



Workshop 4

# Outcomes Report

LGA Resilience Forum

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# 1 Overview

## 1.1 Background

Throughout 2023, Ausgrid has been delivering a pilot program to explore how it could determine resilience-related investment needed in areas vulnerable to climate-induced extreme weather events. The pilot was established as part of the development of Ausgrid's 2024-29 Regulatory Proposal and aimed to meet guidance set out by the Australian Energy Regulator (AER) in its *Note on Network Resilience* (April 2022).

The three Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Port Stephens, Lake Macquarie and Central Coast were selected to be part of the pilot due to their exposure to extreme weather events. To help assess the investment needed in these areas, Ausgrid formed three community forums that comprised lay members of the public, many of whom had experience of extreme weather events. Forum participants collaborated with Ausgrid to develop a costed package of network and non-network responses to meet their community's needs.

The LGA packages, together with a package of Whole of Network solutions came to a value of \$193 million. This was then put to Ausgrid's Voice of Community Panel (VoC) – a randomly selected group of customers from across the network – to assess customers' willingness to pay for the targeted investment. The VoC was largely supportive of the investment and, as a result, a slightly reduced proposal of \$176.5 million was submitted to the AER in July 2023 for assessment.

In September, the AER responded to this proposal with a draft decision approving \$25.7 million of new network investment across all of Ausgrid's network, including \$16.7 million for the three LGAs specifically. No new resilience funding was approved for non-network (community resilience) investment. The AER asked Ausgrid to do further work to show how the proposed solutions met the regulatory requirement of "prudence and efficiency", the causal link between increased climate risks, and how different options had been considered. However, the AER acknowledged the need and value that had been demonstrated by the LGA community forums, and have urged Ausgrid to continue discussions to build the package back up.

## 1.2 About the workshops

In October 2023, Ausgrid reconvened the LGA resilience forums in Port Stephens, Lake Macquarie, and the Central Coast for the fourth and final time. The purpose of the forum was to provide an update on the AER's response and seek feedback on how to continue engaging and advocating for community outcomes.

### 1.2.1 Dates and attendance

The workshop dates and attendance are outlined below. All workshops were held online via Zoom and were attended by Ausgrid staff, external observers and members of the Reset Customer Panel, which has been offering independent advice to Ausgrid throughout the development of the Regulatory proposal.

	Port Stephens 10 October 2023	Lake Macquarie 11 October 2023	Central Coast 12 October 2023
<b>Community members</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>28</b>
Ausgrid staff members	5	6	6
Observers	2	3	5
Reset Customer Panel members	5	4	5
bd infrastructure team members	2	2	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>46</b>

## 1.2.2 Format

It was anticipated that Forum participants would be disappointed in the AER's response. The Ausgrid team, aided by bd infrastructure, therefore carefully crafted the workshop to enable participants to reflect on the response, ask questions, be reassured of the value they brought to the process, and look forward to the next steps. The workshop format was as follows:

Section	Purpose	Activity
<b>Welcome and introductions</b>	To welcome participants back after a four-month break, and outline the format and purpose of the workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation by facilitator</li> <li>• Small groups – to reconnect with fellow participants</li> </ul>
<b>What's been happening?</b>	<p>To provide a presentation on what had been happening since workshop 3 in particular the investment that Ausgrid had proposed in the draft proposal submitted to the AER, and the AER's response to that proposal.</p> <p>Ausgrid emphasised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the community had made a compelling case for resilience investment,</li> <li>• it had more work to do to show how it could efficiently and prudently deliver that value in line with the regulatory framework,</li> <li>• the investment initially proposed by the AER was therefore low but was a starting point to build back from.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation by Ausgrid</li> <li>• <b>"Reflection harvesting"</b> to gain the group's initial reaction to the update.</li> <li>• Small groups to ask questions to the Ausgrid team</li> </ul>
<b>Advocating and engaging</b>	To get feedback on how participants had found the process, and draft messages to community members participating in future engagement around the resilience program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plenary led by bd infrastructure without Ausgrid to get <b>feedback on the engagement process</b> using a "rose, bud, thorn" format.</li> <li>• Small group discussion to develop <b>messages for the community</b> who might participate in future engagement.</li> </ul>

### 1.3 Summary outcomes

Themes	Port Stephens	Lake Macquarie	Central Coast
<b>Reactions to AER response</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disappointed (6 mentions)</li> <li>Angry!</li> <li>Overwhelmed</li> <li>Waste of time</li> <li>Confused</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disappointment</li> <li>Where to from here???</li> <li>Don't understand. What more evidence did they need?</li> <li>Not at all surprised</li> <li>Looks like we were overly optimistic I really think the AER decision to not Right!</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disappointed (5 mentions)</li> <li>Not surprised</li> <li>Angry</li> <li>Realistic</li> <li>Empty</li> <li>Wow!</li> </ul>
<b>What worked well with the process?</b> (Themes not direct quotes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The process was collaborative, inclusive and well-designed.</li> <li>We received a good level of information.</li> <li>We felt heard and are ready to be engaged again.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The process was well-designed.</li> <li>Ausgrid was helpful and transparent.</li> <li>We received a good level of information.</li> <li>The group worked well together.</li> <li>Logistics were good</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The process was well-structured and facilitated.</li> <li>Ausgrid were open and transparent.</li> <li>We received a good level of information.</li> <li>The group worked well together.</li> </ul>
<b>What didn't work well with the process?</b> (Themes not direct quotes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expectations were set too high. The outcome is disappointing.</li> <li>The workshops felt too rushed.</li> <li>The regulator needs to listen.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The workshops felt too long.</li> <li>Loud voices were too dominant.</li> <li>The AER is not in line with the community.</li> <li>Workshop could have been better structured</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expectations were set too high. The outcome is disappointing.</li> <li>The workshops felt too rushed.</li> <li>I had some technical issues</li> </ul>
<b>What could be improved with the process?</b> (Themes not direct quotes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use data and analysis to make the case.</li> <li>Use the relationships created through this process.</li> <li>Keep going!</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allow more opportunity for quieter voices.</li> <li>Large group voting may have led people.</li> <li>Streamline information more.</li> <li>The outcome is disappointing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Better information might have avoided the disconnected outcome.</li> <li>The workshops could have some minor improvements.</li> <li>Keep going!</li> </ul>
<b>Messages to the community</b> (Themes not direct quotes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Represent your community.</li> <li>Respect and listen to others.</li> <li>Take the time to understand.</li> <li>Enjoy the process.</li> <li>Keep going!</li> <li>Prioritise what's important.</li> <li>Build on what we've started.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Represent your community.</li> <li>Respect and listen to others.</li> <li>Take the time to understand.</li> <li>Enjoy the process.</li> <li>Be realistic.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Represent your community.</li> <li>Respect and listen to others.</li> <li>Take the time to understand.</li> <li>Keep going!</li> <li>Make an impact.</li> </ul>



# 2 Detailed Outcomes

The following section outlines the detailed responses from Forum participants to the three feedback opportunities. These were:

- **Immediate reflections** on the AER’s response to the proposal. These were ‘harvested’ via the Zoom chat.
- **Feedback on the engagement process**, captured on GroupMap in a plenary session without the Ausgrid team present.
- **Messages to community members** who may participate in future engagement processes. These were captured in GroupMap through small group discussions.

All comments have been reproduced as they were written by participants. However, bdi infrastructure has grouped comments in themes, which are shown in bold type, to demonstrate key themes within each workshop and across the LGAs.

## 2.1 Port Stephens

### 2.1.1 Immediate reflections

Negative sentiment	Neutral sentiment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Disappointed (6 mentions)</i></li> <li>• <i>Not even in the ball park! More work needed for new submission.</i></li> <li>• <i>Angry!</i></li> <li>• <i>Overwhelmed</i></li> <li>• <i>Deflated at the small \$ proposed.</i></li> <li>• <i>Not surprised</i></li> <li>• <i>Waste of time</i></li> <li>• <i>Confused</i></li> <li>• <i>Doesn't feel like it'll even make an impact and now we're on our own in the next disaster.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Not too bad at less [sic] it a start</i></li> <li>• <i>Like 83% of people were happy that has to count for something</i></li> <li>• <i>Could not realistically expect this expert group to roll over and accept everything we came up with. Glad they are wanting justifications for expenditure, would be disappointed if they did not.</i></li> </ul>

### 2.1.2 Feedback on the engagement process

Rose (What worked well)	Thorn (What didn't work well)	Bud (What could be improved)
<p><b>The process was collaborative, inclusive and well-designed.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>A lovely, collaborative process. Community and Ausgrid worked hard to get something together. A kick in the guts that the expected funding didn't come. Was it the way the info was presented to the AER? Was there a disconnect btw what we had as a whole at end of W3 and going forward. Regulator was there and they seemed pretty happy at the time. Is there no money at the AER?</i></li> <li>• <i>Process has been extremely democratic. Everybody had their chance to have their say! bdi and Ausgrid community consultation has been really appreciated.</i></li> <li>• <i>Appreciate consultation.</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Expectations were set too high. The outcome is disappointing.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Expectation management - didn't set expectations of what the outcome would be - a lesson.</i></li> <li>• <i>Expectations not set clearly with community. They didn't expect AER to accept everything and then not provide the funding Expectation to say we might not get 100% or 50% of the requested funding.</i></li> <li>• <i>It's emotional because for some of us it's trauma based. - expectation management</i></li> <li>• <i>Kick in guts funding hasn't come as we thought it would come.</i></li> <li>• <i>Overall was about Networking spending, NOT COMMUNITY</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Use data and analysis to make the case.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Analyse data - put into facts and figures - compare apples to apples.</i></li> <li>• <i>Really analyse and crunch the data to do the in-depth modelling as required by the AER.</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Use the relationships created through this process.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Something that could be built on are the r/ships from the diverse community in coming together as part of unified process. This group worked really well together!</i></li> </ul>

<b>Rose</b> (What worked well)	<b>Thorn</b> (What didn't work well)	<b>Bud</b> (What could be improved)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Also, I wanted to just say as a side note. I really appreciated you guys adding the reflecting session after you broke the news from the AER. That was definitely something you improved on from the last in person session when you broke the news about the budget the VOC allocated us. Wanted to say I thought that was a really great inclusion.</i></li> </ul> <p><b>We felt heard and are ready to be engaged again.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Group could be called upon again in future if need be.</i></li> <li><i>Rose: Great to be included and considered. I feel heard and like my thoughts and ideas are valued. LOVE coming together with community to share ideas.</i></li> <li><i>Whole of community to be included in whole process and be kept in the loop, keep getting feedback. Nothing been disregarded or neglected.</i></li> </ul> <p><b>We received a good level of information.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Very informative, loved the presentations, and their willingness to answer our questions.</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>The process felt rushed.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Fairly rushed but acknowledging time constraints. Probably not as much depth and detail as required by AER.</i></li> </ul> <p><b>The regulator needs to listen.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Way that the w/shops were delivered - community would be making a bigger impact. Community part of the process - feel like they are a big part because Ausgrid have wanted their feedback. Misalignment. Community have made an emotional investment in the process. With community consultation comes a personal, heartfelt response - this needs to be considered as part of AER calculations.</i></li> <li><i>Community experiencing financial pressure with their rising energy bills/ costs. Many are suffering. Who's the AER to tell us how much we should pay?</i></li> <li><i>I am just wondering that after our last workshop on the Saturday, we noticed the Ausgrid helicopter flying over Port Stephens. Maybe the regulator (only one present) at the last workshop should have been flying over the area too.</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Keep going!</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>We are not defeated still need Ausgrid to stand up for the community in the final draft to push forward</i></li> </ul>

## 2.1.3 Messages to community members

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5
<p><b>Represent your community.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Be Aware - talk about it widely with your neighbours / families.</i></li> <li>• <i>Ensure there is engagement with aboriginal community and listen and accept their presented views (cultural heritage).</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Enjoy the process.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Encouragement: "it is interesting"</i></li> <li>• <i>Expect Clarity ("clearer") and transparent at the start. At the community level.</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Take the time to understand.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>First to understand what the challenges the AER has in understanding the Community's social modelling.</i></li> <li>• <i>Have a clear understanding of what you are there for from the start.</i></li> <li>• <i>In the near future - We could experience a natural disaster/event.</i></li> <li>• <i>It does take understanding &amp; time!!!!</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Build on what we've started.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Really look at the work already done by us all.</i></li> <li>• <i>Recognise that its started, it got to meet the need, and things don't change overnight.</i></li> <li>• <i>What is the Baseline that you are coming in on to build on</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Represent your community.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Make sure to advocate for the human factor.</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Respect and listen to others.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Participate in discussions, and make sure to listen to the whole group. Be respectful.</i></li> <li>• <i>Sense of community</i></li> <li>• <i>Focus on the message to the AER.</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Prioritise what's important.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Prioritise \ what needs and requirements for a resilience program.</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Enjoy the process.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Been a supportive process.</i></li> <li>• <i>Good experience to come together and discuss different priorities but then come to a conclusion.</i></li> <li>• <i>Interesting and need more talk about it.</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Prioritise what's important.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Prioritise the most important aspects of what you are looking for - given funding can be low. Instead of cramming.</i></li> <li>• <i>Sometimes your ideas might not be accepted by everyone. Come to a conclusion in the end. There is no right or wrong.</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Enjoy the process.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Great to feel heard and use the time wisely.</i></li> <li>• <i>The process is a privilege, don't take it for granted.</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Prioritise what's important.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Community engagement with the diverse range of community participants was a rewarding exercise to get viewpoints from everybody. But coming to a united front on strategies to improve outcomes when there are adverse weather events is challenging.</i></li> <li>• <i>I think was good process but wasn't expecting there to come back 100% with approval.</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Take the time to understand.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>If it doesn't make sense, question it.</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Keep going!</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>This exciting and successful collaboration must continue. It needs to maintain the momentum.</i></li> <li>• <i>We are not finished with the collaboration process, need to comeback with what we need to prioritise the allocated funding. An evaluation survey will be forwarded to capture reflection of the process. What is the message we would like to forward to the next community involved group to continue and pass on to continue the collaborative process. I would like future participants to fight for a decent funding model that reflects the true nature of community needs to prepare for and ensures a resilient community.</i></li> </ul>



## 2.2 Lake Macquarie

### 2.2.1 Immediate reflections

Negative sentiment	Neutral sentiment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Inideal</i></li> <li>• <i>Where to from here???</i></li> <li>• <i>Somewhat expected outcome</i></li> <li>• <i>Don't understand. what more evidence did they need?</i></li> <li>• <i>Disappointment</i></li> <li>• <i>Not at all surprised</i></li> <li>• <i>Looks like we were overly optimistic in our requests</i></li> <li>• <i>Do I understand that 202 has become 25.7?</i></li> <li>• <i>Unsure</i></li> <li>• <i>Concerned</i></li> <li>• <i>Surprised</i></li> <li>• <i>I really think the AER decision to not Right!</i></li> <li>• <i>Additional Resilience hubs not supported, clarify same. Good that prioritising liaison with other emergency services will we have to cover more of this cost??</i></li> <li>• <i>Worried</i></li> <li>• <i>Bullshi**</i></li> <li>• <i>Concerned</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Happy</i></li> <li>• <i>Helpful</i></li> <li>• <i>Understandable given the circumstances described</i></li> </ul>

### 2.2.2 Feedback on the engagement process

Rose (What worked well)	Thorn (What didn't work well)	Bud (What could be improved)
<p><b>Ausgrid was helpful and transparent.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Appreciated the availability of Ausgrid staff.</i></li> <li>• <i>Different experts brought a wide range of knowledge to answer lots of different questions.</i></li> <li>• <i>In all the sessions, I like how all of the staff have been more than happy to explain things 2-3 times if needed when community members don't understand something.</i></li> </ul> <p><b>We received a good level of information.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Liked environmental information, and stats for blackouts.</i></li> <li>• <i>lots of interesting information</i></li> <li>• <i>Slides and content have been informative &amp; direct.</i></li> <li>• <i>Very worthwhile process felt everything was explained well. I didn't feel that there was too much volume of information. The presenters conveyed content well.</i></li> <li>• <i>Transparency with the public group (us)</i></li> </ul> <p><b>The process was well-designed.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>biggest MR I've ever been a part of</i></li> <li>• <i>breakout groups &amp; moving around in person.</i></li> <li>• <i>great structure &amp; organisation</i></li> <li>• <i>Excellent facilitation</i></li> <li>• <i>getting back to face-to-face groups</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>The workshops were too long.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>A long time between sessions</i></li> <li>• <i>long sessions</i></li> <li>• <i>No just too long not too many</i></li> <li>• <i>Yes, long sessions.</i></li> <li>• <i>yes, I think shorter sessions, maybe more frequently, would have been better.</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Loud voices were too dominant.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Didn't hear enough from people who aren't necessarily socially 'loud' (easy for introverts to get lost)</i></li> <li>• <i>more opportunity to write down questions, or statements if one doesn't feel comfortable voicing in the larger group or might struggle to within the larger group due to running out of time, or certain participants frequently being the most vocal.</i></li> <li>• <i>used to smaller groups so very big group was very different.</i></li> <li>• <i>When facilitating, having confidence to shutdown loud, repetitive voices who often showed pet interests that weren't relevant or were not accepted by the group early.</i></li> <li>• <i>Would prefer more small group time at times.</i></li> </ul> <p><b>The AER is not in line with the community.</b></p>	<p><b>Allow more opportunity for quieter voices.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>A lot of the same people spoke up (which was good!) but would have been nice to have a few different voices as well.</i></li> <li>• <i>Allow some individual contributions as well Some of the larger discussions sometimes railroaded smaller voices or nuance.</i></li> <li>• <i>Change up the speakers in each "group" to share the load.</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Large group voting may have led people.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The group voting scenarios in the in-person sessions were great discussion points. I think that some of the participants maybe opted to move to the larger groups instead of moving into a minority viewpoint. Mostly out of fear of being quizzed in front of everyone.</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Streamline information more.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The slides with lots of information could be streamlined to not be overwhelming with the volume of information we are provided at a time.</i></li> <li>• <i>It was a lot of info but was well-structured.</i></li> </ul> <p><b>The outcome is disappointing.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Well planned with people given lots of info - overall process would have been very good. Would have been very different process if the</i></li> </ul>

Rose (What worked well)	Thorn (What didn't work well)	Bud (What could be improved)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The timing of the sessions</li> </ul> <p><b>The group worked well together.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Everyone being respectful of each other's views.</li> <li>everyone listened to our opinions non judgementally.</li> <li>Everyone wanting to contribute.</li> <li>hearing everyone's opinions.</li> </ul> <p><b>Logistics were good.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good food</li> <li>Great venue in Warners Bay. Love Brown Sugar</li> <li>Ken does great work to keep things functioning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Costs could be passed onto customers either way when "shit hits the fan".</li> <li>Given today's update the aims appeared at odds with the outcome. this is not a criticism of the process but perhaps of AER transparency.</li> <li>What community were asked to do is more preventative rather than responding to things when "shit hits the fan". In that sense, what would the alternative solutions to the AER have been?</li> </ul> <p><b>Workshop could have been better structured.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In-person sessions could have been structured slightly differently. Rather than starting with bulk information and then an activity. It's more engaging to do activities first and then delivery large amounts of information.</li> <li>Some of the forums did get off track. Probably could have been reigned back a little bit.</li> <li>Sometimes went quite off track in the sessions which resulted in time not being used efficiently.</li> <li>Some of a parameter should have been clearer at the beginning.....there was the impression of constraining the ideas/options continually because of possible money constraints as months went passed.</li> <li>an agenda to inform us when break times might be, what topics covered etc. both for face to face and on zoom.</li> </ul>	<p>overall budget was smaller from the beginning. Not optimistic that Ausgrid will get back to something near the original budget proposed.</p>

### 2.2.3 Messages to the community

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
<p><b>Be realistic.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Amounts of funding proposed may not be approved in final plan.</li> <li>Focus on network improvements.</li> </ul> <p><b>Take the time to understand.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concept of community engagement costs money but is a sure way of Ausgrid taking its community responsibility seriously.</li> <li>You're not going to understand everything. it will take a little while. Just be open minded and let it all come together.</li> <li>Think about your area &amp; what has occurred in the past.</li> <li>To consider those in your own local area as well as take into account the feedback from others</li> </ul>	<p><b>Take the time to understand.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be patient, it will all make sense in the end. ish</li> <li>Being able to collaborate on this scale with people that have different perspectives is very eye opening.</li> <li>Don't be worried about sharing your thoughts and opinions.</li> <li>Listen to everyone's stories. It's pretty interesting hearing about all the experiences out there.</li> <li>Your needs are similar to a lot of other people's needs. Share what you're thinking because you represent more than just yourself.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Be realistic.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Don't have unrealistic expectations as it may lead to feels of disappointment.</li> <li>It seems like the AER is fairly conservative on spending. Don't let the ideas run away.</li> <li>It's a very dynamic topic and need to keep open minded regarding economic realities.</li> </ul> <p><b>Take the time to understand.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No question is a silly question. Be open and honest and ask if you're not sure.</li> <li>Take advantage of the knowledge available from the Ausgrid team</li> <li>The process gives a good overview of the power grid,</li> </ul>

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
<p><i>in other areas to see if you can adopt ideas for your area.</i></p> <p><b>Respect and listen to others.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Don't be afraid to challenge other's thoughts and ideas. Just because they've suggested it, doesn't mean you can't suggest something different.</i></li> <li>• <i>People work at different paces so be aware of that.</i></li> <li>• <i>Speak freely make sure you have a turn &amp; make yourself heard.</i></li> <li>•</li> </ul>		<p><i>Ausgrid's role, and the challenges of climate change.</i></p> <p><b>Represent your community.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Be informed about your community and the needs for that community.</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Respect and listen to others.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Be open and honest with opinions.</i></li> <li>• <i>Get involved in the discussions, don't be afraid to have a voice for your community. All voices in this process are important as you've been chosen for a reason.</i></li> <li>• <i>I would advise any future members to have discussions with their neighbours, who may have some ideas.</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Enjoy the process.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Enjoy the process, it's pretty cool to be a part of and have your voice heard</i></li> </ul>

## 2.2.4 Further feedback for Ausgrid

The “Message to the Community” exercise at the Lake Macquarie workshop also resulted in further advice to Ausgrid which centred around the need to quantify and further prove the value of resilience investment on behalf of the community.

- *Been lots of talk about the community proposal which has been rejected – Ausgrid should go ahead and try and quantify that proposal in terms of economics and evidence. Many of the community proposals might have been taken as something trying to help a few vulnerable people or get people to a hub but there is a very important economic basis that those sorts of things allow communities to recover from climate events a lot faster and can potentially help reduce loss of life.*
- *Consider the ongoing impacts and the economic benefits of community resilience; help communities to recover quickly.*
- *Discussions, theories and reality are quite different when all is said and done.*
- *Divide all offered fund values by 10. Much easier to start small and build bigger if available.*
- *New/ reinforced evidence is coming out of some of the recent climate events from around the world. How can this be used? E.g., Lismore floods and fires elsewhere. Can quantify that investment from Ausgrid helps shorten the return to economic normality.*
- *Resilience can be applied across various areas. It'd be worthwhile reiterating the narrow definition of resilience that we tried to apply during these workshops.*

## 2.3 Central Coast

### 2.3.1 Immediate reflections

Negative sentiment	Neutral sentiment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Not surprised</i></li> <li>• <i>Angry</i></li> <li>• <i>Scary</i></li> <li>• <i>Realistic</i></li> <li>• <i>Disappointed (5 mentions)</i></li> <li>• <i>Disappointed that we haven't been taken seriously</i></li> <li>• <i>Empty</i></li> <li>• <i>Expected</i></li> <li>• <i>Wow</i></li> <li>• <i>Interesting Yes</i></li> <li>• <i>Recognising our input is easy to say</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>How much review now happens between you guys and the energy regulator?</i></li> <li>• <i>Need economic modelling.</i></li> </ul>

### 2.3.2 Feedback on the engagement process

Rose (What worked well)	Thorn (What didn't work well)	Bud (What could be improved)
<p><b>The process was well-structured and facilitated.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Great facilitation</li> <li>• Facilitation was excellent.</li> <li>• great facilitation- good balance of listening and participating.</li> <li>• Generally, the process was excellent.</li> <li>• I think it's clear that our side of the process was great but based on the feedback it's a shame that Ausgrid dropped the ball (not meant to be taken too seriously?)</li> <li>• mostly a great process</li> <li>• Nice to be included in something so important.</li> <li>• The small breakout groups.</li> </ul> <p><b>We received a good level of information.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good level of information provided by Ausgrid.</li> <li>• Small group discussion and robust discussion</li> <li>• Communication was good it was big picture.</li> <li>• I liked the analogies used such as shopping carts.</li> <li>• Information was explained in a way it was understandable for those of us with now experience in this field.</li> <li>• quality information</li> </ul> <p><b>The group worked well together.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• everybody engages and learning about what going on.</li> <li>• I liked the group environment more in the face-to-face meetings.</li> </ul>	<p><b>The process felt rushed.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 workshops is it enough??</li> <li>• Some parts were too fast paced. Sometimes the info was overwhelming, but we had to quickly decide.</li> </ul> <p><b>Expectations were set too high. The outcome is disappointing.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bit of a disconnection at times btw what had asked us for and what came out.</li> <li>• Budget</li> <li>• budget round down from \$70M down to \$9M.</li> <li>• How the AER count the figure number??</li> <li>• maybe Ausgrid could have managed expectations differently?</li> <li>• The difference btw the third workshop and what the AER has approved today for Central Coast.</li> <li>• The round down was more like a complete slash back.</li> <li>• where did the original budget numbers come from?</li> <li>• Lack of clarity in how much the budget could be rejected to such a low percentage of the proposal.</li> </ul> <p><b>I had some technical issues.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I had some problems logging on today, Zoom said it was not a registered long on to Zoom.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Better information might have avoided the disassociating outcome.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A bit of a disconnect between reality and perceptions of what we were asking for.</li> <li>• discussion further for what going on after the AER decision.</li> <li>• Improve the approach to AER to meet their expectation.</li> <li>• Information on addressing barriers throughout the process of application for funding.</li> <li>• More information to the user group on the various roles and how things could change.</li> <li>• The real world kicked in and future events could mean things may get worse.</li> </ul> <p><b>The workshops could have some minor improvements.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Processes – having a scale of 1-5 was too many options. Would have been better to have fewer options.</li> <li>• We should have constant reminders of themes as opposed to moving through the process.</li> </ul> <p><b>Keep going!</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These workshops may well be the starting points rather than the end point? This should be where it should begin now there has been the initial chat.</li> </ul>

Rose (What worked well)	Thorn (What didn't work well)	Bud (What could be improved)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Loved all the different opinions and perspectives.</li> <li>times</li> <li>The collaboration and team exercises?</li> <li>Seeing the same group multiple</li> <li>Vigorous discussion</li> </ul> <p><b>Ausgrid were open and transparent.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Having representatives present</li> <li>I appreciated the information given by Ausgrid on the different options.</li> <li>The information provided by the facilitators and Ausgrid.</li> <li>the trust shown to us.</li> </ul>		

### 2.3.3 Messages to the next group

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
<p><b>Respect and listen to others.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>be prepared to listen to opposing views.</li> <li>Crucial for people to be a part of this; we all need to find solutions, can be stressful at times, but it keeps you aware and keeps it front of mind. Keep the conversation going.</li> <li>enjoy the experience and don't be afraid to ask questions.</li> </ul> <p><b>Represent your community.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remember, you are not representing your own ego, you are representing other people's interests.</li> </ul> <p><b>Keep going!</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hi all, this has been a great experience overall, just remember don't feel down about the numbers, this is a first, a pilot program essentially, as evidence comes about things will get better,</li> <li>It will be worthwhile paying attention to information that AER will publish.</li> <li>It's a process, this is only a beginning.</li> <li>keep focussed on what is being asked of you.</li> <li>We could have aimed low and got just as little. At least aiming high we have something to strive for.</li> </ul> <p><b>Take the time to understand.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintains awareness of the impact that climate events can have on the community. More you know the better you can prepare yourself.</li> <li>Overall experience, really interesting! Being a bit more tech savvy would enable more participation for some.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Respect and listen to others.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Don't be afraid to speak your mind.</li> <li>Try to understand other group member's perspectives and experiences when making a decision.</li> <li>Understand that my idea of a "need" is not the same as other members of the community. We may be one LGA but have very diverse experiences and priorities.</li> </ul> <p><b>Make an impact.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your input matters.</li> <li>Your insights and ideas are vital in finding ways to address electricity resiltants at an affordable cost.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Respect and listen to others.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be open minded.</li> <li>Be open to other views but challenge the views consistently against the information, themes and objectives.</li> <li>Be willing to change your view based on the information learnt throughout the process.</li> <li>Consider all views pragmatically and not emotionally.</li> <li>Don't get swept up in popular opinion. All viewpoints are valid and valuable in this process.</li> <li>Listen and share, no idea is a stupid idea.</li> </ul> <p><b>Represent your community.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You are a community representative, think about how your suggestions affect the broader community, not just you.</li> </ul> <p><b>Be realistic.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be realistic! Don't ask include everything just because it is on offer, and you think it would be good. Really think about what it is you feel the coast needs and what would best benefit the coast.</li> </ul> <p><b>Keep going!</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keep advocating for the regional parts of the Central Coast. It's easy to forget the few for the sake of the many.</li> <li>look at creative solutions and compromise.</li> <li>Stay focused.... try not to go off on tangents.</li> <li>thinking critical about our decision and the consequence for the next</li> <li>Understand that it is a process, and we are part of the process and not the decision maker.</li> </ul>



### 2.3.4 Further feedback for Ausgrid

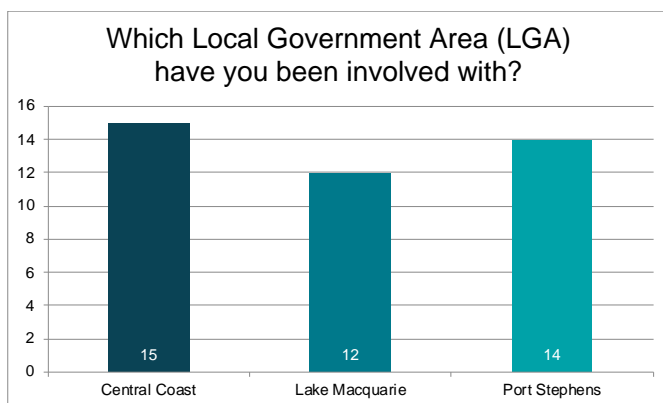
The “Message to the Community” exercise at the Central Coast workshop also resulted in further advice to Ausgrid which centred around the criticality of resilience investment to the Central Coast community, and the reasons behind the AER’s response.

- *Because the CC has such enviro sensitive areas with plant and animal life contrasting with people who want to develop new infrastructure. Is this being considered in terms of the future needs of the LGA? Clash btw. enviro protection and ongoing development.*
- *Building climate resilience is essential.*
- *Community is trying to achieve something quite different here. When the proposal went to the AER it is almost like the community are talking a different language. AER feedback has been they don't understand key points.*
- *I don't know if this a political decision because the CC is quite often brushed over. Whether or not it's because the LGA is pretty steady Labor.*
- *More people moving into the LGA than the AER has taken into consideration. More infrastructure is needed otherwise it will become sub-standard.*
- *Need to have the AER Guidelines from the beginning to know what they require.*
- *The reasons behind the decisions made by community so we can look at both what AER wants, and community wants. Community trying to look at where it would be fair to put the money e.g., in the Mangrove Mountain area or whether it would be fairer to go along the coastline and decide where/ how they are being affected by climate change. What should be provided (e.g., a generator) and the costs of doing so.*
- *With lots of fires and droughts and talking about how we'd love to have undergrounding. Is the cost of undergrounding an issue?*

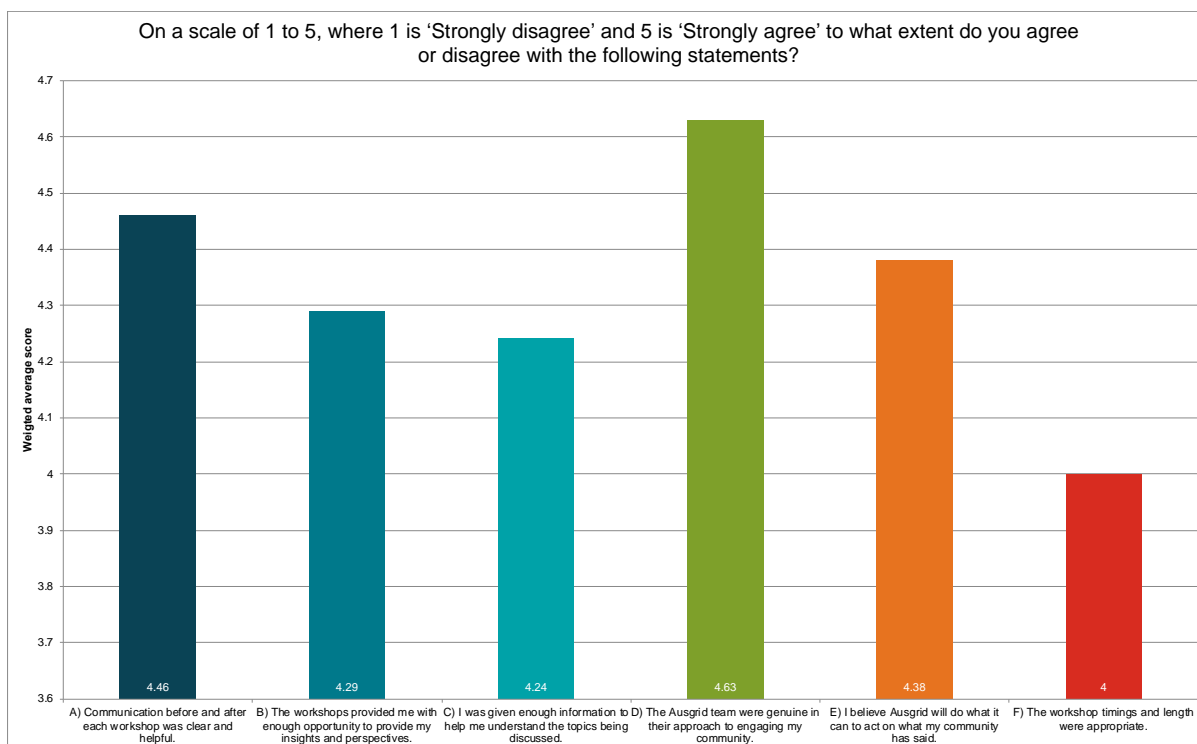
# 3 Next Steps

## 3.1 Evaluation of the engagement process.

An evaluation survey was sent to workshop participants covering the whole 4-workshop process. This was completed by 41 people, or roughly one third of participants, with a good spread across all three LGAs.



Feedback on the process was overwhelming positive, with a weighted average score above 4 (out of 5) for each question.



## 3.2 Interest in future participation

Thirty five of the 41 participants 'definitely' want to participate again, and six probably or maybe would want to participate again. Ausgrid will contact them early in 2024 in the lead up to the AER final determination to outline opportunities to engage.