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MY ENERGY MARKETPLACE (MEM)

# Lessons Learnt Report No. 2

November 2020

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PROJECT PARTNERS

**ACCUR▲SSI**



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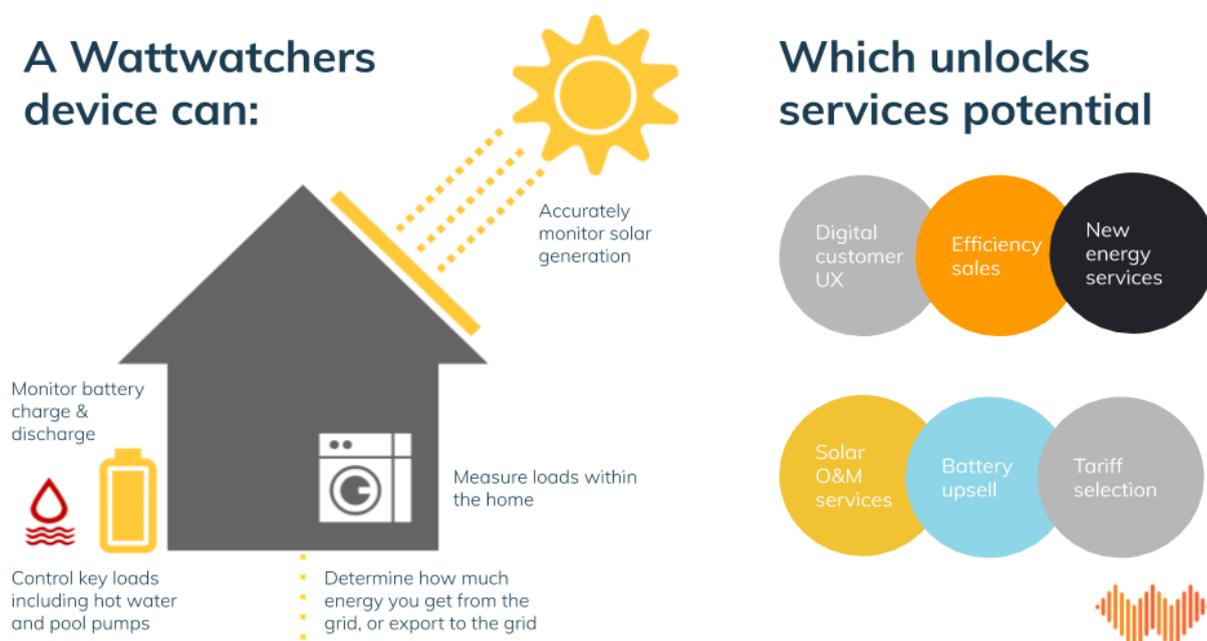
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## Overview of the project

The My Energy Marketplace (MEM) project, led by Wattwatchers Digital Energy and running over three years (2019 to 2022), is exploring a data-driven model for engaging and empowering electricity consumers to be active participants in a 'digital-and-distributed New Energy marketplace' that is now taking shape in Australia.

In particular, the MEM project focuses on residential and small business consumers, plus schools and school communities. One year in, the MEM has now deployed Wattwatchers and other smart energy management solutions to 280+ households, 40+ small businesses and 25+ schools. These are early-stage installations, including pilots and demonstrations, towards the full project deployment targets of 5,000 homes and small businesses, and 250 schools.

The MEM deals mainly with data collected from devices that consumers can control themselves—and that often are associated with energy assets owned by consumers, such as solar and battery system inverters, and 'smart devices' like Wattwatchers' solutions for monitoring and controlling electrical circuits in real-time through the cloud.



## Key MEM activities

The main activities undertaken thus far are:

- Establishment of an independent Consumer Energy Data Advisory Panel (CEDAP) to provide guidance to Wattwatchers for the MEM project (see Appendix 1)
- Development and user-testing of the 'MEM App', **mydata.energy**, a new consumer-facing online dashboard that is scheduled for its initial release in November 2020, which is after the end of reporting period covered by this document (more information at <https://mydata.energy>)
- Drafting, and the extensive reworking and refinement of consumer-facing Terms and Conditions (T&Cs)—purpose-developed for the MEM, but with the intention of using them more widely within the Wattwatchers solution suite
- Shaping of other major aspects of the data management and security architecture for the MEM e.g. key internal documents such as a Data Governance Framework (DGF) and an Information Security Policy (ISP)
- Expansion of key project partner collaborations e.g. Accurassi (tariff data integration), Solar Schools (energy and education), ANU Battery Storage and Grid Integration Program (3-year PhD student project focused on energy data-related services)
- Channel partner recruitment and development, including early deployment trials with engaged individuals, community groups, business programs, commercial solar installers, electrical contractors, niche energy retailers and others

## Lessons learnt and key reflections

### Legal

#### Consumer data rights and protections

These are live issues for many consumers and are blockers to data being acquired and shared. But people also want services that are enabled by data, so the challenge is to find a viable middle-ground between privacy and security on one hand, and access and shareability of data on the other.

Our Terms and Conditions reflect our open and clear communication approach so consumers can make informed decisions based on information presented in plain language.

'Ownership' of data is more complex than we thought

While Wattwatchers' objective is to maximise consumer 'ownership' of energy data, we've learned through the early stages of the MEM that, in broad terms, copyright law considers the entity that generates data as the 'owner.' As Wattwatchers provides the sole means of access to most of the data being made available through the MEM for both our service users and third parties, for all intents and purposes Wattwatchers 'owns' the data generated by our devices. Thus our revised objective is to maximise consumers' 'control' of their data.

## Social and Customer

### Paralysis by analysis

The 'New Energy' technology space is inherently 'new' and often confusing for consumers and communities. Yet it can involve significant spending requirements, and making the wrong calls can be expensive. So making decisions on what 'technology paths' to choose can be challenging.

We are taking an open approach to maintain consistent communication with customers and community stakeholders to allow them to make their own informed decisions.

### Fear of being 'locked in'

Because of the lack of trust in the sector, and apprehensions about making decisions because of high levels of uncertainty (e.g. about technology pathways and emerging business models), individual consumers and communities are concerned about being over-reliant on any one technology suite or vendor.

Our response follows the 'Trust' (see below) and 'Paralysis by analysis' items to support open decision making for long term benefits to our customers and community groups.

### Installation is key to the customer experience

The inherent challenges of deploying, and often retrofitting smart energy management devices at consumer sites is a core focus area for the MEM. The age, and poor or sometimes even electrically unsafe condition, of many meter boxes is a clear barrier for deployment of smart devices. These challenges will be reviewed and reported on in greater detail in future Lessons Learnt reports, when the MEM project will have moved from hundreds of devices deployed in Australian homes, small business and schools now, to thousands by the end of 2021.

## Trust... or the lack of it

This is already a known issue and a defining challenge for everyone involved in the energy sector who is trying to engage consumers, but its importance has been reinforced for Wattwatchers through the early stages of the MEM.

We continue to focus on clear and easy to understand communications with customers to build and maintain that trust throughout the project. Guidance from the project's external Data Advisory Panel (see Appendix 1) has consistently re-emphasised the importance of simple and accessible language to engage consumers and earn their trust.

## COVID-19 impacts and reflection

Like most of the country, the MEM project has been significantly impacted by COVID-19 impacts/restrictions, with delays to installations (especially in Victoria due to its extended second-wave lockdowns). Anecdotally, COVID-19 also appears to have negatively impacted on the already normally constrained decision-making 'headspace' and financial resources for schools, with a lot of traditional fundraising activities being curtailed. We believe that this has contributed to slower than expected uptake of the MEM 'School Starter Packs'.

## Financial, Technical, and Regulatory

Nothing to include in this report on these topics but will be incorporated where relevant in future reports.

## MEM Applications

The MEM Application was released to the public as part of this reporting period. In the leadup to this launch, we undertook a round of user testing on both the app itself, and the related Terms & Conditions.

Some of the learnings from this feedback have been incorporated into the findings above (such as around "trust" and "fear of being locked in").

Other feedback was received in relation to general usability, which has had an immediate impact on user experience elements such as the app's main navigation options. Additional feedback has also been taken into consideration for future releases, and we will be monitoring usage statistics and undertaking further user research as the app's development continues.

We expect to provide a “deeper dive” in subsequent Lessons Learnt reports, as this further customer feedback is received.

## APPENDICES

# APPENDIX 1: DATA ADVISORY PANEL

The Consumer Energy Data Advisory Panel (CEDAP) provides Wattwatchers with high-level independent expert advice and expertise on consumer energy data and key related issues, including but not limited to consumer perspectives, stakeholder engagement, technologies, privacy, security, and consumer data rights.

Specific MEM elements that the Advisory Panel provides guidance on include development of the new mydata.energy app, consumer T&Cs, an information security policy and a data governance framework.

## Membership

The Terms of Reference for the Advisory Panel allow for nine (9) Members<sup>1</sup>. Currently they are:

### Donna Luckman (Chair)

Leads the Zero Carbon Moreland Campaign for Moreland City Council in Melbourne. Non-executive director with the Coalition for Community Energy (C4CE). Member of the Beyond Zero Emissions Investment Reference Group. Spent 16 years with Renew (Alternative Technology Association), including six years as CEO.

### Adam Berry

Associate Professor, A/DRsch The Data Science Institute, University of Technology Sydney (UTS). Former leader of the CSIRO's Energy Use Data Model (EUDM), which is now known as the National Energy Analytics Research (NEAR) program.

### Sarea Coates

Data Specialist with the Energy Security Board (ESB) and part-time advisor to the CSIRO's NEAR program. Previous roles with the Australian Government including Senior Policy Advisor in the Department of Environment and Energy working on the Consumer Data Right for Energy.

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<sup>1</sup> One Member position is currently vacant

## David Havyatt

Senior Economist in the CEO Secretariat with Energy Consumers Australia, where he provides high-level economic input to ECA's advocacy. Executive Officer (part-time role) with the Illawarra Consumers of Energy. Previously held senior advisory and management roles in the telecommunications sector.

## Sabiene Heindl

Director of The Energy Charter, a world-first whole-of-sector energy industry-led initiative to address customer expectations. A lawyer by profession, previously was ECA's Director, Stakeholder Engagement, and Corporate Counsel. Background in intellectual property law, telecommunications and the music industry.

## Tim Hewat

Head of Enterprise Data Services with the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO). Extensive cross-sector consulting and executive experience including government agencies, and the property, banking and gambling industries.

## Yolande Strengers/Larissa Nicholls (alternates)

Yolande Strengers is Associate Professor of Digital Technology and Society at Monash University in Melbourne. Larissa Nicholls is Senior Research Fellow at Monash University. Both focus heavily on issues for energy consumers.

## Ben Waters

Sustainability and cleantech leader. Co-founded Presync in 2014 after 17 years at GE in leadership, sustainability, commercial and engineering roles and, previously as an officer in the Royal Australian Air Force.

## Support roles

**ARENA observer:** Adrian Rule, ARENA's Delegate for the MEM

**Wattwatchers secretariat:** Grant Young, Chief Innovation Officer; Murray Hogarth, Director of Communications and Community Networks; Tim McCoy, Program Manager.