

Building the future of account-to-account payments in Australia

**Public consultation on NPP
capabilities**

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Consultation process

Making a submission

AP+ is undertaking a public consultation seeking input and views from stakeholders and end users of account-to-account payments on their needs for the future capability of the New Payments Platform (**NPP**), Australia's real-time payments infrastructure. This includes understanding the payment needs and requirements of end users such as businesses and government and other key stakeholders or intermediaries involved in payments such as organisations that process payments on behalf of end users.

Written submissions, or enquiries in relation to this consultation, can be made by via email:

consultations@auspayplus.com.au

There is no requirement or expectation that written submissions will include responses to all the questions contained in this consultation paper. Respondents are welcome to provide feedback to all or only parts of this consultation and the questions posed.

Submissions provided by email should be in a separate document, in Word or RTF format. Any submissions in PDF format must also be accompanied by a version in either Word or RTF format.

Please include the name of the person or organisation providing the response and contact details.

Closing date for submissions: Thursday, 31 July 2025

What happens to submissions

Consultation responses will be read by AP+ staff working on or involved in the development of NPP capabilities. The consultation findings will be used by AP+ and NPP participating members to inform the future roadmap development for the NPP, in particular the capabilities required to support the movement of payments currently made on legacy payments infrastructure over to the NPP.

Submissions confidentiality and privacy

Responses to this consultation will be treated as confidential and only used for the purpose of this consultation. AP+ may disclose findings from this consultation only on an aggregated and/or anonymised basis.

AP+ will treat any personal information collected via this consultation in accordance with its [privacy policy](#).

By lodging a submission, you grant AP+ a royalty-free licence to use and reproduce your submission solely for the purpose of the consultation, and subject to applicable confidentiality and privacy obligations.

Background

New Payments Platform (NPP)

The NPP facilitates real-time, data-rich payments, 24 hours a day, every day of the year with funds transferred in close to real time. More than 115 banks, financial institutions and fintechs use the NPP to support over \$6 billion of payments each day moving quickly and securely between bank accounts using Osko, PayID and PayTo.

Since the NPP was launched in 2018, account-to-account transfers have been migrating across to this real-time payment system, with the platform processing more than one third of account-to-account payments.

The NPP uses the data-rich ISO 20022 messaging format, the new global standard for payments systems that allows key information to be embedded into a payment transaction. This messaging format and the ability to incorporate data in a structured and consistent manner together with the payment enables significantly more efficient processing throughout the entire journey of the payment process. This data capability can also be tailored to the needs of different payment types, such as payroll, superannuation and tax.

By utilising line by line processing, the NPP provides the ability to quickly identify and isolate any payment errors that require correction (as the payment is rejected in real-time), while all other payments can continue to be processed in real-time without interruption. Payment notifications in real-time allow users to know the outcome of a payment instantly - avoiding up to a two-day wait for confirmation and reducing manual exception handling efforts.

The platform's payee validation services, PayID and Confirmation of Payee (CoP) which will begin rolling out in 2025, gives citizens, corporate and government users confidence that the payment is going to the intended account by matching the account name prior to the payment being made. This has significant benefits in detecting, disrupting and preventing certain types of fraud and scams.

The NPP's PayTo service is a modern alternative to direct debits and supports third party payment initiation more generally. PayTo has been enabled for retail (payer) customers, with the service available in 95% of retail banking accounts and is being rolled out to business (payee) customers. The visibility of PayTo payments for both users and customers, alongside real-time verification of customer accounts and a data-rich messaging format enables more efficient processing of a payment throughout its entire end-to-end journey.

Key facts and figures

- In 2024, the NPP processed 1.63 billion transactions in real time with a value of over \$2 trillion.
- NPP is always available and supports payments 24 hours a day, every day of the year
- NPP now accounts for 1 in 3 account-to-account payments
- The average daily payment value has increased to over \$6 billion
- In April 2024, the NPP securely processed a single payment of \$40.25 billion in real time
- Over 27 million PayIDs are registered
- 114+ million accounts can make and receive NPP payments

Source: AP+ data 31 March 2025 and RBA payments data; PayID data as of May 2025

As modern payments infrastructure, the NPP delivers significant benefits to end users, in particular businesses, corporates and government agencies:



Move money anytime

Make and receive payments 24/7 – including weekends and public holidays



Certainty

Real-time information provides clear visibility on incoming payments and certainty on payments out



Enable powerful business efficiencies

Streamlined reconciliations and payment processes save businesses time and money



Better customer experiences

Delight customers with better experiences made possible by fast, information-rich payments



Optimise cash management

Unlock more efficient use of working capital with real-time visibility of cash



Confidence money is going where you think it is

Safeguard payments with advanced addressing and validation

Modernising Australia's payment systems

Payments in Australia are trending towards more use of electronic payments methods, mobile wallets¹ and real-time account-to-account payments². Modern payment infrastructure, such as the NPP, offer benefits for end users such as 24/7 availability, real-time funds transfer, payment certainty enabled by real-time information, modern messaging standards and enhanced data, account and payee validation capabilities.

Many account-to-account payments, including welfare, pension, salary and bill payments, are currently processed via the direct entry (DE) system (also known as the Bulk Electronic Clearing System, or BECS) which has been in operation for more than thirty years.

In 2019, AusPayNet and the Australian Payments Council conducted a consultation with BECS members on 'A Future State for Australia's Payment Systems' that aimed to help shape industry's thinking on the future state of Australia's payment systems. The findings were issued in August 2020, in the 'Future State of Payments Action Plan'³ and updated in 2021 in the 'Future State of Payments Action Plan 2021 Update'⁴. This Action Plan highlighted that a migration of BECS transactions to more modern digital alternatives would help support innovation and efficiency, and contribute to better outcomes for users of payments, including improved security.

In June 2023, the Australian government released a Strategic Plan for Australia's Payments System⁵ that identifies significant benefits and opportunities for Australia in modernising its payments infrastructure including uplifting competition, productivity and innovation across the economy.

In December 2023, AusPayNet concluded a three-year consultation on the strategic future of BECS, involving over 85 entities including BECS members, the major payment schemes, fintechs, and end-users like government agencies, superannuation funds, and large corporates. In summary, the industry supported a transition away from BECS to more modern payment system alternatives, and AusPayNet set a target end date of June 2030 for the BECS Framework to focus and accelerate industry efforts in this direction.

¹ Reserve Bank of Australia 'Payment System Board 2024 Annual Report'

² Reserve Bank of Australia 'Payment System Board 2023 Annual Report' p. 24

³ [Future State of Payments Action Plan](#)

⁴ [Future State of Payments Action Plan 2021 Update](#)

⁵ [A strategic plan for Australia's Payment System](#)

The majority of BECS transactions are expected to migrate to the NPP.

Consultation process on NPP capabilities

As industry prepares for the migration of payments to the NPP, AP+ is undertaking this consultation to seek the views of key stakeholders and end users on the key capabilities and enhancements required on the NPP to support all stakeholder and end user needs, including consumers, businesses and government. Responses to this consultation are also welcome from other stakeholder groups, including organisations or intermediaries involved in the processing of payments or other payments related activity.

This consultation has been divided into two parts:

Part 1: Bulk payment processing

AP+ has been working with industry on specific capability required to support the processing of bulk files that contain multiple payments to determine how these payments can be most efficiently processed on the NPP.

Part 2: Other capabilities including standard payment instruction, batch booking and trace accounts

AP+ has been in discussion with industry and a range of stakeholders to identify other potential enhancements to NPP processes and payment messaging that would add value for financial institutions, digital service providers and end users. These potential enhancements include the use of batch identifiers with the NPP payment message, making it easier to identify individual payments originating from a batch file, the development of a standard payment instruction format for NPP payments or future data enhancements to the NPP payment message.

Part 1: Bulk Payments

Processing of bulk payments today

Many account to account payments get processed on BECS today by end users 'batching' a number of payments together into a single file and submitting that file to their bank or payment service provider to be processed. These files are then 'de-bulked' (i.e. separated into individual payments) and re-bulked in order to be sent to the appropriate payer bank receiving the payments.

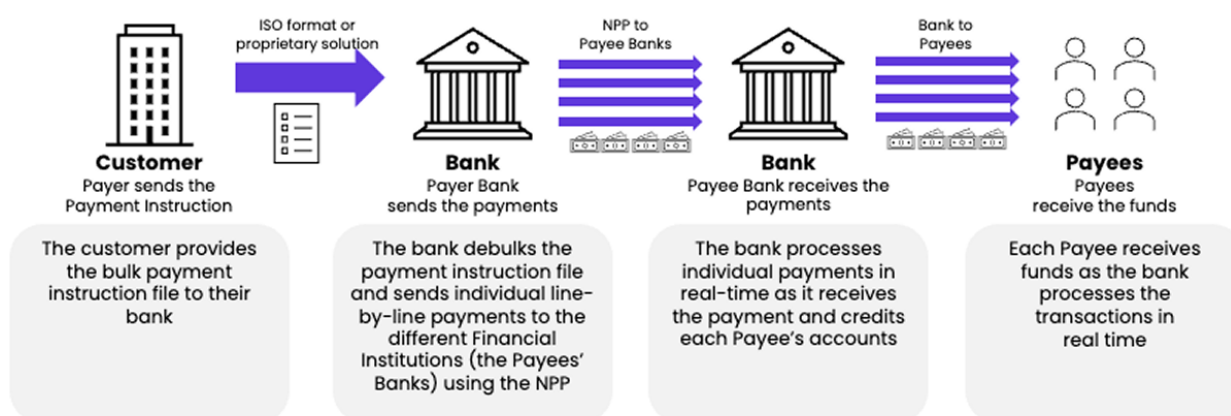
Processing payments on the NPP

The NPP was designed to process single payments line-by-line, rather than batching a number of payments together, as occurs on BECS today. This approach was taken to facilitate real-time processing and support the efficiencies that can be delivered from the ability to isolate individual payment issues.

End users looking to migrate bulk payments to the NPP have options available as to the approach they might choose to take:

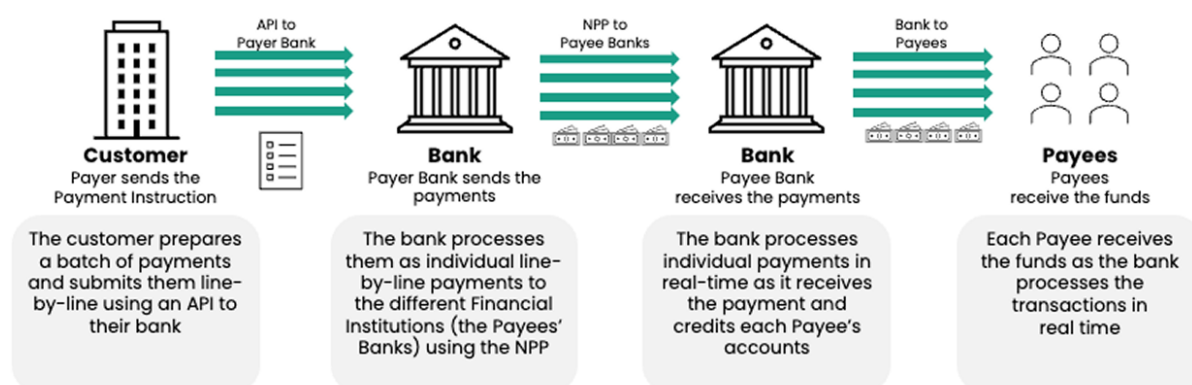
- 1) As per the current process, bulk payment instructions can continue to be provided to the end user's financial institution or payment service provider (PSP) using the same bulk file format that the end user uses today. The financial institution or PSP will de-bulk these instructions to be processed as single NPP payments.

With a bulk payment instruction file



- 2) Alternatively end users may choose to shift to submitting their payments to their financial institution or PSP using APIs for more continuous payment processing

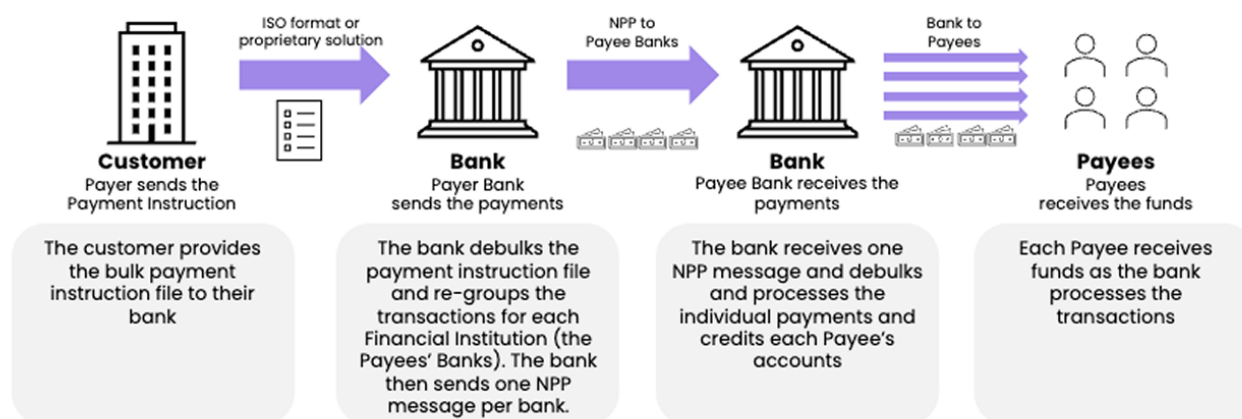
With a batch payment initiation request by API



Both approaches are being used today as end users start to migrate their payments to the NPP.

For those bulk payments for which the above solutions are not ideal, AP+ has received industry feedback that a standard approach to processing these bulk payments across the platform would help facilitate migration. Since mid 2024, AP+ has consulted and collaborated with industry to determine how to best solve for processing these payments on the NPP. At the end of 2024, industry agreed that there was merit in proceeding to detailed design to further elaborate on the development of a new business service on the NPP which would enable multiple transactions to be contained within a single payment message and those messages exchanged between financial institutions to be processed. This approach would support use cases requiring the processing of high volumes of payments to meet strict regulatory or timing requirements for example. This service focuses on how payments submitted in a bulk file format get processed across the NPP platform (i.e. interbank) with end users continuing to submit their bulk payment instruction files to their bank or payment service provider as they do today.

NPP bulk service with a bulk payment instruction file



Detailed design work on this new bulk payments service is occurring during 2025. Part of the design phase includes consulting with stakeholders and end users on their specific needs and requirements for bulk processing. This includes understanding requirements related to the processing of these payments, as well as other associated flows including confirmation, reconciliation and exception processing.

In designing the service, consideration is being given to certain aspects and features of the service such as Service Level Agreements (SLAs), extended processing times, exception handling, and the overall end to end customer experience. The work during this phase also seeks to understand the use cases that might benefit from the bulk payments service including a single payer sending payments to multiple payees, or businesses requesting to debit multiple payers' accounts (e.g. PayTo).

Consultation questions on bulk payments

AP+ is seeking input and feedback on various aspects of bulk processing to better understand end user needs and requirements. This includes feedback on:

- 1) **Identifying use cases and features of the service that would be important**
- 2) **Understanding any specific processing requirements for bulk payments including processing times, exception processing and payment returns**
- 3) **Dealing with incidents and outages and associated contingency arrangements**

1) Identifying use cases and service features

To inform the design of the new bulk payments service, AP+ is seeking feedback on how this service could best support your use cases and what service features matter most from an end user perspective. We're particularly interested in understanding the scenarios where this service would be utilised and the experience expectations that would make it valuable to your organisation.



Consultation questions:

1. What particular use cases would you be interested in using the new bulk payments service for?
2. What specific service features would be of the most value to you and why? What aspects of the end user experience would be considered critical?

For example, account validation, fast notification of rejected payments, speed of processing, ability to incorporate additional data into the payment message

2) Understanding processing requirements for bulk payments

Operational and processing requirements play a critical role in ensuring that a bulk payments service functions effectively and reliably. AP+ is keen to understand the specific operational processes that need to be supported — particularly during time-sensitive or high-volume periods. This includes understanding requirements related to associated flows and processes including confirmation, reconciliation and exception processing.



Consultation questions:

3. What specific operational processes need to be considered for bulk processing? For example, end of day and/or month end processes
4. Are there any specific considerations that need to be accommodated for peak processing periods, such as Easter and Christmas? For example, are there time critical or regulatory requirements in which funds need to be received?

2a) Processing times

One of the key considerations for the new bulk payments service is the processing time for these payments. Rather than being processed immediately in real-time as NPP payments currently are, it might be preferable for bulk payments to have an extended processing time. AP+ is keen to understand end user perspectives on extending processing times as well as any preferences for receiving status updates when processing is staggered over a period of time or partially completed.



Consultation questions:

If there are extended processing times (e.g. 1 hour instead of being processed in real-time):

5. What would be your expected or preferred processing time for these payments (please give a timeframe and reason why)? For example, within 30 minutes, 30-60 minutes, 1-2 hours
6. If payments within a particular batch get processed at different speeds, how would you like to be provided with updates on the payment status. For example, would it be as they occur or as a single consolidated response once all payments in the batch have been completed?
7. Would you need the ability to recall your payment while it is still being processed, i.e. if the payment hasn't been paid to the payee account yet?
8. Are there other considerations or requirements that would need to be taken into account if there are extended processing times?

2b) Exceptions and payment returns

Handling exception processing and payment returns will be important for efficiently processing bulk payments on the NPP. AP+ is keen to understand any requirements or considerations that need to be incorporated into this requirement.



Consultation questions:

9. Is there any specific data that could be contained within the payment message that would assist with more streamlined processing? For example, original transaction ID number or customer reference number.
10. Are there any other requirements related to exception processes that should be considered in designing bulk payment processing?

3) Dealing with incidents and outages and associated contingency arrangements

Efficiently dealing with an incident or outage that interrupts the processing of payments is a key area of focus that is being discussed with NPP participating financial institutions, including the processes and capabilities that are required to support being able to quickly return to the normal processing of payments following an incident or outage. AP+ is keen to understand any requirements or considerations that need to be incorporated when dealing with incidents or outages and their impact on the processing of payments.



Consultation questions:

11. Are there any specific considerations that need to be considered when thinking about the impact of outages or incidents on the processing of payments?

For example:

- is there specific information that needs to be available during an incident or outage?
- is there an order of priority for processing payments following an outage or incident (such as chronological order or a different order according to urgency of the payment or use case)?

Part 2: Capability enhancements on the NPP

The NPP offers a suite of products designed to support more efficient business processes across a wide range of industries and use cases. These products leverage the rich data capabilities of the NPP messaging standard to enhance reconciliation, enable validation through features such as PayID and Confirmation of Payee, and allow third-party payment initiation via PayTo.

Consultation questions on NPP capability enhancements

To continue meeting the needs of users and to help shape the future of NPP payments, AP+ is seeking input on the development of new NPP capabilities. While some specific capabilities have been identified for further exploration, AP+ is also looking for input on any additional requirements or opportunities that would enhance payment processing efficiency for end users.

This part of the consultation aims to get input and views on the following capability:

- 1) Development of a standard payment instruction format
- 2) Use of batch booking functionality
- 3) Use of trace accounts in payment returns
- 4) Any other capability enhancements that would be of value to end users, such as enhancing the data that can be contained within the payment message (either for all payments or specific types of payments)

1) Development of a standard Payment Instruction format

Use of payment instruction file formats today

Payment instructions are used by end users to authorise their financial institution to transfer funds into or out of their account. These instructions follow a specific file format to ensure all required information is captured for accurate and efficient processing.

Currently, many businesses use the ABA file format to submit instructions for BECS (direct entry) transactions. These transactions include both direct debits (pulling funds from an account) and direct credits (pushing funds to an account). The ABA format has been widely adopted for many years and is supported by most financial institutions.

Developing a standard payment instruction for NPP payments

The ABA file format in use today is specifically designed for BECS payments. It is limited in the data it can carry—such as a maximum 18-character payment reference—and only supports payments made using a BSB and account number.

To support broader use of the NPP, it is proposed that a standard payment instruction format be introduced—functionally equivalent to the ABA file but tailored to the NPP’s capabilities and in particular the ISO 20022 message structure that the NPP operates on. A standardised format would promote consistency across the industry and enable businesses to unlock the full benefits of the NPP, including support for PayTo, payments addressed to PayIDs, and richer data such as additional references and identifiers.

AP+ has heard from key market segments—including Digital Service Providers (DSPs), ERP systems, and accounting software providers—that a consistent payment instruction format would simplify processing, enhance reporting, and streamline system integration. These stakeholders have also highlighted the importance of receiving confirmation of successful payments, visibility of rejected transactions for exception handling, and traceability back to the original instruction to support reconciliation.

AP+ is seeking input on the value of establishing a standard payment instruction for NPP payments—and on the requirements that would enable more efficient business processing.



Consultation questions:

12. What use cases would need to be supported in a standard payment instruction?
13. What features would be required in a standard payment instruction to support end-to-end processing and operations such as reconciliation and error handling?

Consider various aspects such as:

- a) Would you have a need to include both debit and credit transactions in a single instruction?
 - b) Would you want the format to be file-based or API, or do you see a need for both?
 - c) Do you require an acknowledgement after submission of your payment instruction?
14. What would be the benefits of having a standardised payment instruction format for NPP payments?

Considering aspects like costs, processing, implementation, maintenance and customer experience.
 15. What potential risks or impacts do you foresee if a standardised payment instruction for NPP payments *was not* available?

2) Use of batch booking functionality

Incorporating batch booking into the NPP message structure would enable financial institutions to group multiple transactions together and report the total aggregated value as a single entry within the payment message.

This functionality would provide businesses with the flexibility to choose whether transactions are reported individually or as a consolidated amount, depending on their operational needs and the nature of the transaction. A key use case is payroll, where consolidating salary and wage payments ensures that only the total batch amount is visible. This is particularly important for maintaining privacy, as different roles within an organisation require varying levels of access to payment information.

Batch booking also offers practical benefits for reconciliation. For larger businesses, line-by-line reporting on account statements can be cumbersome. The ability to group transactions helps streamline reconciliation by reducing the volume of entries that need to be reviewed and matched.

AP+ is seeking feedback on the value and potential use cases of batch booking functionality within the NPP, and how it could support more efficient business processing.


Consultation questions:

16. How relevant would batch booking be for your organisation?

What use cases or scenarios, if any, would this functionality support?

17. Which business processes might be influenced or impacted by batch booking?

For example, consider areas such as validation, authorisation, reconciliation, or others relevant to your operations.

18. What are your preferences or requirements when it comes to reporting?

What are your expectations or requirements regarding consolidated information versus individual transaction details? Consider any intra-day notifications you might receive for debits and credits to your account, and end-of-day reporting.

3) Use of trace accounts in payment returns

In the BECS system, fund transfers between bank accounts occur at set intervals during the day, with settlement often being completed on the next business day. This delay can result in payment failures - such as when account details are incorrect, or the destination account has been closed. In these cases, businesses can nominate a different account for returned payments to be credited to, known as a **trace account**.

The NPP operates differently, enabling real-time validation of account details and immediate rejection of payments for reasons such as insufficient funds, incorrect information, or closed accounts. It also supports return processes in cases of mistaken or misdirected payments (e.g. due to user error, fraud, or scams). In these instances, the payer's financial institution investigates and, where appropriate, recovers the funds. Recovered funds are typically returned to the **original account** that was used to make the payment, unless that account is closed or unable to receive funds.

Given the differences in how the NPP operates, AP+ is seeking feedback on whether the use of trace accounts remains necessary for NPP payments, or whether returning funds to the originating account is sufficient.


Consultation questions:

19. Does your organisation currently use trace accounts for returned payments?

If so, in what scenarios or use cases are they used, and why are they important for your operations?

20. If trace accounts were not supported for NPP payments, what would the impact be for your organisation?

Are there alternate approaches you would consider for handling returned payments in this context?

4) Other capability enhancements

AP+ is seeking to understand whether there are any additional capability enhancements that would help the NPP better support your organisation's needs. We are particularly interested in identifying any unmet requirements or gaps that may limit the NPP's ability to support specific use cases or business processes. We are also interested in understanding if enhancements to the NPP payment message with the population of structured data will enable validation and facilitate straight through processing opportunities.



Consultation questions:

21. Are there any additional capability enhancements to the NPP that would benefit your organisation?

Please describe any features, functions or improvements not already covered that would support your operations or enable certain use cases.

22. Are there any specific data requirements for your particular industry or to support any specific use cases, for example superannuation, payroll and tax payments?

Attachment A: List of consultation questions

Bulk payments

Identifying use cases and service features	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What particular use cases would you be interested in using the new bulk payments service for? 2. What specific service features would be of the most value to you and why? What aspects of the end user experience would be considered critical? For example, account validation, fast notification of rejected payments, speed of processing, ability to incorporate additional data into the payment message
Understanding processing requirements for bulk payments	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. What specific operational processes need to be considered for bulk processing? For example, end of day and/or month end processes 4. Are there any specific considerations that need to be accommodated for peak processing periods, such as Easter and Christmas? For example, are there time critical or regulatory requirements in which funds need to be received?
Processing times	<p>If there are extended processing times (e.g. 1 hour instead of being processed in real-time):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. What would be your expected or preferred processing time for these payments (please give a timeframe and reason why)? For example, within 30 minutes, 30-60 minutes, 1-2 hours 6. If payments within a particular batch get processed at different speeds, how would you like to be provided with updates on the payment status. For example, would it be as they occur or as a single consolidated response once all payments in the batch have been completed? 7. Would you need the ability to recall your payment while it is still being processed, i.e. if the payment hasn't been paid to the payee account yet? 8. Are there other considerations or requirements that would need to be taken into account if there are extended processing times?
Exceptions and payment returns	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Is there any specific data that could be contained within the payment message that would assist with more streamlined processing? For example, original transaction ID number or customer reference number. 10. Are there any other requirements related to exception processes that should be considered in designing bulk payment processing?
Dealing with incidents and outages and associated contingency arrangements	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Are there any specific considerations that need to be considered when thinking about the impact of outages or incidents on the processing of payments? For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is there specific information that needs to be available during an incident or outage? • is there an order of priority for processing payments following an outage or incident (such as chronological order or a different order according to urgency of the payment or use case)?

Capability enhancements on the NPP

Development of a standard Payment Instruction format	<p>12. What use cases would need to be supported in a standard payment instruction?</p> <p>13. What features would be required in a standard payment instruction to support end-to-end processing and operations such as reconciliation and error handling?</p> <p>Consider various aspects such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Would you have a need to include both debit and credit transactions in a single instruction? b) Would you want the format to be file-based or API, or do you see a need for both? c) Do you require an acknowledgement after submission of your payment instruction? <p>14. What would be the benefits of having a standardised payment instruction format for NPP payments?</p> <p>Considering aspects like costs, processing, implementation, maintenance and customer experience.</p> <p>15. What potential risks or impacts do you foresee if a standardised payment instruction for NPP payments <i>was not</i> available?</p>
Use of batch booking functionality	<p>16. How relevant would batch booking be for your organisation?</p> <p>What use cases or scenarios, if any, would this functionality support?</p> <p>17. Which business processes might be influenced or impacted by batch booking?</p> <p>For example, consider areas such as validation, authorisation, reconciliation, or others relevant to your operations.</p> <p>18. What are your preferences or requirements when it comes to reporting? What are your expectations or requirements regarding consolidated information versus individual transaction details? Consider any intra-day notifications you might receive for debits and credits to your account, and end-of-day reporting.</p>
Use of trace accounts in payment returns	<p>19. Does your organisation currently use trace accounts for returned payments?</p> <p>If so, in what scenarios or use cases are they used, and why are they important for your operations?</p> <p>20. If trace accounts were not supported for NPP payments, what would the impact be for your organisation? Are there alternate approaches you would consider for handling returned payments in this context?</p>
Other capability enhancements	<p>21. Are there any additional capability enhancements to the NPP that would benefit your organisation?</p> <p>Please describe any features, functions or improvements not already covered that would support your operations or enable certain use cases.</p> <p>22. Are there any specific data requirements for your particular industry or to support any specific use cases, for example superannuation, payroll and tax payments?</p>

About Australian Payments Plus (AP+)

Australian Payments Plus (AP+) is Australia's domestic payments organisation formed in 2021 through the merger of BPAY Group, eftpos, and NPP Australia. AP+ brings together these organisations under a single entity to create a more innovative, efficient, and resilient payments ecosystem for Australia. AP+ plays a critical role in the evolution and sustainability of Australia's payment infrastructure, helping to drive trust and innovation across the digital economy.

As the operator of the NPP, AP+ is responsible for ensuring the platform's continued evolution and growth. We work closely with financial institutions, businesses, and government to expand the use of NPP services, drive broader industry adoption, and encourage innovation that delivers greater value to all participants. Our role is central in supporting the move towards faster, smarter, and more secure payment experiences for all in Australia.