

## THE TIME IS NOW TO GET SMARTER WITH THE LOCAL GRID

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Changing the way we use the local electricity grid can provide Australians with cleaner and cheaper energy, according to a new report from Energy Networks Australia.

[The Time is Now report](#) shows that there are opportunities within the distribution grid that can be unlocked and enabled now, to deliver more benefits for customers.

Energy Networks Australia CEO Dom van den Berg said that we must look beyond the traditional role of distribution networks as just poles and wires.

“Findings show that if we act now to get the distribution grid doing more heavy lifting, customers can save around \$160 per year and avoid \$7 billion in overall system costs in 2030 alone. The nation will also be better positioned to achieve its 82% renewables target by 2030.

“We absolutely need to make sure we are ‘pulling all levers’,” Ms van den Berg said. “That includes keeping focused on the large-scale renewable projects and the vital transmission infrastructure we need to connect them. While we do that, it also makes good sense to do everything we can at a local level to bring down bills and provide more services to customers.

“We must get smarter with how we use existing infrastructure, how we maximise rooftop solar, how and where we store and manage it locally, and how we get more EV chargers in more places.

“There is a clear opportunity to get the local grid doing more of the heavy lifting in the energy transition and achieve greater savings for customers by 2030, but that window of opportunity is closing.”

“The report calls for changes that are entirely doable and can be delivered today through the right policy decisions, and fit-for-purpose regulatory settings. This is about supporting customer choices and enabling a local grid that better serves them.”

To achieve these benefits, the report recommendations include:

1. **Link local energy hubs** by linking locally-generated solar with unused capacity in the grid to operate as ‘local energy hubs’ for all the community to benefit from.
2. **Amplify untapped solar opportunities** by introducing incentives for large commercial properties to install more solar panels on existing rooftops and share it with the local community.
3. **Soak up the surplus solar** by having large batteries attached to the existing grid infrastructure so that local customers get the full benefits of solar and grid connected batteries.
4. **Plug in more EV chargers** by enabling networks to install and maintain kerbside (power poles) charging at pace to put more chargers in more places, ensuring an equitable rollout of chargers and reducing customers’ range anxiety.
5. **Sync with the grid** by connecting and coordinating all energy resources so that we better utilise our existing poles and wires, while maximising the benefits to customers.

*The Time is Now* features extensive modelling by independent experts L.E.K. Consulting. Modelling scenarios show that individual actions deliver customer benefits, but a combination of these actions would deliver even more benefits.

*The Time is Now* has been developed in partnership with global strategy consultancy L.E.K. Consulting. Modelling scenarios show that individual actions deliver customer benefits, but a combination of these actions would deliver even greater outcomes.

L.E.K. Partner Jeff Forrest said: “There is clear evidence that there is untapped potential in the distribution networks. The distribution grid offers levers that we can pull now for the rapid decarbonisation of the electricity sector.”

[Read the report.](#)

## **ENDS**

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**Energy Networks Australia is the national industry body representing Australia’s electricity transmission and distribution and gas distribution networks. Our members provide more than 16 million electricity and gas connections to almost every home and business across Australia.**