

AusNet Services EDPR Customer Forum

3 September 2018 meeting minutes

Attendees

Customer Forum (CF)	AusNet Services (AST)	Other
Tony Robinson Helen Bartley John Mumford Greg Camm Dianne Rule	Alistair Parker Adrian Hill Shelley Cussen Charlotte Eddy Rob Ball	Roz Doyle

Customer experience

Overall impressions

The Forum provided its overall impressions on AST's [Customer Experience Negotiating Position note](#). This included the following key commitments sought from AST:

- Cultural change and better collaboration with other industry players
- Address the diffuse accountability for customer within the company
- Make customer always being right the starting point for all customer interactions
- Improve the way we collect and use data on customer experience – much of our data we have relates to the network, not customers.

AST considered that its Customer Centricity project is central to its plan to build roadmap around customer. AST acknowledged that customer accountability is the 'glue' needed to bring all the initiatives set out in the negotiating position note together. AST confirmed that several structural changes are being announced this week which it will share with the Forum.

Table 1: Proposed strategic and tactical customer experience initiatives for the 2016-20 period

The issues discussed and actions for each initiative are summarised in the following table.

Initiative	Discussion	Actions
1. Review accountability for customer within organisation	CF is seeking a commitment for AST to not just review but also implement changes to address the diffuse accountability	AST to provide further details on organisational structure changes
2. Link employee remuneration with customer satisfaction (CSAT) outcomes	CF agreed it is best practice to include CSAT KPIs for employees, but raised possible issues with relying too heavily on CSAT data – e.g. sample size, approach to sampling, and ensuring indicators reflect what is important to customers. AST confirmed its choice of metrics was based on customer research.	AST to acknowledge limitations of the CSAT data and how these will be addressed
2A. Introduction of a new, small scale customer	AST considered paper trail doesn't provide strong enough incentive. AST hopes to	AST to provide a revised incentive scheme design

Initiative	Discussion	Actions
<p>experience incentive scheme from 2021-25</p> <p><i>** Not originally included in Table 1</i></p>	<p>lodge joint proposal with the CF on an incentive scheme.</p> <p>CF supported replacing telephone answering metric with new incentive scheme, but not convinced that current CSAT scores are the appropriate starting point for this scheme. AST described a performance ‘dead band’ as a possible design approach. CF was supportive of this, but would like the measures refined, e.g. to possibly include a life support customer measure and split into business vs. residential customers.</p>	
<p>3. Rolling customer research program</p> <p>4. Conduct further customer journey mapping</p> <p>5. Ensure customer involvement in customer experience design</p>	<p>CF is seeking commitment that any rolling research program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deals separately with residential and non-residential customers. • Is utilised by the business, together with existing data • Is made transparent to customers to increase accountability • Have an annual budget amount attached to it. 	<p>AST to provide further detail on a rolling customer research program.</p> <p>AST to merge initiatives 3, 4 and 5.</p>
<p>6. Enhanced training of call centre staff</p> <p>7. Enhanced measurement of call centre staff performance</p>	<p>CF was supportive of these initiatives.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>8. Disaggregate CSAT data into region-specific data</p>	<p>CF flagged potential for the potential for increased statistical error associated with disaggregated data. AST accepted this, but maintained this data would be of use as it builds upon the intent of initiative 2.</p>	<p>AST to merge with initiative 2 and make clear that ‘region-specific’ refers to north, east and central regions (not at the suburb level) and it would include contractors.</p>
<p>9. Provide information to customers on unplanned outages post-resolution</p>	<p>CF considered this initiative could be simplified (i.e. be less contingent on testing), but accepted that customer views should inform what is ultimately implemented.</p> <p>AST suggested it could engage with customers on its worst performing feeders to gauge their preferences</p>	<p>AST to provide revised initiative involving engagement with customers on worst performing feeders</p>
<p>10. Use smart meter data to help customers manage bills through usage related (i.e. “bill shock”) alerts</p>	<p>CF considered this could be rolled into initiative 11 and simplified (i.e. be less contingent upon testing). AST noted that initiative 10 it is not well supported by</p>	<p>AST to provide revised initiatives 10, 11, 13 and 14, including commitment to engaging with</p>

Initiative	Discussion	Actions
11. Use smart meter data to help customers manage bills through appliance related alerts	<p>customer research and dependent on more complex and challenging analytics, relative to initiative 11.</p> <p>CF suggested AST consult with consumer advocates or its CCC to discuss smart meter capabilities and identify what data services customers would value most. In this regard, CF considered this ties in well with #14.</p> <p>CF noted that initiatives such as this support the case for maintaining metering exclusivity.</p>	consumer advocates and co-develop solutions.
12. Make the myHomeEnergyPortal more user-friendly	CF considered low priority due to low usage of portal.	N/A
13. Identify gaps in customer base regarding hardship program eligibility and concession eligibility	<p>CF suggested AST involve consumer advocates in this process and explore possible solution with them. In this regard, CF considered this ties in well with #14.</p> <p>AST noted it has only obtained data from Energy Australia.</p>	AST to merge with initiatives 10, 11 and 14.
14. Public commitment to share data with consumer advocates for research purposes	CF was supportive of this initiative.	AST to merge with initiatives 10, 11 and 13.
15. Become active member of Thriving Communities Partnership (TCP)	AST advised the Forum that it is unable to access data on its vulnerable customers through the TCP due to not having their explicit informed consent.	<p>AST to confirm it cannot obtain granular customer data through TCP.</p> <p>CF to explore this issue further with YVW.</p>
16. Establish energy literacy program	CF hesitant about whether customers would value this. Accordingly, it does not consider this a high priority nor would it support additional expenditure on this.	AST to provide further details on what has been committed to with CPRC and revise initiative to better reflect this.
<p>17. Improve restoration times for life support customers experiencing an outage</p> <p>18. Enhance communications to vulnerable / life support customers</p>	<p>CF concerned these initiatives may not go far enough, given life support customers are the most vulnerable customer group. AST confirmed it is doing a lot in this space, including phone calls to all life support customers prior to outages, and using it's cross referencing tools to ensure accurate planned outage notification.</p> <p>AST made point that an industry-wide</p>	<p>AST to assess need for targeted customer research into life support customers.</p> <p>AST to confirm impacts REFCL operation will have on life support customers.</p> <p>AST to confirm its position</p>

Initiative	Discussion	Actions
	<p>solution is needed here as responsibility sits across distribution and other industry participants.</p> <p>CF interested in whether AST is willing to do targeted customer research into life support customers to better understand their needs, and what implications REFCL operation will have for life support customers.</p> <p>CF also highlighted that no advocacy body exists for vulnerable customers – it would therefore like to see a commitment from AST to lead advocacy amongst DBs to establish one.</p>	<p>on advocating for or supporting the establishment of a life support customer advocacy group.</p>
<p>19. Develop a consistent and “plain language” compensation and claims fact sheet easily accessible by customers.</p>	<p>In light of Healesville outages, CF considered AST’s claims process also needs to be improved.</p>	<p>AST to provide detail on how it is responding to the Healesville outages, including changes to its claims management procedures.</p>
<p>20. Development of a planned outage policy and other planned outage related initiatives</p> <p><i>** Not originally included in Table 1</i></p>	<p>Refer to planned outage discussion below.</p>	<p>AST to confirm whether it can develop planned outage policy and respond on other points raised in planned outage discussion below.</p>

Relationship manager for commercial and industrial (C&I) customers

CF found during its consultation that large customers would value having access to a relationship manager. AST confirmed it is currently looking to fill two new roles that would provide this – a C&I customer manager and a community energy liaison officer.

Planned outages

CF considered an outage policy should be established to create consistency in the way we schedule and communicate outages and engage with customers. Relevant considerations discussed included:

- The cost of a customer hiring a generator and how AST might assist with this
- Could AST run a commercial generator hire business? AST noted a previous EDPR where it proposed expenditure for generator hire to assist customers during outages required for a safety program, which the AER did not accept
- ‘One size fits all’ approach may not work - some customers require up to 3 weeks’ notice of outages to make leave arrangements with their staff

- Thousands of customers are impacted by outages in some cases, making it challenging to prioritise and plan. CF suggested liaising with local councils as an efficient way of doing this
- CF considers AST could publish data on different outage experience in different suburbs, to inform business/investment decisions
- CF considered AST could indicate range for outage, e.g. 3-5 hours
- CF considered AST could provide real time updates for customers on duration.
- CF would like to see an initiative around further exploring the impact of outages on different customer segments.

AST to respond on these points.

New connections

CF considered the further information provided by AST on 31/8 did not reconcile with what it is hearing regarding connection delays that AST is causing which are impacting residential developers.

AST explained that that the implementation of Power of Choice has created a backlog of connections for national retailers, which could be contributing to the delays being experienced. AST stated it is confident it has improved performance since end of industrial relations disputes and is not the cause of any delays.

CF suggested that AST could share its connections performance hub data publically to improve transparency with stakeholders, e.g. developers.

CF to consult with Master Builders on this issue and report back.

Actions arising:

AST to prepare a revised customer experience note, including names of staff members that are accountable for each initiative.