



RESERVE BANK OF AUSTRALIA

Decommissioning of the Bulk Electronic Clearing System

RBA Risk Assessment Update

10 March 2026

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Executive Summary

Following publication of the RBA Risk Assessment on the decommissioning of the Bulk Electronic Clearing System (BECS) in March 2025,¹ the RBA has put in place an annual program of oversight of the intended decommissioning of BECS, Australia's primary account-to-account (A2A) system. This report provides an update on the evolving risk profile and progress made since March 2025 by industry against the recommendations in the RBA Risk Assessment.

Overall, the RBA welcomes industry's efforts to implement the recommendations, especially the increased coordination within industry and the more direct engagement with end users. In December 2025, AusPayNet announced that until further progress has been made and a clear roadmap has been developed for the future of A2A payments in Australia, it was removing the target end date of June 2030.² The RBA Risk Assessment identified risks that a disorderly transition pose to end users, safety and resilience, efficiency and competition in the A2A payments system. These risks have largely subsided in the near term with the revised approach to transitioning A2A payments away from BECS.

Nonetheless, several areas of risk persist, while other risks have emerged to be more prominent.

Recommendation 1 of the RBA Risk Assessment calls for a **shared vision** and strategic objectives for the future of the A2A payments system that is in the public interest. As outlined in the Risk Assessment, the RBA deems it unlikely that a target future state would be in the public interest if it is reliant on either the New Payment Platform's (NPP) single credit transfer (SCT) capabilities alone, or on retaining BECS without investment to maintain it and remediate its limitations. Therefore, **recommendation 2** asks for a more **comprehensive set of options** to be analysed to enable the development of an industry roadmap to achieve the strategic vision. There are two key areas of concern with implementing these foundational recommendations:

- Stakeholders have highlighted **insufficient consensus within industry**, which impedes the effective decision-making needed to establish a path forward for A2A payments. It also has the potential to further impede product development and implementation. This concern particularly relates to the delivery of bulk payment capabilities on NPP rails or possible upgrades to BECS.
- Industry's **pace of progress**, especially on the options analysis (recommendation 2), has been slow and is impeding its ability to engage in more detailed planning on how to migrate to the future state.

The industry risks losing the **momentum needed to modernise A2A payments**. In recognition of this, some industry participants are calling for further governance changes within industry and for the RBA to provide industry with more direction on the future of A2A payments.

The RBA recommends that industry continues to implement the 2025 recommendations with greater focus on achieving consensus while maintaining momentum. If industry is unable to make sufficient progress on modernising A2A payments, the RBA would need to consider taking further action.

1 RBA (2025), '[Decommissioning of the Bulk Electronic Clearing System: RBA Risk Assessment](#)', March.

2 AusPayNet (2025), 'AusPayNet Revises Outlook for the Bulk Clearing System (BECS) Framework', Media Release, 16 December.

Context

In March 2025, the **RBA published its Risk Assessment of AusPayNet's** intended decommissioning of the BECS framework by a target date of 2030. The RBA Risk Assessment identified a number of risks to an orderly transition from BECS to alternative systems, mainly the NPP. The Risk Assessment noted that these risks were not sufficiently understood and adequately managed by relevant industry participants. The RBA put forward a set of recommendations, with a subset of high-priority foundational recommendations. To complement this, the RBA put in place an annual program of oversight of the intended decommissioning of BECS.³ This program seeks to assess the risk profile of the intended decommissioning and to monitor how risks are managed and evolve as industry responds to the recommendations of the RBA Risk Assessment.

The RBA Risk Assessment's foundational recommendations asked industry to:

- formulate a clear **vision and strategic objectives** for the future of the A2A payments system that is consistent with the public interest and considers a broader set of stakeholder requirements
- analyse a more **comprehensive set of options** for achieving the vision's strategic objectives and provide a clear articulation of the issues with the current BECS system
- establish a centralised forum responsible for **governance and coordination** of the BECS migration
- establish mechanisms that ensure that **all relevant information is obtained**, verified and meaningfully considered
- define **success criteria for a bulk payments** functionality and assess prospective solutions against these.

In December 2025, AusPayNet announced the **removal of the target end date** for decommissioning BECS and committed to retaining BECS until further progress has been made and a clear roadmap has been developed. AusPayNet indicated that it will continue to assess and update the outlook for BECS every six months. This has **considerably reduced the risk of a disorderly transition** in the short-to-medium term. Key risks regarding a lack of planning and coordination, limited contingency and resilience arrangements, the economics of the transition, and the capacity and capabilities of the NPP have been mitigated by the industry no longer targeting the decommissioning of BECS in 2030.

³ RBA (2025), '[Ongoing Oversight Arrangements for the Intended Decommission of the Bulk Electronic Clearing System](#)', May.

Progress Against the Recommendations

Overview

Following the RBA Risk Assessment, industry implemented several initiatives to support the governance and coordination of the migration:

- **Industry committed to aligning on a shared vision** – or desired target state – for A2A payments and analysing a spectrum of options for achieving the vision’s strategic objectives.
- The **A2A Roundtable** (comprising AP+, AusPayNet, the RBA and the Australian Treasury) commenced in September 2025 to establish the shared vision. The Roundtable is supported by the AusPayNet and AP+ membership and committees.
- Industry implemented **mechanisms to ensure that it received end users’ perspectives** on current and future payment needs. AusPayNet and AP+ jointly consulted end users and participants to help inform the vision for A2A payments.⁴ In addition, several key stakeholders undertook their own end user engagement programs.
- AP+’s **Move to NPP Steering Committee** (MTNSC) has enabled its members to provide oversight and strategic guidance for AP+’s ‘Move to NPP’ program. However, some stakeholders are concerned by the steering committee’s lack of decision-making powers.
- NPP participants have endorsed **success criteria for exploring a multi-credit transfer (MCT) functionality for the NPP**, which would enable the NPP to process bulk payments.

Vision for A2A payments

The RBA Risk Assessment’s first recommendation was for industry to formulate a clear vision and strategic objectives for the future of the A2A payments system consistent with the public interest and with a broad set of stakeholder requirements considered.⁵ Consensus on a desired end state is essential for industry to effectively manage a modernisation program of this scale and avoid generating major inefficiencies and risks in the payments system. Without agreed strategic objectives that balance the spectrum of interests across the A2A ecosystem, industry ‘buy in’ will be hindered as stakeholders may struggle to create business cases and secure funding for infrastructure investments necessary to support the transition of payments away from BECS.

4 An overview of the joint consultation and its findings is available on the AP+ and AusPayNet websites. See AusPayNet (2025), ‘Public Consultation on the Future Vision for Account-to-Account Payments in Australia’; AP+ (2025), ‘Public Consultation 1. The Future for Account-to-Account Payments’.

5 In July 2025, the RBA released a high-level conceptual framework for a successful A2A payments system that served the public interest, intended as a guiding document for the Roundtable discussions. See RBA (2025), ‘[Public Interest Framework for a Successful Account-to-Account Payments System](#)’, July.

The A2A vision, including a roadmap of deliverables and milestones for its achievement, is being shaped by a Roundtable comprising AusPayNet, AP+, the RBA and the Australian Treasury.⁶ Stakeholder perspectives have been incorporated into the vision development process through submissions to a joint AusPayNet and AP+ public consultation on end users' current and future payment needs.⁷ AP+ simultaneously launched a public consultation seeking submissions on the desired future capabilities of the NPP.

The RBA supports the public consultations as a step forward in ensuring information relevant to the future of A2A is obtained and meaningfully considered. This particularly provides an opportunity for stakeholders that have not traditionally been consulted to have direct input. As of March 2026, the Roundtable has begun to engage directly with stakeholders on a draft A2A vision. A wider consultation on the draft vision is planned for April, with a final published vision expected by June 2026.

Options analysis

The RBA Risk Assessment highlighted that the decision-making processes that led to the establishment of a target end date for BECS did not sufficiently explore potential alternatives to the complete decommissioning of BECS. If BECS is retained, it will likely require maintenance and uplift investment to address its current limitations. Accordingly, the RBA recommended that industry analyse a comprehensive set of options – including upgrading BECS – for achieving the strategic objectives outlined in the A2A vision.

As of March 2026, AusPayNet has taken preliminary steps to address this recommendation. However, the pace of addressing this recommendation has been slower than ideal, and other workstreams – such as the development of an MCT solution on the NPP – have been progressing ahead of the findings from the options analysis. The RBA considers it risky for industry to make investment decisions on future A2A infrastructure before the options analysis is completed. Inefficient outcomes, where industry needs to potentially revise and reconsider previous analysis and decisions, would be more likely to occur.

The options analysis should meaningfully consider a range of ways to achieve the shared vision and strategic objectives for A2A payments. As described in the RBA Risk Assessment, options for achieving this vision should be assessed in a transparent way for whether they meet end user needs and for their costs and benefits across the payments ecosystem. The RBA highlights the need for the options to be considered at an ecosystem level, recognising that different options will have distinct cost implications for central infrastructures, participants and end users.

6 Authorisation for the Roundtable was granted with conditions by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) on 1 August 2025. For details on the ACCC authorisation, see ACCC (2025), 'Australian Payments Network Limited and Ors', Authorisations Register, 1 August.

7 The consultation on the vision was conducted in July 2025 and received 68 submissions from a range of stakeholders across the A2A ecosystem, including end users, service providers, and industry associations. For the aggregated and anonymised findings from both consultations, see AP+, n 4; AP+ (2025), 'Public Consultation 2. NPP Capabilities and Enhancements'.

Governance and coordination

Removal of the 2030 target end date

The decision not to target 2030 for the decommissioning of BECS has **considerably reduced the risk of disorderly transition** in the near term. This decision followed broad industry engagement from AusPayNet, where the majority of BECS members informed AusPayNet that they considered the target end date to not be achievable. If the work on the A2A vision, options analysis, and roadmap leads AusPayNet to decommission BECS, a new target end date will not be set until several milestones and thresholds in industry's agreed roadmap have been delivered.

Modernising A2A payments

The 2030 target date had promoted broad acknowledgement of the need to modernise the A2A ecosystem. Therefore, the removal of the target introduces three new related risks:

- Without a clear timeline, industry may lose the momentum required to modernise A2A processes.
- As momentum weakens, participants could shift to pursuing their own initiatives, resulting in diverging investment priorities across the ecosystem and a larger degree of fragmentation.
- More broadly, the creation and then removal of an end date may have undermined trust in A2A governance and coordination mechanisms, making setting future target dates or mandates more challenging.

To mitigate the risk of losing momentum, trust and not making decisions in the public interest, the development of a shared vision and the analysis of options to deliver that vision need to be progressed with adequate pace. It also needs to be of sufficient quality to provide a robust foundation for developing the roadmap to deliver the vision.

Need for consensus to drive decisions

Stakeholder feedback to the RBA has indicated that industry has not yet been able to reach consensus on the future of A2A payments. Inconsistent support for some of the transition's core issues is a risk not only for initial decision-making but also for implementing the decisions subsequently. This risk is particularly demonstrated in the differing views on whether the NPP needs to have bulk payment processing capabilities.

The RBA supports continued industry engagement via forums and public consultations and stronger governance of A2A modernisation. These forums include the A2A Roundtable, which is comprised of AP+, AusPayNet, the Treasury and the RBA. BECS members and NPP participants provide input into the A2A Roundtable through workshops and committees facilitated by AusPayNet and AP+. The Move to NPP Steering Committee also provides governance, oversight and strategic guidance for AP+'s Move to NPP program, but has no formal decision-making powers.

Stakeholders have reported that AP+'s ability to govern and coordinate programs related to the proposed decommissioning is improving. The Move to NPP Steering Committee is increasingly demonstrating its ability to add value in supporting the migration. Committee participants unanimously endorsed the appointment of an independent chair, which has helped facilitate balanced conversations by providing all committee members an opportunity to contribute their perspectives. However, some

participants have shared concerns regarding the Move to NPP Steering Committee's lack of actionable power.

The RBA suggests that both AusPayNet and AP+ continually review and improve their governance and coordination structures. This will allow the full spectrum of perspectives to contribute to the consensus-based decision-making guiding the modernisation of the A2A system.

End user engagement

Industry has uplifted its engagement with end users. End users consulted by the RBA have reported that AP+ is actively engaging with them and seeking to understand their payment requirements. In addition to the joint AusPayNet and AP+ public consultation, several key stakeholders, including industry bodies, undertook independent end user engagement programs.⁸ The RBA welcomes that AP+ now has the ability to directly engage with end users – enabling them to understand their requirements – and encourages further direct two-way dialogues between AusPayNet, AP+ and end users.

A specific example of improved end user engagement by AP+ involves the Payday Super reforms to superannuation. The changes include the requirement for superannuation funds to enable receipt and allocation of payments via the NPP.⁹ AP+ engages with stakeholders affected by these reforms through regular bilateral discussions and runs pilot implementations with stakeholders. The RBA welcomes AP+ directly working with corporate and business customers seeking to process payments using the NPP.

Among end users, there is growing awareness of the benefits of more modern payments systems and the limitations of BECS in its current form. The NPP's capability to facilitate real-time, data-rich payments provides value to end users, particularly those for whom cash-flow and payment timing are important. Other advantages of the NPP include payment-success notifications, 24/7 operational availability, and an easier reconciliation process. The indirect costs and limitations of BECS – such as additional back-office processing and limited financial crime controls and protections – are better understood. At the same time, the comparatively high cost of NPP transactions remain a key concern for end users (see the Economic transition section below). Many end users do not currently have use cases requiring the ability to make real-time, data-rich payments. For these end users, the NPP's capabilities do not justify the additional expense of NPP transactions.

Overall, these developments are important steps in ensuring all relevant information for the future of A2A payments is obtained and meaningfully considered.

Economic transition

Progress against recommendations relating to the economic transition has been limited. AP+ and NPP participants are unlikely to be able to provide certainty on the costs of NPP transactions until industry aligns on a vision and roadmap for A2A payments, as well as future capabilities of A2A rails. Wholesale

8 Prior to the RBA Risk Assessment, it was a common approach for financial institutions to represent their customers' needs and restrict AusPayNet and AP+'s direct engagement with end users to a limited subset of end users.

9 Under the Payday Super reforms (which commence on 1 July 2026), superannuation contributions must be received by the employee's super fund within seven business days. If a contribution cannot be allocated, super funds must return it within three business days. Separately, the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) has approval of the NPP for SuperStream payments and rollovers. From 1 July 2026, superannuation funds and self-managed superannuation funds need to ensure they can receive and allocate NPP payments. See ATO (2025), 'Updated Guidance on SuperStream Standard and FVS', 20 August.

fees for NPP transactions remain significantly higher than for BECS transactions, although industry anticipates NPP wholesale fees will decrease as the volume of NPP transactions increases. Due to the technological complexity and 24/7 operation of the NPP, the RBA expects the wholesale cost of NPP payments to remain above current BECS costs.

It remains unclear whether – as a whole – fees charged to end users for NPP payments are higher than those charged for BECS payments. Visibility into NPP end user fees is constrained by the limited granularity of data reported by providers of A2A payments and heterogeneous pricing models applied across institutions. End users and industry participants require clarity on the upfront and ongoing costs of making NPP payments to inform capital spending decisions and their approaches to payments modernisation.

The RBA will continue to work with providers of A2A payments to collect higher quality end user pricing data to enable industry to establish a higher degree of certainty on the cost of A2A payments.

Treatment of bulk payments

The risks relating to the treatment of large volume payments have largely been mitigated in the near term by the decision to remove the 2030 target end date for BECS. AP+ and NPP participants have committed to exploring an MCT functionality for the NPP that would enable the NPP to process bulk payments. NPP participants have endorsed success criteria that will guide the MCT's design. The criteria include objectives aligned with the public interest, such as resilience, recoverability, cost efficiency, and fair and open access. AP+'s board will consider whether or not AP+ should proceed to build an NPP MCT service or alternatively uplift its SCT service to support the processing of high volumes of payments on the NPP.

There is a significant risk arising from AP+'s decision-making and broader industry work regarding the future of A2A payments not being sequenced. The RBA encourages AP+ and AusPayNet to use the Roundtable to ensure that decision-making is appropriately sequenced and takes into account the benefits of achieving industry consensus. If industry better coordinates their efforts, this will mitigate the risk of having to revisit critical decisions in the future. Achieving industry consensus will also reduce risks to the subsequent implementation of any decisions made.

Operational resilience and contingency arrangements

In the near term, risks to operational resilience and contingency stemming from the proposed decommissioning of BECS have subsided. Participants will retain the option to use two A2A systems, which provides a degree of redundancy.

Reflecting the importance of resilience to end users, A2A payments resilience objectives are expected to feature in the A2A vision. AP+ has uplifted its collection of NPP participants' incident reporting data. The data will be used to identify areas for improvement and inform next steps. Compared with previous years, NPP outage durations were relatively low in 2024 and 2025, suggesting improved resilience across the NPP ecosystem. As the NPP's volumes increase, it will become increasingly important that it has robust contingency arrangements.

Other capabilities of alternative rails

Reach

A key challenge to winding down the BECS framework is ensuring that all relevant BECS-reachable accounts would be able to send and receive payments using alternative payment methods. Payers will not be able to migrate off BECS if payments cannot be made reliably to all intended payees via alternatives such as the NPP. The Payments System Board has communicated the importance of financial institutions continuing to work towards making their accounts reachable by the NPP.¹⁰ Despite this, little progress has been made over the past year to connect relevant BECS-reachable accounts to the NPP.¹¹ AP+ and NPP participants expect to connect a further 8 per cent of accounts in the future, while approximately 3 per cent of accounts are currently expected to remain unconnected to the NPP.

Additionally, there remain around 30 authorised deposit-taking institutions (ADIs) that use BECS to process payments but are not yet connected to the NPP. These institutions include foreign bank branches, foreign subsidiary banks and small Australian-owned ADIs. In discussion with the RBA, these unconnected institutions have commonly cited investment and transition costs, and technical complexity as major barriers to connecting to the NPP. As a result, there is substantial variation in institutions' plans to connect to the NPP, with some having defined timelines while others are still exploring different connection arrangements.¹²

Another account-reach issue identified by the industry over the past year relates to managing outdated bank state branch (BSB) numbers in the NPP. When a BSB becomes obsolete (e.g. due to branch closures or bank mergers), financial institutions typically reroute BECS payments automatically from the outdated BSB to a new BSB to ensure the payment makes it to the intended recipient. Similar processes have not been widely implemented for the NPP, which means that some payments that would previously have been successfully processed via BECS are rejected when sent via the NPP. AP+ has prioritised exploring possible solutions to this issue.

There remains a strong need for AP+ and NPP participants to provide assurance on when account-reach gaps and data issues will be resolved and align on appropriate, time-bound plans to make the NPP or alternative services available to their customers.

PayTo

PayTo provides a modern alternative to the BECS direct debit system, giving payers additional control over their recurring payments, and giving payee businesses increased data capabilities and speed of settlement. However, PayTo has yet to demonstrate its maturity as a direct debit replacement. While PayTo use grew in 2025, growth was primarily driven by new payment agreements, rather than the

10 RBA (2023), '[Payments System Board Update: February 2023 Meeting](#)', Media Release No 2023-05, 16 February.

11 As of August 2025, 89 per cent of accounts at NPP participants that are connected to BECS were also connected to the NPP, a slight increase from the previous year. This increase was mostly driven by the opening of new accounts that are both BECS- and NPP-enabled. In absolute terms, the number of existing BECS accounts still to be reached by the NPP declined only modestly over the year.

12 Some institutions have also found that connecting to the NPP has taken longer than originally anticipated. Despite 11 institutions having indicated to the RBA that they intended to connect in 2024 or 2025, only five previously unconnected ADIs have successfully connected to the NPP over the past two years.

migration of existing direct debits. The vast majority of account-based pull payments in Australia continue to be made using BECS and the barriers inhibiting the use of PayTo persist.¹³

AP+ and NPP participants are working to address the barriers inhibiting the use of PayTo, including banks' service gaps and variability, and participants' concerns about arrangements for managing fraud risks. This has included the development of frameworks to standardise customer experiences and manage fraud risks. However, further work is required to achieve consensus about the approach to resolving the remaining barriers.

Currently, PayTo only supports single direct debit transfers. AP+ is considering developing a bulk payment initiation capability to support direct debit use cases (bulk PayTo) alongside its exploration of MCT design options. Other PayTo functionalities are also yet to be developed, including the ability for payers to port PayTo payments between their accounts.¹⁴

13 The total value of PayTo agreements was only a fraction (0.1 per cent) of the total value of BECS direct debits in 2025, although some progress has been made in migrating certain types of direct debits (e.g. superannuation contributions) to PayTo.

14 PayTo currently does not offer payers the ability to port their PayTo mandates between accounts. This capability would promote competition by making it easier for customers to switch financial institutions. The introduction of PayTo porting had been scheduled for 2026 but was removed from AP+'s Product Roadmap in its December 2025 update.