3	927.2	1,815	2,974	4,323	6,195
EPG35	197.6	181.5	564.7	1,275	2,355	4,284	6,556
EPG23	0.0	0.3	157.2	655.9	1,316	1,842	1,826
<b>TOTAL (MWh p.a.)</b>	<b>329.0</b>	<b>3,296</b>	<b>6,759</b>	<b>12,894</b>	<b>24,056</b>	<b>40,882</b>	<b>58,880</b>
<b>Total (\$m, 2025 p.a.)</b>	<b>12.1</b>	<b>139.2</b>	<b>273.9</b>	<b>501.0</b>	<b>905.4</b>	<b>1,512</b>	<b>2,161</b>

By 2032, the EUE and its financial impact on customers are forecast to be 58,880 MWh p.a. and \$2,161 million (real, \$2025) respectively. This presents a forecast deterioration in electricity supply reliability.

## 4.3. Summary of identified network need

The identified need is to address forecast capacity shortfalls on the EPG 22 kV distribution feeders that are servicing the Wollert supply area, in order to maintain electricity supply reliability and facilitate forecast load growth.

AusNet has identified that approximately 61.0 MVA of additional capacity or demand reduction is required by 2032, rising from a present need of 7.6 MVA<sup>18</sup>, through network augmentation or alternative non-network approaches (such as demand management, embedded generation, and/or storage). This is needed to avoid network overload and to maintain a reliable electricity supply to the Wollert supply area.

If left unaddressed, these network capacity shortfalls could:

- increase the risk of involuntary load shedding;
- inhibit new customer connections and customer load growth; and
- risk non-compliance with AusNet's regulatory obligations.

Addressing these network capacity limitations will help to ensure that AusNet is able to prudently and efficiently meet forecast electricity demand growth within the Wollert supply area to:

- support economic growth anticipated for this region;
- support the electrification of homes, businesses and transport<sup>19</sup>; and
- maintain electricity supply reliability and facilitate new customer connections.

<sup>18</sup> Total (N) load-at-risk in Table 3.

<sup>19</sup> Refer to [Victoria State Government, 'Gas Substitution Roadmap – Update: Victoria's Electrification Pathway.'](#)

## 4.4. Assumptions underpinning the identified need

Key factors underpinning the quantification of the identified need in this RIT-D include:

- Forecast maximum demand;
- Load duration curves;
- Asset ratings;
- Asset unavailability;
- Load transfer capacity; and
- Demand management.

### 4.4.1. Forecast maximum demand

The forecast maximum demands for the existing 22 kV distribution feeders servicing the developing part of the Wollert supply area, being EPG13, EPG21, EPG33, EPG35 and EPG23, were developed by AusNet in 2025 and are summarised in Table 5 through to Table 9 respectively.

**Table 5: Do nothing (base case) forecast EPG13 maximum demand (MVA)**

EPG13	FY26	FY27	FY28	FY29	FY30	FY31	FY32
Summer PoE10	18.2	24.1	25.4	26.7	28.1	29.6	31.0
Summer PoE50	11.6	13.4	14.7	16.2	17.6	18.9	20.3
Winter PoE10	16.9	23.1	25.2	26.8	28.5	30.3	32.2
Winter PoE50	16.1	18.3	20.0	21.9	23.5	25.1	26.8

**Table 6: Do nothing (base case) forecast EPG21 maximum demand (MVA)**

EPG21	FY26	FY27	FY28	FY29	FY30	FY31	FY32
Summer PoE10	11.9	16.3	21.1	24.6	28.1	31.4	34.4
Summer PoE50	15.7	15.6	16.2	17.5	18.7	19.9	21.1
Winter PoE10	14.1	20.3	27.6	32.6	37.3	42.3	46.6
Winter PoE50	14.5	14.6	17.5	19.6	21.6	23.8	25.6

**Table 7: Do nothing (base case) forecast EPG33 maximum demand (MVA)**

EPG33	FY26	FY27	FY28	FY29	FY30	FY31	FY32
Summer PoE10	14.6	16.5	17.9	19.5	21.0	22.3	23.8
Summer PoE50	10.3	12.0	14.6	15.4	16.6	18.3	18.2
Winter PoE10	17.4	19.7	21.5	23.5	25.4	27.1	28.9
Winter PoE50	10.9	12.9	15.5	17.4	18.3	18.9	18.9

**Table 8: Do nothing (base case) forecast EPG35 maximum demand (MVA)**

EPG35	FY26	FY27	FY28	FY29	FY30	FY31	FY32
Summer PoE10	16.6	16.4	17.2	18.6	19.8	21.1	22.2
Summer PoE50	15.7	15.6	16.2	17.5	18.7	19.9	21.1
Winter PoE10	15.5	15.6	18.5	20.7	22.8	25.0	26.8
Winter PoE50	14.5	14.6	17.5	19.6	21.6	23.8	25.6

**Table 9: Do nothing (base case) forecast EPG23 maximum demand (MVA)**

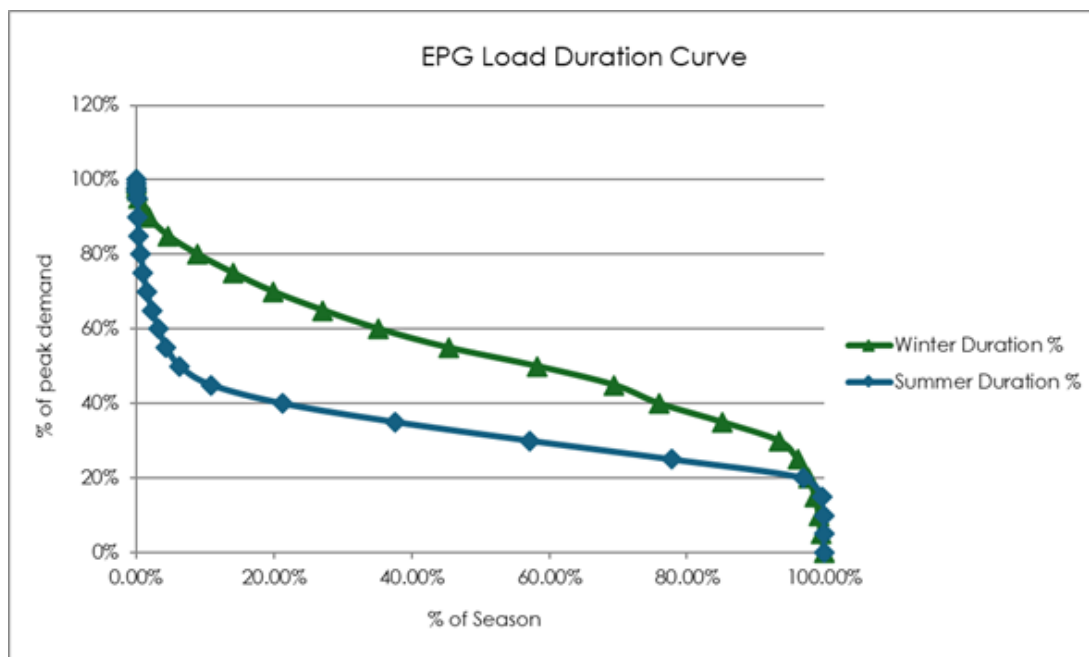
EPG23	FY26	FY27	FY28	FY29	FY30	FY31	FY32
Summer PoE10	11.7	13.4	15.7	16.6	18.3	19.9	19.9
Summer PoE50	10.3	12.0	14.6	15.4	16.6	18.3	18.2
Winter PoE10	11.9	14.2	16.9	17.9	19.5	20.1	20.1
Winter PoE50	10.9	12.9	15.5	17.4	18.3	18.9	18.9

### 4.4.2. Load-duration curves

Load-duration curves plot demand, normalised as a percentage of the seasonal maximum demand (for summer and winter separately), against the cumulative percentage of time within that season. Demand values are ordered in descending magnitude, such that each point on the load-duration curve represents the proportion of the season for which demand is expected to be greater than or equal to the corresponding load level. Where the product of the load-duration ordinate and the forecast seasonal maximum demand exceeds the seasonal rating, the excess portion, represented by the area above the rating, contributes to EUE.

Figure 3 shows the load-duration curves for the EPG 22 kV distribution feeders.

**Figure 3: EPG feeder load-duration curves PoE10**



The power factor is assumed to be unity, and the load factor for the year is 0.45.

### 4.4.3. Asset ratings

The (N) summer and winter ratings of the 22 kV distribution feeders that are currently servicing the greenfield growth area within the Wollert supply area are presented in Table 10.

**Table 10: Do nothing (base case) distribution feeder ratings (MVA)**

Feeder	Summer	Winter
EPG13	13.9	13.9
EPG21	14.7	14.7
EPG33	14.7	14.7
EPG35	13.3	13.3
EPG23	13.7	13.7

#### 4.4.4. Asset unavailability

For distribution feeders, AusNet only considers the EUE as material under system normal operating conditions, that is, when the asset demand exceeds the asset rating with all assets in service. By comparison, the magnitude of the EUE under single contingency conditions is considered immaterial due to the size of the asset overload under system normal conditions. Hence asset unavailability is not relevant for the purposes of this RIT-D.

#### 4.4.5. Load transfer capacity

The forecast load transfer capacity for the assets in proximity to the greenfield growth area within the Wollert supply area is presented in Table 11. The ability to transfer load from the constrained feeders to neighbouring feeders during peak demand will continue to decline. This is because the neighbouring feeders that currently absorb load from these constrained feeders are themselves already near or at their capacity and will also become constrained.

**Table 11: Do nothing (base case) forecast load transfer capacity at maximum demand (MVA)**

Transfer capacity	FY26	FY27	FY28	FY29	FY30	FY31	FY32
EPG13	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6
EPG21	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
EPG33	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
EPG35	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
EPG23	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

EPG21, EPG33, EPG35, and EPG23 are interconnected, allowing tie points between them. However, load transfers are not feasible at times of high demand, because the contributing (supporting) feeders themselves are operating under overload conditions and have energy at risk. For example, a transfer from EPG33 to EPG23 (or vice versa) cannot occur, as both feeders are overloaded and unable to provide backup support at times of high demand.

#### 4.4.6. Demand management

The forecast demand management capacity is presented in Table 12, currently being very little available capacity.

**Table 12: Do nothing (base case) forecast demand management capacity (MVA)**

Demand management	FY26	FY27	FY28	FY29	FY30	FY31	FY32
EPG13	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
EPG21	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
EPG33	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
EPG35	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
EPG23	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

## 5. Potential credible options

This section outlines the potential credible options that are able to address the identified need, including a do nothing counterfactual option as the base case for comparing credible options. These include all substantially differing commercially and technically credible options, including non-network and SAPS solutions.

Credible options (or a group of options) are those that meet the following criteria:

- addresses the identified need,
- is (or are) commercially and technically feasible, and
- can be implemented in sufficient time to meet the identified need.

The options proposed to be analysed in this RIT-D to address the identified need in the Wollert supply area are as follows:

- Option 0: Do nothing (base case) - no proactive investment intervention
- Option 1: Wollert new zone substation, and four new distribution feeders
- Option 2: Third transformer and bus at Doreen zone substation, and four new distribution feeders
- Option 3: Non-network and SAPS solutions

Option 1 and 2 are credible network solutions proposed to be assessed to address the identified need.

An option to augment Epping zone substation (EPG) was considered but will not be progressed for this RIT-D on the basis that there are no spare circuit breaker bays for new feeders and transformers at this fully-developed zone substation, making the option for expanding EPG, prohibitively expensive and unlikely to be technically viable.

AusNet will also consider and evaluate any alternative, non-network or SAPS proposals that are submitted by interested parties during the RIT-D consultation, that can credibly address the identified need. This includes those that can either be combined with another solution to defer or reduce in scope credible network options being considered, and/or mitigate the EUE in the lead up to implementing a network option. These will be assessed under Option 3.

Each potential credible option is further elaborated in the subsequent sections.

### 5.1. Do nothing (base case)

The do nothing option assumes that AusNet would not undertake any proactive investment, outside of normal operational and planning processes for managing peak demand and thermal overloading. This option is the counterfactual to the other options considered and establishes the base level of risk (base case) and the basis for comparing other credible options.

While this option does not entail any upfront capital costs, it exposes customers to the continuing and increasing risk of network-induced electricity supply outages, as a result of demand exceeding the available network capacity. The reliability cost to customers of this option is represented by the forecast EUE in Table 4.

With the forecast overloading of our existing distribution feeders in the Wollert supply area (presented in Table 3) leading to a deterioration in electricity supply reliability for our customers, this option does not address the identified need.

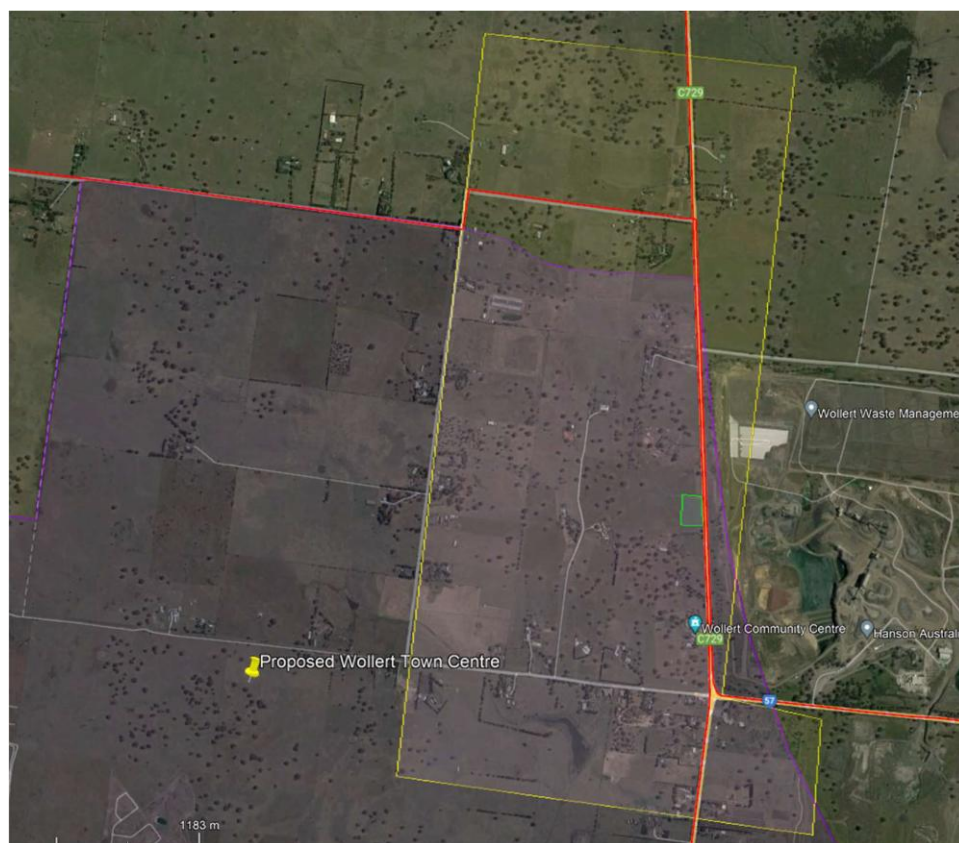
## 5.2. Option 1: Wollert new zone substation, and four new distribution feeders

This option establishes a new 2 x 33 MVA 66/22 kV zone substation with two 22 kV busbars and four new 22 kV distribution feeders, connected into the existing 22 kV network, at a site located close to the existing dual circuit 66 kV lines on the eastern edge of the proposed Wollert Town Centre. The new Wollert (**WLT**) zone substation would be to AusNet's standard design with provision for a third transformer in the future. We expect commissioning of the zone substation can be completed by the end of FY28 based on an immediate start of the design and construct activities.

This proposed option addresses the identified need by ensuring that the growing load in the Wollert area is not connected to the existing surrounding zone substations, in particular KLO, EPG, DRN, and on the existing distribution feeders EPG13, EPG21, EPG33, EPG35 and EPG23. This option would allow the amount of EUE to be reduced significantly.

Figure 4 shows a possible Wollert zone substation site at 565 Epping Road Wollert, of approximately 10,000 m<sup>2</sup> highlighted with a green outline. It is in a planned light industrial area on the eastern edge of the Wollert area and is adjacent to the existing dual circuit 66 kV lines, meaning the cost of connecting the proposed zone substation will be minimised. Further detailed site investigation will be required before an exact site is selected.

**Figure 4: Possible Wollert zone substation site**



The estimated total capital cost of this option including sub-transmission connection, zone substation establishment, distribution feeders establishment and site acquisition is \$96.2 million<sup>20</sup> (real, \$2025). In relation to operations and maintenance (**O&M**) expenditure, annual routine maintenance expenditure would be \$1.0 million.

The estimated construction timetable for this option is 2 years with an anticipated optimal timing of summer 2027-28.

<sup>20</sup> Comprising \$10.0 million for land acquisition, \$57.2 million for the WLT zone substation and sub-transmission connection works and \$29.0 million for the local Wollert distribution feeder works (real, \$2025).

## 5.3. Option 2: Third transformer and bus at Doreen zone substation, and four new distribution feeders

This option involves installing a third 66/22kV 33 MVA transformer and third 22 kV bus at DRN and four new 22 kV distribution feeder exits connected into the existing 22 kV network to provide supply to the Wollert area. This option addresses the identified need by expanding the existing DRN zone substation to its full capacity. Longer length 22 kV feeders are needed in this option as DRN is located approximately 12 km from the Wollert area. This is significantly longer than the average feeder length which will be required from the Wollert zone substation proposed in Option 1. Figure 5 shows a satellite view of DRN with the available space for a third transformer.

**Figure 5: Existing Doreen (DRN) zone substation site**



The estimated capital cost of this option including feeders is \$109 million<sup>21</sup> (real, \$2025). In relation to O&M expenditure, annual routine maintenance expenditure would be \$1.1 million.

The estimated construction timetable for this option is 2 years with an anticipated optimal timing of summer 2027-28.

<sup>21</sup> Comprising \$20 million for the DRN zone substation works, \$29 million for the local Wollert distribution feeder works, and \$60 million for the 12 km backbones of four distribution feeders from DRN (real, \$2025).

## 5.4. Option 3: Non-network and SAPS solutions

The NER require DNSPs to investigate non-network and SAPS options as part of the RIT-D process.

For this option, AusNet will consider and evaluate any alternative, non-network or SAPS proposals that are submitted by interested parties during this RIT-D consultation, that can credibly address the identified need. AusNet will also assess any that can be combined with another solution to defer or reduce in scope, credible network options being considered, and/or mitigate the EUE in the lead up to implementing a network option.

The following non-network solutions located at strategic locations within the Wollert supply area are likely to be potentially feasible options to address the identified need (at least in part):

- New dispatchable generation;
- New renewable generation firmed up by energy storage systems;
- Demand management using customer standby generation and/or controllable load.

Without limiting the potential for non-network solutions, the following types of non-network options are unlikely to be feasible:

- Renewable generation not coupled with dispatchable generation, storage or controllable load;
- Behavioural demand response not coupled with dispatchable generation, storage or controllable load; and
- Unproven, experimental or undemonstrated technologies.

Details of the characteristics and requirements needed for a non-network or SAPS solution to address the identified need are described in the next section of this OSR.

## 6. Non-network or SAPS options

This section provides information regarding the non-network or SAPS services that would be required to address the identified need, including:

- The performance characteristics that a non-network or SAPS option would be required to deliver;
- The estimated maximum deferred augmentation charge that would be available to pay for the network support services provided by the non-network or SAPS solution; and
- The information that a non-network or SAPS proponent should provide to AusNet to explore the potential provision of a non-network or SAPS service.

### 6.1. Required performance characteristics

Table 13 sets out the dispatchable load reduction/generation/storage capacity required from a non-network or SAPS option, located within the Wollert area, by year. It also provides an indication of the maximum number of operating hours per year, and the expected amount of energy needing to be supported by the option. This information (together with Figure 3) provides an indication of the required operating profile to address the identified need in its entirety, noting that prospective non-network service providers may not be able to exactly (or fully) match these requirements to be considered a credible solution.

**Table 13: Performance requirements of a non-network solution**

Year	Capacity required (MVA)	Maximum duration (hrs p.a.)	Expected annual energy (MWh p.a.)
2026	7.6	94	320.0
2027	16.6	441	3,296
2028	17.8	844	6,759
2029	35.6	805	12,894
2030	44.7	1,196	24,056
2031	53.8	1,689	40,882
2032	61.0	2,145	58,880

A non-network or SAPS option is required to be in service no later than summer 2027-28.

A non-network option must be capable of reliably supplying or managing load under a range of conditions and scenarios. The non-network or SAPS solution will contribute to reliability to the extent that it addresses the EUE risks arising from the identified need.

If the non-network option is a generator operating in parallel with AusNet's network, the generator must comply with the requirements set out in document SOP 33-05 and other connection requirements which are set out in AusNet Services' [embedded generator connections page](#).

## 6.2. Information to be included in alternative solution proposals

Non-network or SAPS service providers interested in alleviating the network limitations quantified in this report are advised to begin engagement with AusNet as soon as possible. A detailed proposal including the information listed below should be prepared and submitted by the requested date, during the RIT-D OSR consultation period.

Details required include:

- Name, address and contact details of the person making the submission.
- Name, address and contact details of the person responsible for non-network support (if different to above).
- Evidence and track record proving capability and previous experience in implementing and completing projects of the same type as the proposal.
- Letters of support from partner organisations.
- A detailed description of the services to be provided, including:
  - Size and capacity (MW/MVA/MWh).
  - Location(s) and whether proposed or confirmed.
  - Type of technologies (or actions) proposed for the solution.
  - Proposed dispatching arrangement (e.g. telephone, web-based trigger, automated means etc).
  - Period of notice required prior to dispatch.
  - Operating times, frequency, duration, response time, ramp rate, firmness details as applicable.
  - Availability and reliability performance details.
  - Proposed contract period and staging (if applicable).
  - Proposed timing for delivery (including timeline to plan and implement the proposal).
- High-level electrical layout of the proposed site (if applicable).
- Preliminary assessment of the proposal's impact on the network.
- Breakdown and timing of the lifecycle cost components for providing the service, including:
  - Capital costs (if applicable).
  - Annual operating (i.e. set up and dispatch fees) and maintenance costs.
  - Other costs (e.g. availability, project establishment, etc.).
  - Tariff assumptions.
  - Expected annual payment for providing the solution.
- A method outlining measurement and quantification of the agreed service, including integration of the proposed solution with the network.
- A statement outlining that the non-network or SAPS service provider is prepared to enter into a Network Support Agreement (**NSA**) (subject to agreeing terms and conditions).
- Any special conditions to be included in an NSA.

All proposals must satisfy the requirements of any applicable laws, rules, and the requirements of any relevant regulatory authority, including following the normal network connection processes where applicable. Any network reinforcement costs required to accommodate the non-network or SAPS solution will typically be borne by the proponent of the non-network or SAPS solution.

For further details on AusNet's process for engaging and consulting with non-network and SAPS service providers, and for investigating, developing, assessing and reporting on non-network and SAPS options as alternatives to network augmentation, please refer to the Non-Network Solutions and Demand Management webpages, which contain the Industry Engagement Strategy and other relevant demand management documentation:

<https://www.ausnetservices.com.au/Electricity>.

## 6.3. Potential payments to non-network proponents

At this stage, the preferred network option has not yet been determined. However, the maximum annualised capital expenditure that could be deferred by contractually engaging a non-network solution is \$3.2 million per annum (real, \$2025), assuming Option 1 is the preferred network option<sup>22</sup>.

The payment for a non-network solution may vary according to availability, capacity, dispatch duration and firmness of the non-network service, its ability to address the identified need, and the responses received from other non-network proponents. The actual payment to a non-network proponent will also be subject to negotiation.

AusNet welcomes the submission of non-network and SAPS proposals for review of the potential payment amount on a case-by-case basis. For more information or enquiries regarding non-network solutions to address the identified need, please email [ritdconsultations@ausnetservices.com.au](mailto:ritdconsultations@ausnetservices.com.au). In the subject field, please reference '**RIT-D OSR Wollert**'.

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<sup>22</sup> \$57.2 million (excl. land and feeders) x 5.56% (AusNet WACC) p.a. = \$3.2 million p.a. (real, \$2025).

## 7. Submissions and next steps

### 7.1. Request for submissions

AusNet invites written submissions and any queries, on the matters set out in this OSR, from Registered Participants, AEMO, interested parties, non-network providers and persons registered on our industry engagement register. As explained in section 6, prospective non-network and SAPS service providers interested in alleviating the network constraints outlined in this OSR are advised to begin engagement with AusNet as soon as possible.

All submissions and enquiries should be directed to:

Email: [ritdconsultations@ausnetservices.com.au](mailto:ritdconsultations@ausnetservices.com.au)

Submissions are due on or before 23 June 2026 and should refer to '**RIT-D OSR Wollert**' in the subject heading.

Submissions will be published on AusNet's and AEMO's websites. If you do not wish to have your submission published, please clearly stipulate this at the time of lodging your submission.

### 7.2. Next stage of RIT-D process

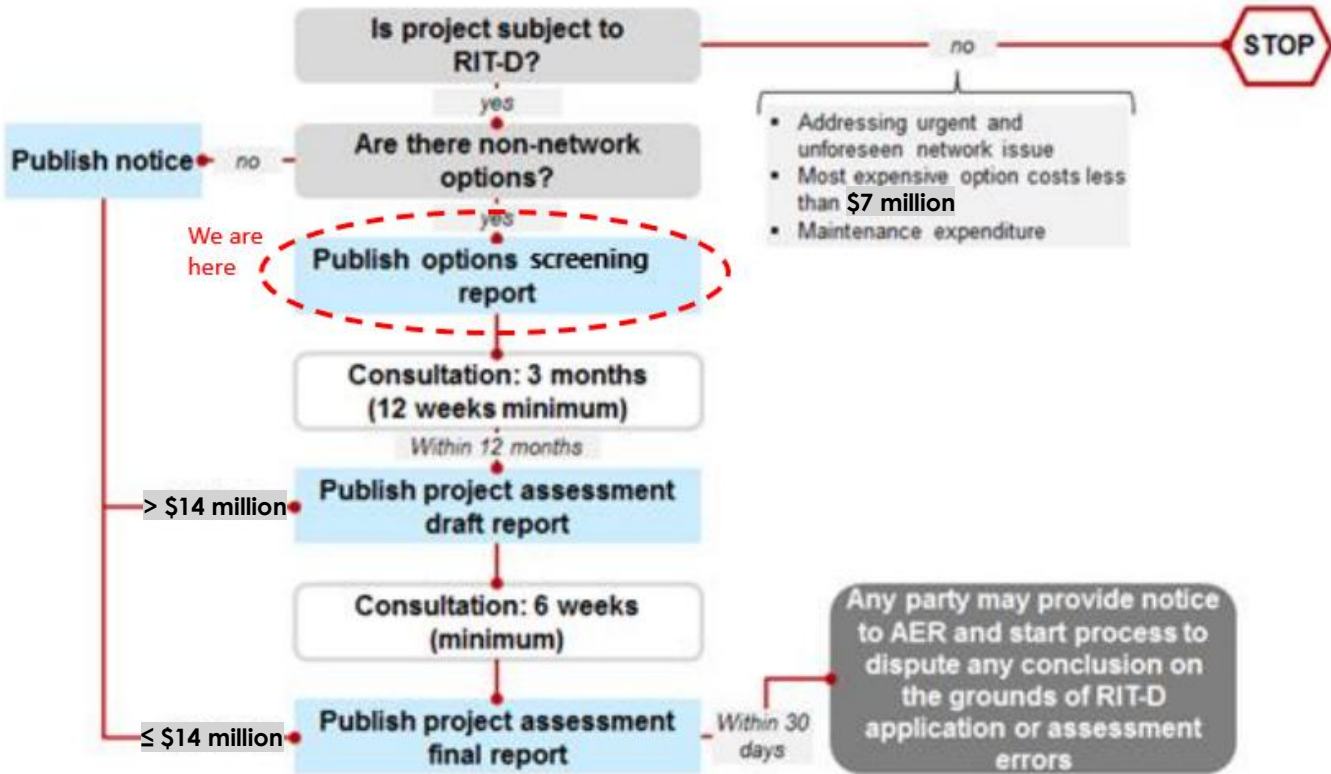
Following the conclusion of the consultation period for this OSR, AusNet will, having regard to any submissions received, prepare and publish the draft project assessment report (**DPAR**) which will include:

- A summary of, and commentary on, any submissions on this OSR.
- A detailed market benefit assessment of the proposed credible options to address the identified need.
- Identification of the proposed preferred option to meet the identified need.

AusNet expects to publish the DPAR before the end of July 2026.

The publication of the DPAR will initiate the second consultation step in the RIT-D process.

# A. Appendix A - RIT-D assessment and consultation process



# B. Appendix B - Compliance with NER

In accordance with clause 5.17.4 of the NER, we certify that the screening for non-network and SAPS options satisfy the first stage of the RIT-D. Table 14 shows how each of these requirements have been met by the relevant section of this OSR.




**Table 14: Compliance with regulatory requirements**

Requirement	Section
Clause 5.17.4 of the NER, Non-network options report must include the following:	
1. a description of the identified need;	Section 4
2. the assumptions used in identifying the identified need (including, in the case of proposed reliability corrective action, why the RIT-D proponent considers reliability corrective action is necessary);	
3. if available, the relevant annual deferred augmentation charge associated with the identified need;	Section 6
4. the technical characteristics of the identified need that a non-network option or (in relation to a SAPS enabled network) a SAPS option would be required to deliver, such as:	
i. the size of load reduction or additional supply;	
ii. location;	
iii. contribution to power system security or reliability;	
iv. contribution to power system fault levels as determined under clause 4.6.1; and	
v. the operating profile;	
5. a summary of potential credible options to address the identified need, as identified by the RIT-D proponent, including network options, non-network options and (in relation to a SAPS enabled network) SAPS options.	Section 5
6. for each potential credible option, the RIT-D proponent must provide information, to the extent practicable, on:	Section 5
i. a technical definition or characteristics of the option;	
ii. the estimated construction timetable and commissioning date (where relevant); and	
iii. the total indicative cost (including capital and operating costs); and	
7. information to assist non-network providers wishing to present alternative potential credible options including details of how to submit a non-network proposal for consideration by the RIT-D proponent.	Section 7

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