



United Energy Ring fencing information sharing protocol

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background and purpose

In October 2017, the Australian Energy Regulator (**AER**) released its Ring Fencing Guideline Version 2 (**guideline**). The guideline seeks to prevent distributors from providing their affiliates operating in unregulated markets from having an unfair advantage. The guideline includes provisions in the following three broad areas:

- cross-subsidisation—preventing distributors from using regulated revenues to subsidise activities in unregulated markets
- discrimination—ensuring distributors treat affiliates and third parties equally
- information sharing—providing electricity information to all parties on an equal basis.

In accordance with the information sharing provisions, the guideline requires United Energy (**us** and **we**) to develop an information sharing protocol. This protocol outlines the circumstances under which we will provide information to affiliates and other legal entities.¹

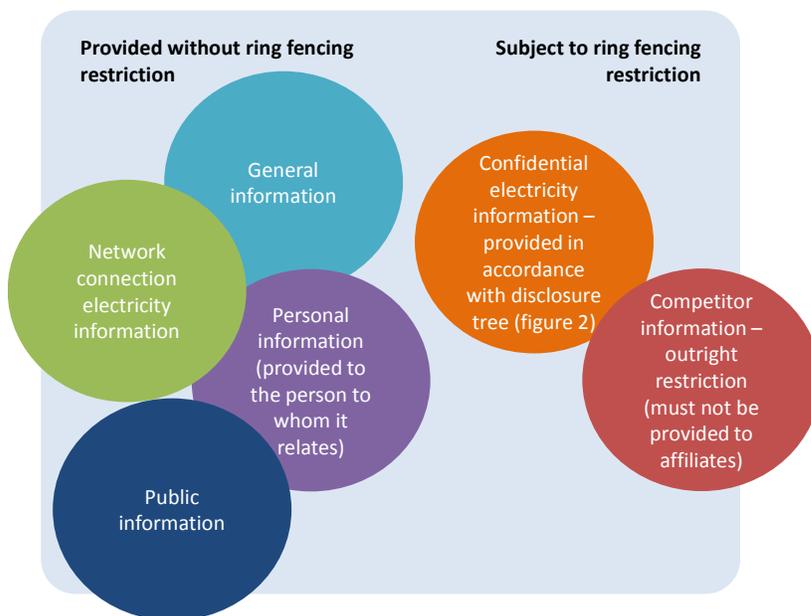
We must also develop an information register to give effect to the principle of equal access to information. The operation of the register is described in this protocol.

1.2. Scope

In this protocol we discuss the circumstances under which we will make various types of information available in accordance with the ring-fencing guideline. It also provides general guidance on seeking information from us.

The figure below provides a summary of information types and the impact of the guideline on our provision of it.

Figure 1 – types of information



¹ AER, Ring fencing guideline version 2, October 2017, 4.3.4(c). For the purpose of this protocol, affiliates are 'related electricity service providers' as defined in the guideline.



1.2.1. Limitations of this protocol

This protocol's primary purpose is to outline the ring fencing implications to our provision of information and is not a complete guide on the circumstances under which information will be provided. In particular, this protocol does not:

- outline or change ongoing obligations to comply with other laws, rules, regulations and instruments (e.g. the *Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)*) when collecting, using, storing, disclosing or transferring protected information²
- discuss the circumstances under which fees for information may apply—this is outlined in our process documents on our website or in offers we make to you
- require that we provide information to you (unless it is required by the operation of our information register)
- respecify or replace existing procedures for providing information.

Further information on these limitations is available on our website.

² Except where complying with this guideline is an exception to, and therefore practically changes, those obligations.



2. What information will we make available?

2.1. Public information

We make a range of information about us and our network publicly available and we are continually seeking to expand on this. The provision of public information will not be impacted by the guideline. For reference, below we have provided links to a selection of this information:

- **Zone substation data** – historical load data on our zone substations (refer Regulatory reports)
<https://www.unitedenergy.com.au/industry/mdocuments-library/#edprdocs>
- **Distribution Annual Planning Report** – actual and forecast network constraints and details of these constraints for the forward planning period (refer Regulatory reports)
<https://www.unitedenergy.com.au/industry/mdocuments-library/#edprdocs>
- **Real time outage information** – <https://outagemap.unitedenergy.com.au/>
- **Tariffs** – network tariff rates and tariff eligibility criteria (refer Tariffs and Charges)
<https://www.unitedenergy.com.au/industry/mdocuments-library/#edprdocs>
- **Personal consumption information** – on our 'Energy Easy' portal you can check your own energy use, set your retailer tariff and target reductions. You can view up to two years of historical data
<https://energyeasy.ue.com.au/>
- **Network standards** – network technical standards and policies are available to contractors and suppliers that have involvement with our network (refer Tech standards)
<https://www.unitedenergy.com.au/industry/mdocuments-library/>
- **Dial before you dig** – plans and information about the location of our underground cables in the network
<https://www.unitedenergy.com.au/safety/public-safety/>
- **Regulatory Information Notices** – we provide network financial, physical network and reliability information to the AER for publication https://www.aer.gov.au/networks-pipelines/network-performance?f%5b0%5d=field_accr_aer_report_type%3A1495
- **Performance reports** – we provide network performance information to the AER, which develops performance reports [https://www.aer.gov.au/networks-pipelines/network-performance?f\[0\]=field_accr_sector%3A4&f\[1\]=field_accr_aer_report_type%3A317&order=field_accr_aer_report_release_date&sort=desc](https://www.aer.gov.au/networks-pipelines/network-performance?f[0]=field_accr_sector%3A4&f[1]=field_accr_aer_report_type%3A317&order=field_accr_aer_report_release_date&sort=desc)

2.2. General and personal information

The guideline does not affect our disclosure of general and personal information (to the person to whom the information relates). This includes information provided in relation to:

- general enquiries;
- service difficulties;
- network outages and faults;
- emergency faults; and
- personal account information and complaints / complaint handling procedures (to whom the information relates).

We will continue to provide this information to all parties where appropriate and it will not be included on the information register.

The Contact Centre is the first point of contact for parties seeking these types of information. You can contact us in a number of ways as outlined on our website at <https://www.unitedenergy.com.au/contact-us/>.

2.3. Network connection electricity information

As described in section 2.4, the guideline requires that we make 'confidential electricity information' available via the information register in certain circumstances. There is a subset of this information, however, which we have



termed 'network connection electricity information' that, on request, we will provide to any party with a legitimate interest in receiving it without it being made available via the information register.

Network connection electricity information is information about the network required by load or generator developers (or their representatives) to facilitate their network connection. Developers typically need this information to design their developments and ensure they can comply with regulatory and technical requirements. This information includes:

- network constraint information and information on required augmentations—this is provided to prospective registered generators with a capacity greater than 5MW; and
- 66kV model data—this is required by prospective 66kV generation proponents (such as wind and solar farms) to develop a 'model package' that must be submitted to the Australian Energy Market Operator in accordance with the National Electricity Rules.³ This information typically includes localised;
 - line lengths and impedances;
 - transformer impedances;
 - system loads;
 - voltage control scheme detail; and
 - scenarios for evaluation.

Network connection electricity information will not be made available via the information register because:

- it is only needed by, and often paid for by, the connection proponent or its representative. The information is piecemeal and only relates to network assets at a particular location, and is unlikely to be useful to parties not involved in the connection;
- notifying all parties on the register that the information has been requested, and then providing the information to all registered parties, could interfere with closed or confidential connection tender processes;
- we have a well-established process for providing this information which does not discriminate between parties; and
- this information is often provided (with 100's of connections being made each year) and sharing it in accordance with the register will be administratively burdensome.

Therefore we will provide this information to any party who requests it and has a legitimate interest in receiving it, without notification being placed on the public register. This is consistent with our current practice.

³ AEMO, <<https://www.aemo.com.au/Electricity/National-Electricity-Market-NEM/Network-connections/Modelling-requirements>>



2.4. Confidential electricity information

The guideline ensures confidential electricity information is provided to affiliates and other entities equitably.

Confidential electricity information is defined in the guideline in two parts, as follows:

'confidential information' means **electricity information**, acquired or generated by a **DNSP** in connection with its provision of **direct control services**, that is not already publicly available, and includes **electricity information**:

- (a) that the **DNSP** derives from that information; or
- (b) provided to the **DNSP** by or in relation to a customer or prospective customer of **direct control services**.

Electricity information is defined as:

'electricity information' means information about electricity networks, electricity customers or **electricity services**, other than:

- (a) aggregated financial information; or
- (b) other service performance information;

that does not relate to an identifiable customer or class of customer

The term 'confidential' is not used to describe information that is confidential in accordance with, for example, the *Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)* or the National Electricity Rules. Rather it refers to information that is not already publicly available.

Given its broad definition, we have provided examples of confidential electricity information to clarify its meaning. Confidential electricity information includes non-public:

- network quality information—frequency stability, voltage stability, power factor and harmonic levels
- network asset loadings downstream of zone substations (zone substation loading information is published in the distribution annual planning report)
- customer consumption profiles (individual or aggregated for a customer class)
- customers' tariff assignments (unless you are seeking information on your own tariff, which is personal information).

Confidential electricity information excludes financial or service performance information that is aggregated to the network level.

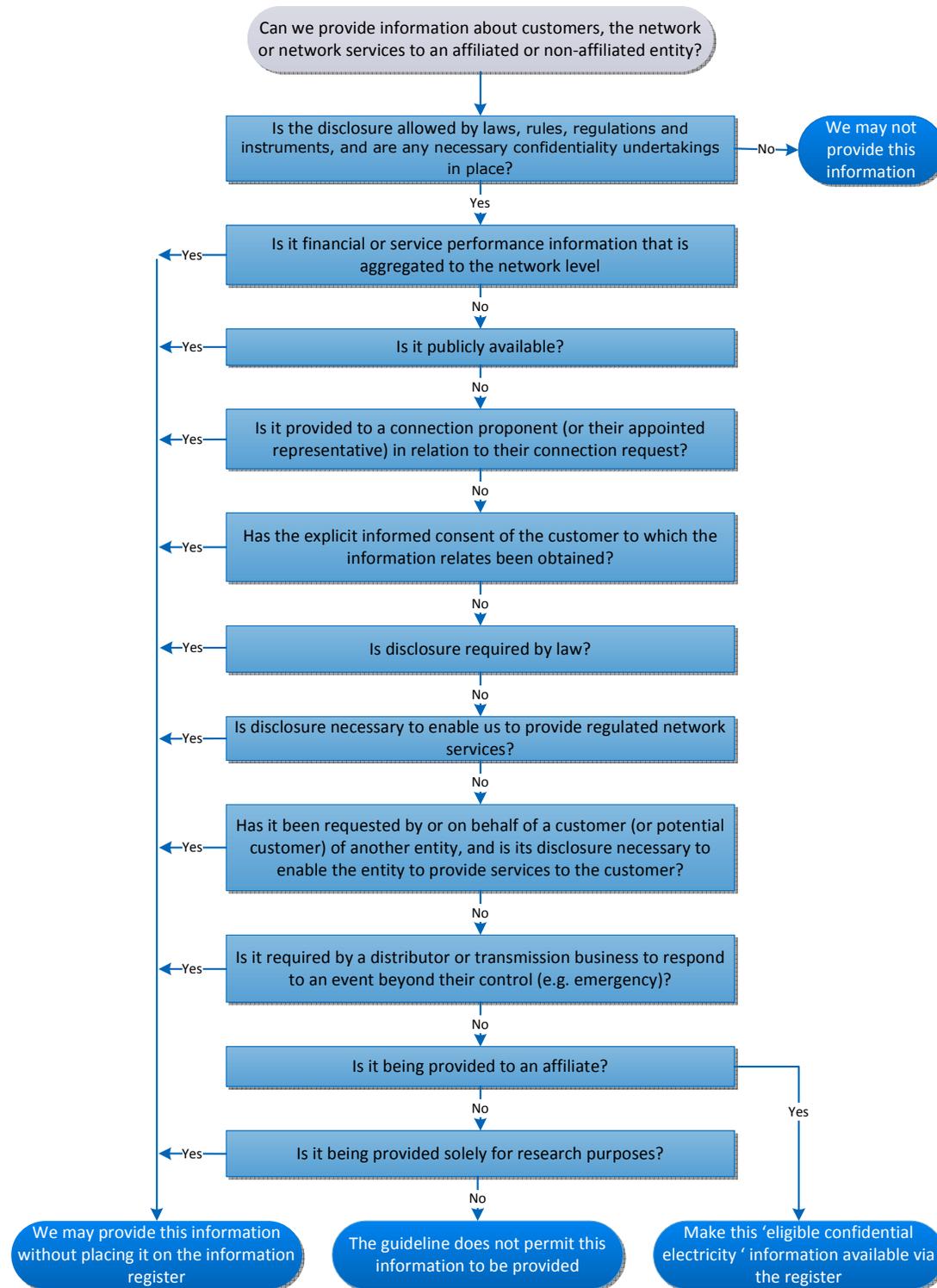
The guideline outlines specific circumstances under which confidential electricity information may be shared with third parties and affiliates. In some cases where we share this information with affiliates, we must also make it available to other parties via the information registers.⁴ We have termed information that must be made available via the information register **eligible confidential electricity information**.

The following information tree outlines the guideline's treatment of confidential electricity information. We will use this tree to determine the circumstances under which information will be made available.

⁴ AER, Ring fencing guideline version 2, October 2017, clause 4.3.4.



Figure 2.1 Information disclosure tree





2.5. Competitor information

Competitor information is described in the guideline as information we have obtained through our dealings with a competitor (or potential competitor) of affiliates where disclosure would, or would be likely to provide an advantage to the affiliate.⁵

We will not disclose competitor information to any party because doing so could undermine the competitiveness of markets and parties' competitive advantages

⁵ AER, Ring fencing guideline, 4.1(c)(iv).



3. Information register

3.1. Operation of the information register

The information register is one of the guideline's mechanisms to ensure we provide eligible confidential electricity information to affiliates and third parties on an equal basis. Consistent with the guideline, our register operates in the following way:

- affiliates, and non-affiliated entities that compete or are seeking to compete with our affiliates, who request access to confidential electricity information will be placed on the register (**registered parties**)⁶
- registered parties must provide us with a description of the kind and purpose of confidential electricity information they would like to receive⁷
- if an affiliate requests (and is provided with) information that matches the kind and purpose of information described by non-affiliated registered parties, that information will be provided to those non-affiliated registered parties on an equal basis⁸
- if an affiliate has paid a fee to receive eligible confidential electricity information (in accordance with rules or procedures), then other registered party will receive a notification that they can receive the same information if the same fee is paid
- information will be provided to registered parties on terms and conditions that require them to comply with the obligation to protect the information and to only disclose it to third parties (including affiliates) only on the basis of clause 4.3.2 and 4.3.3 (a)-(d) of the guideline.⁹

3.2. How to apply

Parties may apply for the information register by emailing ringfencing@ue.com.au. You will need to provide:

- a business name and ABN
- the market(s) in which you compete or are seeking to compete with an affiliate of ours
- a description of the kind and purpose of information you would like to receive, should the information be provided to an affiliate
- an email address to receive the eligible confidential electricity information
- a completed Confidentiality Undertaking which outlines terms and conditions relating to the use, storage and disclosure of any information received through the register (attached to this protocol and the information register available on our website).

Other than the completed Confidentiality Undertaking, this information will be made public on the register.

⁶ AER, Ring fencing guideline version 2, October 2017, clauses 4.3.4(b) & 4.3.5(a).

⁷ AER, Ring fencing guideline version 2, October 2017, clause 4.3.5(b).

⁸ To this end we may require the non-affiliated registered parties to agree to additional terms and conditions by way of variation to their Confidentiality Undertaking.

⁹ AER, Ring fencing guideline version 2, October 2017, clause 4.3.4(e).



A Confidentiality undertaking

See form below.