



# Ausgrid Engagement Framework

For our 2024-2029 Regulatory Proposal

July 2022

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# Engagement narrative

## Who is Ausgrid?

Ausgrid operates the poles, wires and streetlights delivering electricity to homes and businesses across Sydney, the Central Coast and the Hunter region. We strive to connect communities and empower lives through the services we provide.

## Why do we want to engage?

We are now reviewing our strategy for the future, including a plan for 2024 to 2029.

We have been listening to our customers, who told us to focus on being affordable while being safe, smart, sustainable and resilient, and we have been listening. In responding to our customers need for affordability we delivered a 32 per cent reduction in our network charges since 2014.

But the energy industry is changing, and so are our customers.

Listening to you will help us understand the right balance to strike to meet the diverse needs and aspirations of our customers.

## Why is the time now?

The imperative for a low carbon future continues to increase, with more extreme weather including bushfires, flooding and storms.

The way we deliver energy has to change, as homes and businesses change the way they use energy by adopting new technologies such as solar. The pattern of energy use, reflecting the changes in the way we work and live, is evolving. The way we generate energy through renewable sources and our energy policies will drive change in the way we operate.

Customer needs are also changing, with expectations of services becoming more individualised and the acceptance of new technology varying greatly. Within this rapidly changing environment the focus on energy affordability and good customer service remains critical.

## Why should customers engage with us?

We are at a critical point, and we need to respond to ensure we continue to deliver for our customers and set ourselves up for long term success. We also need to ensure we remain inclusive, leaving no-one behind and improving outcomes for the most vulnerable in our communities.

We need your help to shape our future priorities. Without understanding your views and your needs, Ausgrid cannot continue to evolve and improve. We don't have all the answers, yet we need to make the best decisions for future generations.

We commit to listening to and reflecting on your views and priorities in our long-term strategy, including our plan for 2024 to 2029.

## What's our goal?

Your participation will help us strive towards a future energy network that works for everyone; a network that is safe, smart, sustainable and resilient for generations to come.







## About the framework

This document provides a framework for engaging Ausgrid's customers and stakeholders during the development of a draft price proposal for 2024–2029. It has been updated to reflect lessons learnt and changes of approach following the first phase of engagement which took place between October 2021 and February 2022.

### About Ausgrid

We are the largest distributor of electricity on Australia's east coast, providing power to 1.8 million customers. Our network is made up of substations, powerlines, underground cables and power poles, spanning 22,275 square kilometres throughout Sydney, the Central Coast and the Hunter Valley. Our vision is to become a leading energy solutions provider, recognised both locally and globally and our purpose is to connect communities and empower lives with a focus on affordability, reliability and sustainability.

### Regulatory reset 2024–2029

Every five years, Ausgrid is required to submit a proposal to the Australian Energy Regulator (AER) that details our proposed business operations and service delivery for the next five-year period.

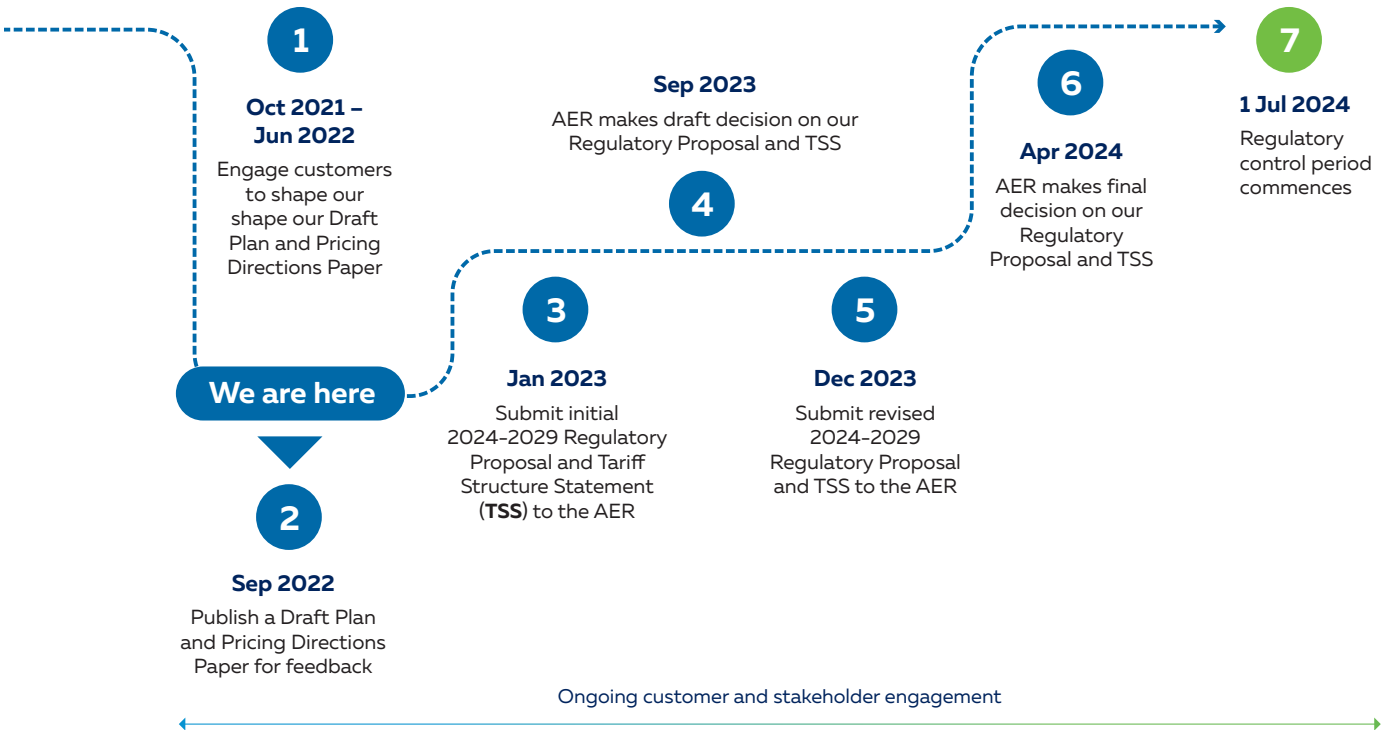
The reset proposal outlines:

- our ongoing commitment to customers and the community
- changes in our environment
- forecast expenditure
- asset base and depreciation
- revenue and tariffs
- customer price impacts.

The next reset will cover 2024 to 2029 and must be submitted to the AER by January 2023. The AER expects Ausgrid to engage extensively with its customers and stakeholders in the formation of the Draft Plan and final plans to make sure there is evidence that they are in customers' long-term interests.

A high-level program for the reset process is outlined below.

Ausgrid's 2024-2029 regulatory reset timeline





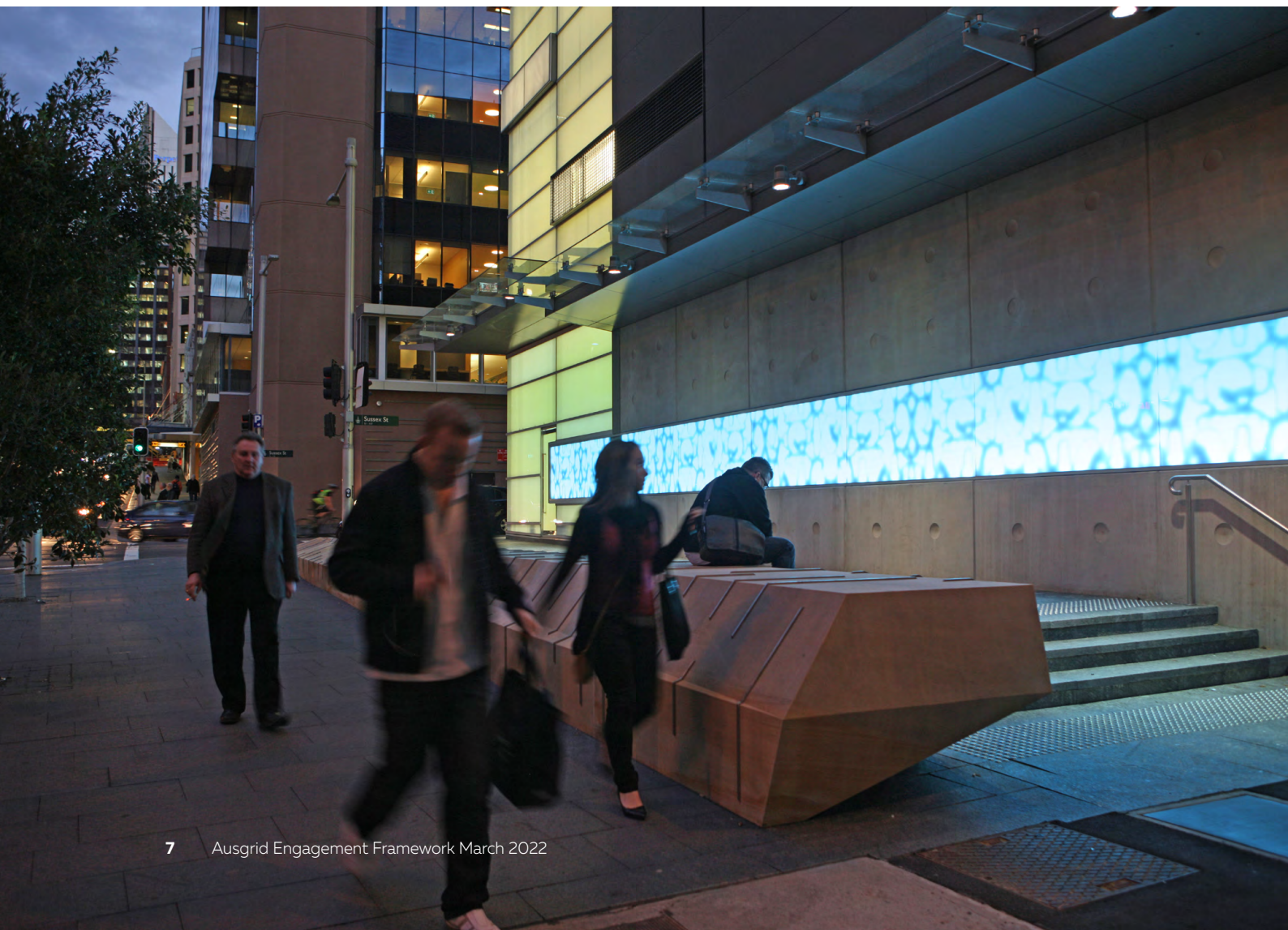
## Why we need to engage

Consumer engagement and advocacy is playing an increasing role in shaping regulatory price proposals for DNSPs in the NEM. This trend is driven in part by improved international standards in consumer engagement by distribution businesses, and a desire by the AER to see price proposals which better demonstrate long-term customer benefit, by evidencing informed customer influence in their development.

In their recent Draft Decisions for the Victorian DNSPs the AER reference a new approach for assessing the impact on customer engagement of the regulatory proposal which highlights the need for tailored and supportive engagement, breadth and depth in the engagement topics, and clearly evidenced impact on the proposal. The AER has provided further guidance on this in their Better Resets Handbook. For Ausgrid these expectations provide a framework to support our journey towards industry leading customer engagement.

The 2014-19 regulatory period marked a turning point for Ausgrid with the AER and customer advocates critical of the efforts to meaningfully engage consumers in the development of price proposals, prompting the Public Interest Advocacy Centre (PIAC) to conduct an evaluation of NSW DNSP consumer engagement for the following regulatory period of 2019-24. Overall PIAC saw a measurable improvement in the engagement quality but called for engagement programs to have greater influence on the proposals.

The 2024-29 regulatory reset proposal provides us with an opportunity to bed down a step change toward best practice consumer engagement. By involving customers in our decision making, we can strive for an energy network that works for everyone.



## How we developed this plan

Ausgrid established the Reset Customer Panel (RCP) in June 2021 to provide independent challenge to the Reset process from a customer perspective. The RCP will observe Ausgrid's engagement and provide deep consideration of the draft regulatory proposal and deliver independent reports to Ausgrid.

This Framework has been developed to guide broad engagement with customers and stakeholders. It was developed through a co-design process with the RCP as well as members of Ausgrid's Customer Consultative Committee (CCC) and Network Innovation Advisory Committee (NIAC). The co-design process comprised three core online workshops to develop the structure of the framework, in addition to off-line 'check-in' meetings on the engagement narrative and questions.

In February 2022, we evaluated Phase 1 of our engagement program and amended the Framework to reflect lessons learned and changes in approach.

## IAP2 Spectrum and Core Values

### Spectrum

We have used the IAP2 Spectrum to guide the design of our engagement approaches. We need to attain an '**involve**' level of participation as a minimum for all customer streams, and a '**collaborate**' level across most customer streams. However, some engagement activities will achieve the '**inform**' or '**consult**' level, depending on the topic at hand, or as a step in the process towards a higher level of participation.

## IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation



IAP2's Spectrum of Public Participation was designed to assist with the selection of the level of participation that defines the public's role in any public participation process. The Spectrum is used internationally, and it is found in public participation plans around the world.

INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION					
	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

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## Core values

In addition, evaluation will use the seven IAP2 Core Values to guide the planning and delivery of our Reset engagement program. The Core Values are:

- 1 Public participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.
- 2 Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.
- 3 Public participation promotes sustainable decisions by recognising and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers.
- 4 Public participation seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.
- 5 Public participation seeks input from participants in designing how they participate.
- 6 Public participation provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.
- 7 Public participation communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.





# Principles and objectives

The engagement approach will be guided by principles and objectives developed in partnership with customer advocates.

## Principles

Our engagement principles are:

**Accountable**

Do what we say we will do and encourage customers and stakeholders to hold us to account.

**Inclusive**

Provide information for customers and stakeholders that considers their perspective, is convenient and timely.

**Collaborative**

Partner in the design of alternative options and the preferred outcome when possible

**Dynamic**

Be progressive, open to new ideas and prepared to change based on feedback from customers and stakeholders

**Transparent**

Be as open as possible on the role of stakeholders and customers in the decision making process



## Objectives

Our engagement objectives are:

Objective	Description
<b>Builds trust and confidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Allow open dialogue which challenges Ausgrid's approach and practices.</li><li>• Customers have trust in the process and rationale behind decisions, even if all positions are not agreed to.</li><li>• Stakeholders and customers have confidence that Ausgrid has genuinely listened and that investment decisions are in the long-term interests of customers.</li></ul>
<b>Reaches diverse audiences</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Engagement utilises approaches that enable diverse customers and stakeholders to meaningfully contribute.</li><li>• Improved understanding of diverse customer preferences and how to address them through the regulatory reset process.</li></ul>
<b>Understand customer aspirations and preferences</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Engagement identifies customer preferences and views on current and future energy services and enables customers to shape our strategy and Reset Proposal.</li><li>• Customers views and preferences are seen to have impacted the Draft Plan and Reset Proposal.</li><li>• The engagement will be designed to capture both breadth and depth of views.</li></ul>
<b>Drives cultural change</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Builds stronger internal Ausgrid capability to continually deliver quality engagement and customer outcomes.</li><li>• Understanding customer needs and aspirations becomes a core competency and expectation for all Ausgrid employees.</li></ul>
<b>Industry leading engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ausgrid staff are proud of the industry leading engagement.</li><li>• Building on successful industry practices and evolving collaborative engagement.</li></ul>



## Governance

Strong Governance will ensure that what we hear from customers and stakeholders has a direct and tangible impact on decisions throughout the Regulatory Reset process. Our governance process provides clear roles for the Ausgrid Board, Executive, and Regulatory Team, and for our customer advocates.

A successful proposal must meet the needs and expectations of customers by delivering enhanced value, while also being capable of acceptance by the AER and Ausgrid's board. To ensure the success of the reset proposal and engagement program, we have established a governance framework. Starting with our Regulatory Reset Executive Committee (RREC), which has members of the Ausgrid Board and Executive and will have end-to-end oversight of the regulatory reset.



## Board

The Ausgrid Board and CEO will receive updates from the RREC in board papers. The Board will have responsibility for endorsing the Reset Proposal before it is submitted to the AER and will consider key elements of the proposal during development.

## Executive

Through the RREC the Ausgrid Executive collaborates with the Ausgrid Board ensuring alignment and transparency through all levels of Ausgrid management. The Executive will also have representation at meetings of the CCC and RCP throughout the development of the Reset Proposal.

## Customer Consultative Committee

The CCC will assist Ausgrid by providing customer and external stakeholder views and input on Ausgrid's business activities, the environment and market within which Ausgrid operates, and Ausgrid's vision and aspirations for the future. The CCC will receive regular updates from the RCP on the progress of the Reset Proposal and has extensive representation on the RCP. This will ensure that the Reset Proposal is well aligned with customer values beyond 2029 and that the RP engagement is able to respond to issues and inputs from outside the regulatory reset.

## Reset Customer Panel

The RCP will represent the long-term perspectives of our customers and challenge Ausgrid on key issues relating to the 2024-29 Regulatory Reset. The RCP will monitor the effectiveness of the customer and stakeholder engagement during the development of the Reset Proposal to ensure that each phase of engagement is informed by the customer feedback and values, and issues identified in the previous phase.

The RCP will act as observers to the reset engagement program by nominating 'sponsors' for each 'customer stream' and provide guidance on the topics and core questions to be addressed through the engagement. The RCP will meet monthly and as needed throughout the engagement program.

## Pricing Working Group

The PWG plays an important role in overseeing the development of prices and tariffs and will need to consider the input of customers, as well as having oversight of tariff trials.

## Network Innovation Advisory Committee

The NIAC was created following Ausgrid's 2019 - 2024 reset. They have oversight of the use of innovation funds to run new trials and deliver better customer outcomes.





## Our customers and stakeholders

Our customers and stakeholders are diverse and wide-ranging. Some we know and hear from regularly, others we don't. This is either because their role and relationship to the energy network is changing or emerging, or because structural, social or resource barriers have prevented us from forming a relationship with them.





## Customer streams

Stream	About this stream	Why we need to engage
 <b>1</b> <b>Individual consumers</b>	<p>This stream reaches individual energy consumers and bill-payers to discuss issues of cost, connection, and reliability. It also tackles individuals' knowledge, interest or confusion over energy issues, and the choices that arise from the changing energy sector.</p>	<p>Individual consumers are at the heart of our customer base. Understanding what they value from the energy network, and what they are willing to pay for, is a fundamental part of the Reset.</p>
 <b>2</b> <b>Lived Experience</b>	<p>The Lived Experience stream will help reach 'outlying' customer interests that lie in the margins of common customer pain points. Ausgrid must respond to these interests if it is to fulfil its role as an Essential Service Provider.</p>	<p>We must strive to identify and reach people that may be missed by other engagement approaches and build evidence for their representation in the cost allocation arising from the Draft Plan.</p>
 <b>3</b> <b>Business customers and Councils</b>	<p>This stream will reach our business and organisational customers: from the large multi-national to the small corner shop. Councils, which are major consumers of energy, also fall in this category (while acknowledging they are also strategic partners).</p>	<p>Like individual customers, we need to understand the changing needs of businesses as energy consumers.</p>
 <b>4</b> <b>Partners</b>	<p>This stream will reach the organisations that are shaping the energy sector. This includes the Federal and State Government departments that set policy, and the energy supply chain, which is changing the way we generate, distribute and store energy.</p>	<p>We need to work with partners to understand the changing nature and direction of the energy sector.</p>
 <b>5</b> <b>Internal</b>	<p>Our Board, our people and our contractors are vitally important to delivering good customer outcomes.</p>	<p>Internal stakeholders know and drive our business and interact with customers every day. They are invested in the Reset and are an integral part of the journey.</p>

## Customer groups

The image below summarises the key customer and stakeholder groups we are engaging during the reset. We knew we would need to test and adapt this approach as we heard from customers and our understanding of their interests, needs and aspirations deepened. It therefore reflects our learnings from the Phase 1 engagement.

Stream	Group	Subgroup
 <b>1</b> <b>Household consumers</b>	Prosumers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Solar customers</li> <li>• Battery customers</li> <li>• EV users</li> </ul>
	Individual grid consumers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bill payers</li> <li>• Renters</li> <li>• Low income customers</li> <li>• Home builders</li> <li>• Higher income customers</li> <li>• Non solar-eligible customers</li> <li>• Disinterested consumers</li> <li>• Export price opponents</li> <li>• Non-digital natives</li> </ul>
	Regional, remote or rural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bush fire affected consumers</li> <li>• Regional, remote or rural customers</li> <li>• Farmers</li> </ul>
	Key voices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CALD</li> <li>• Aboriginal</li> <li>• Youth</li> </ul>
 <b>2</b> <b>Lived Experience</b>	Community interest groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Groups</li> <li>• Local energy and environment groups</li> <li>• Sporting groups</li> <li>• Local activists</li> </ul>
	Emergency services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RFS, SES, Ambulance</li> <li>• Flood / bushfire prone</li> <li>• Some embedded / intermittent connection</li> </ul>
	Vulnerable customers	Renters / low income





## Customer groups continued

Stream	Group	Subgroup
 <b>3</b> <b>Business Customers and Councils</b>	Small business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Owner occupier</li> <li>• Renter</li> <li>• Rural and regional</li> <li>• High consumption</li> <li>• High dependence</li> </ul>
	Large connection customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Societal (hospitals, universities, schools)</li> <li>• Commercial (Government agencies, property managers)</li> <li>• Industrial (factories, data centres, manufacturers)</li> </ul>
	Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TfNSW Operations (train, bus, metro, light rail, P2P)</li> <li>• TfNSW strategy and policy</li> <li>• Retail oil companies</li> <li>• Haulage and freight industry</li> <li>• NRMA</li> </ul>
	Councils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Councillors</li> <li>• Officers</li> </ul>
	Elected representatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Federal</li> <li>• State</li> </ul>
	State and Federal Departments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Federal policy makers</li> <li>• State policy makers</li> <li>• Emergency services (incl SES, RFS)</li> </ul>
 <b>4</b> <b>Partners</b>	Energy supply chain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gentailers</li> <li>• Retailers</li> <li>• Aggregators</li> <li>• Innovators</li> <li>• Embedded network providers</li> <li>• Solar installers</li> <li>• ASPs</li> </ul>
	Regulators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AER</li> <li>• EWON</li> <li>• IPART</li> <li>• EPA</li> </ul>
 <b>5</b> <b>Internal</b>	Ausgrid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ausgrid staff</li> <li>• Ausgrid contractors</li> </ul>



## Approach

We will take a phased approach to engaging our customers during the Reset, set out meaningful topics clearly, and take care to overcome barriers to participation.







### Engagement topics

Through internal discussion, and the co-design process with customer advocates, we identified six key topics that will define our business into the future, and which will be considered in depth during the Reset. The topics have been refined into a series of engagement questions that will be explored with customers throughout the Reset (set out on pages 41-46) were co-designed as an integral part of the engagement framework co-design, and have formed the foundation of engagement interview guides and processes. These questions will start at an exploratory and aspirational level, before drilling down to examine trade-offs between investment, services and costs; and the impact of these trade-offs on tariffs and bills.



## Engagement topics continued

The topics and definitions are outlined below and the engagement questions are outlined in **Appendix A**. They are not intended to be used verbatim or prescriptively.

Fair		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intergenerational equity</li> <li>• No one left behind – access as well as pricing</li> <li>• Who pays? – cost allocation</li> </ul>
Sustainable		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand the value the community places on net zero</li> <li>• Cost vs net zero trade-offs</li> <li>• The role of Ausgrid and DNSPs in transition</li> <li>• Intergenerational equity</li> <li>• No one left behind – access as well as pricing</li> <li>• Who pays? – cost allocation</li> </ul>
Future network		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changing customer and community expectations</li> <li>• Build social licence and trust</li> <li>• Transparency of short- and long-term future network planning</li> <li>• Encouraging DER across different geographic customer segments</li> <li>• Understanding varying dependences on reliable supply and related consequences</li> <li>• Creating shared value in the community</li> <li>• The speed of Ausgrid's transition to clean and distributed energy</li> </ul>
Customer experience		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cost vs service level trade-offs</li> <li>• Digitisation of services</li> <li>• Customer communications</li> <li>• Enhancing customer energy literacy</li> <li>• Quality of service and bespoke experiences and outcomes</li> </ul>
Resilient		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community expectations around resilience vs reliability</li> <li>• Cost vs service level trade-offs</li> <li>• Cost vs risk trade-offs</li> <li>• Ausgrid's role during outages and extreme events</li> <li>• Financial resilience</li> <li>• Long-term asset strategy</li> <li>• Cyber security</li> </ul>
Value for money		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is 'value' from a customer and a DNSP perspective</li> <li>• Role of Ausgrid in power bills and raising customer awareness</li> <li>• Trade-offs between what customers would like and what represents value for money</li> <li>• Return on investment</li> <li>• Utilisation of assets</li> <li>• Contribution / benefit towards the transition to net zero</li> <li>• Valuing the benefits to communities of local solutions</li> </ul>

## Removing barriers

Our engagement approach is oriented around the needs, understanding and interests of customers and stakeholders and has been designed to build on each group's ability and capacity to engage.

Many of our customers and stakeholders may face cultural, resource, knowledge or structural barriers to participating in our engagement process. Some customers are familiar with the energy sector, have the resources to participate and will be confident to speak up. Others will have a lower level of understanding of energy issues and may not even be aware of Ausgrid's relevance to them. They may also be less confident to participate in traditional ways, or have limited time, may not speak English as a first language or have limited access to technology. To address these barriers, we have developed the following commitments.



## Engage broadly

Our customer and stakeholder base is broad: from the 'citizen consumer' to the 'home user' to major businesses and industry. We will adopt a variety of approaches to reach them all. We will also respond to the diversity of our customers' culture, language, demographic and socio-economic status and work with third parties and trusted community leaders to help us reach the 'missing voices'.

## Listen, ask and provide feedback

We will listen to what customers have to say about their values, aspirations and understanding before we launch into topics that we consider important. We will ask them how they want to engage with us and why they choose not to engage – it could be because they are satisfied with the current state. We will provide authentic feedback on how we've acted on what we've heard so that people feel that engaging with Ausgrid is worthwhile.

## Commit resources to engage well

We will provide the funding, the people and the resources to make sure we engage broadly and deeply through the Reset process. We will engage in places and spaces, and through methods, that suit our customers. We will hold events at the right time of day or week; and address customers' practical barriers to taking part – for example by arranging Ubers to take people to events, translating materials, contributing to childcare costs; providing mobile devices to those who don't have them, and giving incentives in return for time provided.

## Offer "go to" and "come to" approaches

We have developed 'come to' and 'go to' engagement approaches to ensure we provide the space for people to engage to the best of their ability and capacity. 'Come to' approaches are generally more traditional and formal, and suited to groups with high levels of knowledge and capacity. 'Go to' approaches are more proactive on Ausgrid's part, less formal and happen in places and formats that are more familiar to the target stakeholder.

## Provide clear and understandable information

Energy is a complex topic. We will build customers' energy literacy and understanding by providing clear, visually appealing and jargon-free information. In conjunction with our neighbouring network Endeavour, we will tailor language to the drivers and interests of consumers and translate key information into our network's three main languages: Arabic, Mandarin and Vietnamese.




## Recognise the impacts of Covid-19

The pandemic has affected us all and caused stress and anxiety for many. We will recognise cumulative hardship and stress caused by lockdowns when we design our approaches and adapt our engagement approaches to take account of the need for digital and virtual engagement while public health orders are in place.



## Phasing

The Reset engagement will take place over three key phases, linked to the stages of the overarching program. Public health restrictions will be in place during Phase 1, so engagement will need to be delivered digitally, only transitioning to face to face if restrictions ease.

Phase	Timing	Engagement phase focuses on
 <b>1</b> <b>Values and aspirations</b>	October 2021 to February 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• providing customers with information and background to our key reset topics so they can contribute</li> <li>• listening to customers to hear how they understand the topics</li> <li>• gauging customer values and aspirations in relation to each topic</li> <li>• asking customers how Ausgrid needs to change to meet their values and aspirations.</li> </ul>
 <b>2</b> <b>Developing trade-offs and prioritisation</b>	February to June 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• evaluating feedback from Phase 1 and modifying the onward engagement approach and questions, potentially moving to face to face engagement if restrictions ease</li> <li>• garnering detailed feedback to shape the draft Plan</li> <li>• holding in-depth discussions developing trade-offs and prioritisation related to each topic, and the tariff and bill impacts of these trade-offs.</li> </ul>
 <b>3</b> <b>Report back and refine trade-offs</b>	September to November 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reporting back to customers and stakeholders on how their feedback has shaped the Draft Plan and</li> <li>• getting feedback on how well customers felt their views were reflected, to help with discussions with the AER.</li> <li>• provide additional information to further refine trade offs and prioritisation</li> </ul>

## RCP sponsors

Our draft regulatory proposal is more likely to represent the long-term interests of our customers if we seek the views of a **broad** cross section of the customer base; and get the **deep** consideration of knowledgeable and experienced customer advocates.

We will link breadth and depth through the allocation of an RCP sponsor to some customer groups. The sponsors will provide oversight and advice on engagement with their nominated customer group and attend engagement activities where possible.

The RCP sponsors are:

### Individual customers

- **Deliberative core** – Mike Swanston
- **Regional customers** – Tony Robinson
- **Key voices** (CALD, Aboriginal, youth) – Iain Maitland
- **Prosumers** – Grant Stepa
- **Lived Experience** – Gavin Dufty

### Business customers

- **Large connection customers** – Mark Grenning
- **Transport** – Pascal Labouze
- **Councils** – Tony Robinson
- **Small business** – Tony Robinson

### Stakeholders

- **Government** – Louise Benjamin







## Program

Engagement activities have been tailored around customers' interests and capacity to engage and strive to attain an overarching participation level of involve or collaborate on the IAP2 spectrum.

### Updates to the framework following an evaluation of Phase 1

A report of the Phase 1 engagement resulted in a "letter to the Voice of Community Panel" which documented our key findings. This letter was supported by a methodology report which outlined how we evolved and conducted the Phase 1 engagement process.

An evaluation of the Phase 1 engagement was conducted with the RCP on 25 February 2022. As a result of this evaluation, the following actions were agreed:

- To verify insights against data gathered by Ausgrid as part of its Voice of Community research program.

- To focus Phase 2 of the Lived Experience and SME engagement stream on receiving and providing a "light touch" response to the initial ideas emerging from the Voice of Community Deliberative Panel.
- To seek out external sources of validation for our insights, in particular by sharing insights with other DNSPs.
- To conduct any further engagement with small businesses on a one-on-one basis to increase reach.
- To prioritise engagement on the Customer Service Incentive Scheme.
- To involve more Ausgrid staff in engagement activities.

## Individual customers

### The deliberative core

The Voice of Community Panel forms the core spine of the engagement approach and will enable us to gain a good appreciation of how customers view the trade-offs inherent in the Reset process.

The Panel brings together 45 randomly selected customers in Hunter/Newcastle, Greater Sydney and the Central Coast. Participants are incentivised to attend through stipends and offered practical support to overcome participation barriers such as laptops and internet access.

The Panel will meet seven times prior to the finalisation of the Draft Plan, both in regional groups and all together.

The Panel Remit is:

Ausgrid manages the poles and wires in your community. The energy industry is at a critical point, with a growing focus on a low carbon future and more extreme weather impacting the grid. Alongside that, customer needs and aspirations are rapidly changing. How we understand and respond to these issues has important implications for electricity bills and the reliability of electricity supply.

**How should Ausgrid look to the future while being fair to today's customers?**

Phase	What we set out to do	What we've done / changed
<b>1</b> <b>Customer research</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Research aimed at gauging the knowledge of, and values in relation to, the reset topics from a broad range of individual customers.</li><li>• Use research to recruit for, and as an input to, the deliberative forums.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We analysed our own customer data and the outputs of research reports by several advocacy organisations. This identified focus areas for our broader engagement.</li><li>• We used random selection, overseen by the Sortition Foundation, to recruit the Voice of Community Panel.</li></ul>
<b>1</b> <b>Online engagement: kitchen-table discussions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Establish an online engagement site to provide background to the Reset engagement process.</li><li>• Include a "kitchen-table" discussion pack to be used by community groups and to recruit for the deliberative process.</li><li>• Market the engagement site through social media, direct contact such as phone calls and emails.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We have established an engagement portal.</li><li>• Instead of kitchen table discussions, and social media, we used random selection to recruit for the Voice of Community Panel.</li></ul>





Phase	What we set out to do	What we've done / changed
<b>2</b> <b>Area-based deliberative forums</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold three deliberative forums in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 1. Newcastle / Hunter</li> <li>– 2. Central Coast, and</li> <li>– 3. Greater Sydney.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The forums will bring together a cross section of individual consumers spanning geography, demography and knowledge of energy issues. The forums will provide the core of the Reset engagement.</li> <li>• The Forums would meet once during Phase 1 and then meet two to three times during Phase 2. Initial trade-off 'bill impacts' would be identified after Phase 1.</li> <li>• Forum participants will be able to seek advice from other engagement streams.</li> <li>• Participation would be incentivised by stipends. Additional payments and benefits may be needed to ensure participation. For example, contributions to child-care, catering, Broadband 'boosts', IT support and equipment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We are running a Voice of Community Panel comprising 45 customers from Newcastle / Hunter, the Central Coast and Greater Sydney.</li> <li>• The Panel are meeting as a whole and in their regional groups.</li> <li>• The Panel will meet seven times: in regional groups and all together; and online and in person.</li> <li>• The remit was determined through internal discussions and the Panel met for the first time in February 2022.</li> <li>• Panel members will receive a stipend and be given IT support if needed.</li> <li>• At its outset, the Panel was briefed on the insights gained from wider engagement.</li> <li>• Initial ideas developed by the Panel will be presented to customers who participated in our other engagement streams to provide 'light touch' responses.</li> </ul>
<b>3</b> <b>TBD: 21st Century Town Hall</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During Phase 3, we may bring together representatives from across our individual customer engagement activities to participate in a wide-ranging Town Hall forum to provide feedback on the draft plan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Voice of Community Panel will meet as part of a 'recall session' in around September 2022, to provide a response to the Draft Plan and to further refine trade offs and priorities.</li> <li>• We will also consult widely on the Draft Plan using the online platform and social media.</li> </ul>
<b>4</b> <b>TBD: 21st Century Town Hall Phase 2</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We recognise the potential need to continue to seek customer feedback post our initial submission to the AER, due to the number of unknowns and changing variables that could impact customer priorities.</li> </ul>



## Key voices

Separate, engagement activities are running concurrently with the deliberative core to gain targeted insights from non-English speaking groups and Aboriginal communities (and potentially young people). Insights from these streams will feed into the deliberative process as information and views to be considered.

Phase	What we set out to do	What we've done / changed
<b>1</b> <b>Prosumer research</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commission research into the values and aspirations of prosumers.</li> <li>This research could be conducted jointly with other DNSPs and could be used as an input to the deliberative forums.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The prosumer engagement stream has been folded in with our engagement around export tariff structures. It will commence once scenarios on export levels have been completed. Export tariff trials begin Aug 2022.</li> </ul>
<b>1</b> <b>In-language discussion circles</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek specialist support to design in-language discussion circles with the two main language groups in our network: Arabic, and Mandarin, with a particular emphasis on small business owners.</li> <li>Endeavour Energy will lead conversations with the Vietnamese community.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>During Phase 1, we worked with the Ethnic Communities Council of NSW to conduct in-language discussions in Arabic, Mandarin, and Vietnamese.</li> <li>We will conduct another round of discussions with these CALD groups during Phase 2 to develop 'light touch' responses to the initial ideas of the Panel and, possibly again in Phase 3 to provide a response to the Draft Plan.</li> </ul>
<b>2</b> <b>In-language discussion circles</b> <b>Phase 2</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reconvene the Arabic, Mandarin and Vietnamese community groups to seek their community feedback on the Draft Plan ahead of the Town Hall event.</li> </ul>
<b>2</b> <b>Yarns with Aboriginal leaders</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek the advice of an aboriginal-owned business to help us build our knowledge of Country and cultural awareness.</li> <li>Talk to Aboriginal knowledge holders and Land Councils throughout our network to properly understand the impact of our assets on Country.</li> <li>Co-design approaches for Phases 2 and 3 to build energy awareness in Aboriginal communities and gain insights on the future of our network.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We have partnered with Indigenous Energy Australia (IEA) to lead discussions with Aboriginal communities about the future of our network. These will start in April/May 2022.</li> <li>We have mapped the Indigenous communities in the Ausgrid network area and their communities' key priorities.</li> </ul>





Phase	What we set out to do	What we've done / changed
<b>1</b> <b>Youth questionnaire and outreach, and Youth Forum</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct a survey of young people to gauge their knowledge of, and values in relation to, our reset topics. This questionnaire would be distributed through student union members, social media and youth political groups.</li> <li>Through these outcomes we would identify participants for a cross-network Youth Forum that will meet during Phases 1 and 2. We will also explore opportunities to leverage existing youth forums as an alternative to a new one.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Early planning identified youth as a key vulnerability in relation to the energy network.</li> <li>We have therefore engaged youth advocates as part of the Lived Experience stream and will reconvene them to respond to key outputs of our Voice of Community Panel.</li> <li>We reached out to youth groups and student unions to participate in discussion groups. Feedback was mainly received from Youth Action and the Greater Sydney Commission Youth Panel.</li> </ul>
<b>3</b> <b>21st Century Town Hall</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants from the Key Voices stream could be invited to the 21st Century Town Hall event. However, this would be subject to the outcomes of the first two engagement phases.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will invite participants from Phases 1 and 2 to feedback sessions on the Draft Plan.</li> </ul>



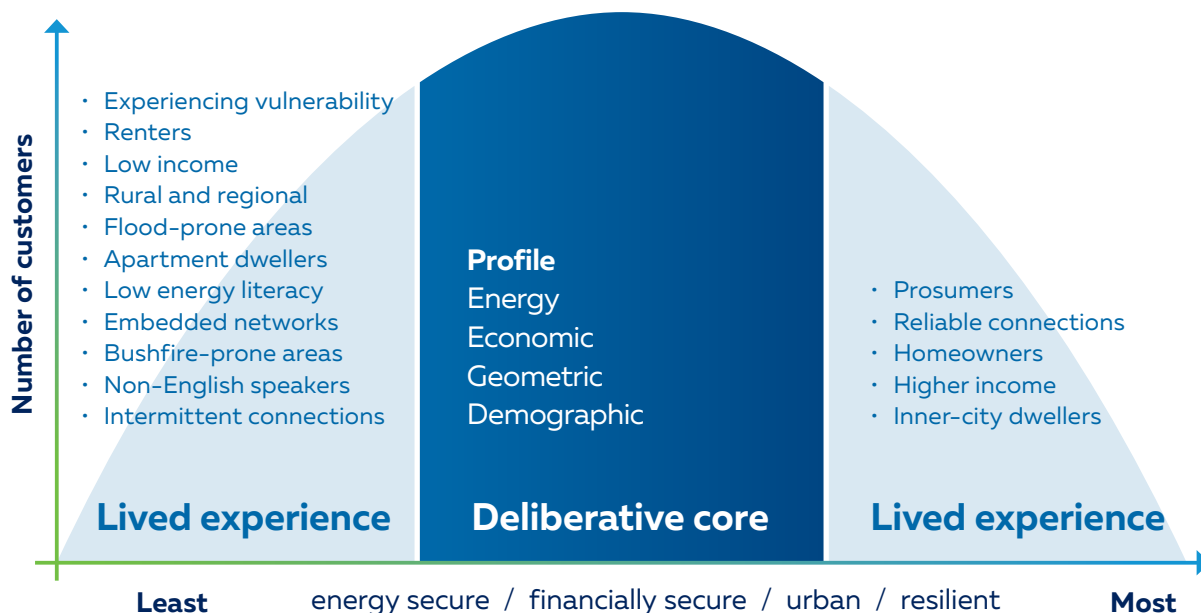
## Lived Experience

The Lived Experience stream (referred to the Civil Society stream) will help reach 'outlying' customer interests that lie in the margins of common customer pain points. Ausgrid must respond to these interests if it is to fulfil its role as an Essential Service Provider.

The Lived Experience stream will provide a way of identifying and reaching individuals that may be missed by other engagement approaches and

build evidence of their needs and aspirations and willingness to pay for the initiatives outlines in the Draft Plan.

The diagram below illustrates where the stream sits in relation to the deliberative core (which will be assembled to represent our broad customer base) and the types of customers that might be targeted through this stream depending on the pain point they experience.



## Approach

The stream will first mine customer data and front-line knowledge holders to understand where these pain points sit, before verifying this insight with community leaders (MPs and Councils), Not for Profit organisations, emergency services and care institutions.

We will then engage through the Reset online engagement portal to gain ideas on what Ausgrid could do to enhance its value proposition to more marginalised groups. Subject to what we hear, we may delve deeper during **Phase 2** to begin developing and designing these solutions.



Phase	What we set out to do	What we've done / changed
<b>1</b> <b>Internal consultation and data collection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interrogate customer complaints and feedback to understand the nature and location of customer 'pain points'.</li> <li>Talk to our front-line staff and contractors to ask what issues they are witnessing and with whom.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We analysed our own customer data and the outputs of research reports by several advocacy organisations.</li> <li>This identified focus areas for our broader engagement.</li> <li>We have involved Ausgrid staff in engagement events.</li> </ul>
<b>1</b> <b>Structured interviews - key organisations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approach key umbrella and professional organisations representing broad-based alliances, Not for Profit organisations, community groups and the care industry.</li> <li>Conduct 'structured interviews' to garner insights into the energy challenges being faced, and opportunities being explored, by their members and constituents.</li> <li>Seek advice on how to reach their members and constituents during the Reset process.</li> <li>Invite organisations to partner with us to explore ways and methods that ensure communities and vulnerable groups are not 'left behind' in the energy transition.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We have involved representatives from more than 20 organisations that advocate for customers in vulnerable circumstances. This has been via round table and one-on-one discussions.</li> <li>We will reconvene these organisations to provide 'light touch' responses to the Voice of Community Panel ideas.</li> </ul>
<b>1</b> <b>Initial outreach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will write to Councils and MPs (this could be combined with broader engagement on Reset issues) to verify our findings. We will also seek their support in sending information to communities asking for ideas on what Ausgrid could be doing to alleviate these issues.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We have surveyed 74 MPs across our network and will survey them periodically through the Reset.</li> </ul>
<b>1</b> <b>2</b> <b>Online engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will design a function on our online engagement platform outlining our known 'pain points' and asking for people's stories and ideas on how we could improve our service in these areas.</li> <li>The online engagement should be pushed out via social and traditional media in areas where we know these pain points are being experienced.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We have established an engagement portal. This contains areas for each customer stream and comprises discussion forums aligned with our engagement topics.</li> <li>We have used social media to reach young people.</li> <li>In Phase 3 we plan to use online engagement as a main component of our public consultation on the Draft Plan.</li> </ul>



Phase	What we set out to do	What we've done / changed
<b>2</b> <b>Spot engagements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advice garnered from the structured interviews would shape "spot" engagements with a selection of community and vulnerable groups to provide indicative insight into energy issues. For example, these could include intercept surveys in flood-prone areas, with apartment dwellers, or in areas of intermittent connection.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>During Phase 1 we commissioned additional focus groups in communities affected by extreme events. We will reconvene these stakeholders to respond to the VoC Panel ideas.</li> <li>In Phase 2 we will survey Life Support Customers on how we can support them better.</li> </ul>
<b>2</b> <b>Civil society energy forum</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Subject to the advice gained in Phase 1, we would establish a civil society energy forum during the early part of Phase 2. The outputs of the Forum should be used as an information input to the customer deliberative approach outlined below.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We have involved representatives from more than 20 organisations that advocate for customers in vulnerable circumstances. This has been via round table and one-on-one discussions.</li> <li>We will reconvene these organisations to provide 'light touch' responses to the Voice of Community Panel ideas.</li> </ul>
<b>3</b> <b>TBD: 21st Century Town Hall</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants from the Civil Society stream could be invited to the 21st Century Town Hall event. However, this would be subject to the outcomes of the first two engagement phases.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will invite participants from Phases 1 and 2 to feedback sessions on the Draft Plan.</li> </ul>



## Business customers and councils

We will engage comprehensively with business customers and councils throughout the Reset through a series of one-on-one and group

engagement activities. Separate streams of activity have been designed for small business, large connection customers, the transport sector and councils.

### Small business

Phase	What we set out to do	What we've done / changed
<b>1</b> <b>Small business profile</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will use internal information and data to profile typical small businesses in our network for example, a rural business that owns its premises, a tenant in a suburban shopping centre, an agricultural business, a retailer, a hospitality business.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We examined customer data and ABS data to identify areas of the network to target for small business engagement.</li> </ul>
<b>1</b> <b>Listening conversations with SMEs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will head out to meet a random selection of small businesses of varying kinds guided by our profiling.</li> <li>The purpose of these meetings is to listen to what small businesses are experiencing in relation to energy use, and use the feedback as input to subsequent engagement activities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We held discussion groups with small business owners in Sydney and the Hunter region.</li> </ul>
<b>1</b> <b>Structured interviews with industry organisations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In addition, we will approach industry organisations representing small business to conduct structured interviews. These could include the Small Business of Australia Association, and the Council of Small Business Associations Australia. Both organisations advocate around climate change and energy.</li> <li>We will undertake one-on-one conversations with these organisations to understand the key issues affecting their members.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We held round table and one-on-one discussions with peak groups and business chambers in Sydney and the Hunter.</li> </ul>
<b>2</b> <b>Spot engagements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advice garnered from Phase 1 activities would shape further engagements with a selection of small businesses to provide indicative insight into energy issues.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will invite small business customers and stakeholders engaged during Phase 1 to provide 'light touch' responses to the initial ideas of the VoC Panel.</li> </ul>
<b>2</b> <b>Reset topic forums</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will invite stakeholders to participate in a series of forums throughout Phase 2, structured around our reset topics and questions.</li> </ul>	
<b>3</b> <b>TBD: Energy Industry Forum</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Subject to how conversations with partners progress, during Phase 3, we may bring together representatives from across the industry and business stream to provide feedback on the Draft Plan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will invite participants from Phases 1 and 2 to feedback sessions on the Draft Plan.</li> </ul>



## Large connection customers

Phase	What we set out to do	What we've done / changed
<b>1</b> <b>One-on-one deep-dive conversations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We will undertake one-on-one conversations with our top 20 large-connection customers to gauge understanding and values in relation to our key topics, in addition to tailored questions.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We mapped our Commercial and Industrial customer segments to identify key customers with a range of needs and business models.</li><li>• We will conduct between 10-20 interviews over March and April 2022.</li></ul>
<b>2</b> <b>Reset topic forums</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We will invite stakeholders to participate in a series of forums throughout Phase 2, structured around our reset topics and questions.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We will identify key topics based on the insights gained through our interviews and test these through a series of large customer forums.</li></ul>
<b>3</b> <b>TBD: Energy Industry Forum</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Subject to how conversations with partners progress, during Phase 3, we may bring together representatives from across the industry and business stream to provide feedback on the Draft Plan.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We will hold one on one interviews with customers to seek their feedback on our Draft Plan.</li></ul>



## Transport

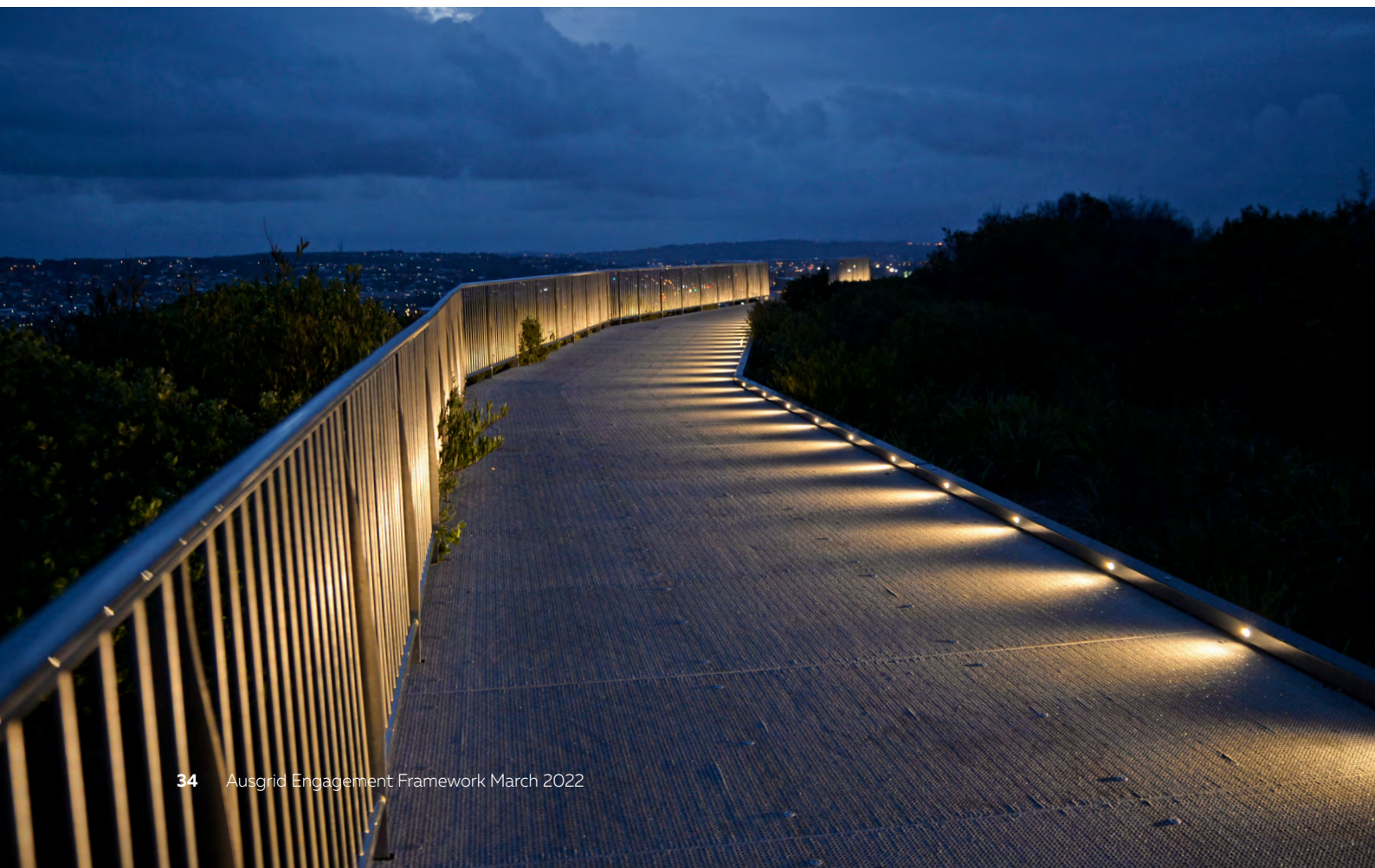
Phase	What we set out to do	What we've done / changed
<b>1</b> <b>Transport sector</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will conduct desktop research into lessons learnt on the introduction of EVs and Zero Emission transport in countries that are much more advanced than Australia.</li> <li>We would hold a series of deep-dive conversations with industry segments within the Transport group during Phase 1. This will be informed by the desk top research exercise.</li> <li>These would seek to understand the impacts of electrification on private-sector bus and rail operators, on the Point to Point industry and freight companies. It would also reach out to oil companies who may be transitioning their retail gas stations to charging hubs.</li> <li>These conversations would seek the potential benefits of an Energy in Transport workshop during Stage 2 and could potentially be held in conjunction with other DNSPs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engagement with the Transport industry is being conducted as part of Ausgrid's BAU activities.</li> <li>Transport for NSW was identified as one of our key large connection customers, and was interviewed as part of the large customer engagement.</li> </ul>
<b>2</b> <b>Energy in transport Forum</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will invite stakeholders to participate in an Energy in Transport Forum.</li> </ul>	
<b>3</b> <b>TBD: Energy Industry Forum</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Subject to how conversations with partners progress, during Phase 3, we may bring together representatives from across the industry and business stream to provide feedback on the Draft Plan.</li> </ul>	





## Councils

Phase	What we set out to do	What we've done / changed
<b>1</b> <b>Council deep dive conversations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We will have targeted conversations with Councils on key issues.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We have conducted a total of 6 workshops with an average of 20 Councils attending each on the topics of Vegetation Management, Innovation and Sustainability, Public Lighting and Resilience.</li></ul>
<b>2</b> <b>3</b> <b>Council subgroups</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We will conduct issue-specific working groups as identified during Phase 1</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This will be ongoing through the Reset.</li></ul>





## Partners

This stream will reach the organisations that are shaping the energy sector. This includes the Federal and State Government departments that

set policy, and the energy supply chain, which is changing the way we generate, distribute and store energy.

## Energy supply chain

Phase	What we set out to do	What we've done / changed
<b>1</b> <b>One-on-one deep-dive conversations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will undertake one-on-one conversations with key partners in the energy sector to gauge understanding and values in relation to our key topics, in addition to tailored questions. The conversations will also gauge interest in reset topic forums in Phase 1 and 2.</li> <li>These conversations will be held separately with representatives from each supply chain category: gentailers, retailers, aggregators, innovators, embedded network providers, solar installers and ASPs.</li> <li>Conversations will be held one-on-one as some, for example gentailers, may not be willing to share information with other organisations in the room.</li> <li>Where possible, the conversations will be held jointly with other DNSPs as many are common across networks.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We held a forum for ASPs in Dec 2021, with approximately 100 ASPs attending. ASP engagement is ongoing.</li> <li>We reached out to all retailers to seek interest in engaging in our regulatory process, and as a result of this we met with 4 retailers to discuss detailed engagement preferences.</li> <li>Following feedback from retailers we have begun a monthly newsletter to keep them informed.</li> <li>We have engaged 2 retailers as part of our tariff trials.</li> <li>Solar installers are being engaged as part of our large customer engagement.</li> </ul>
<b>2</b> <b>Reset topic working groups</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will invite stakeholders to participate in a series of working groups throughout Phase 2, structured around our reset topics and questions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will hold a forum for retailers in June 2022 to share early Draft Plan insights.</li> </ul>
<b>3</b> <b>TBD: Energy Industry feedback Forum</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Subject to how conversations with partners progress, during Phase 3, we may bring together representatives from across the industry and business streams to provide feedback on the Draft Plan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will hold a forum with retailers to seek their feedback on our Draft Plan.</li> <li>We will communicate our Draft Plan to ASPs (which may involve a forum).</li> <li>We will provide a mechanism for feedback via our online platform.</li> </ul>

## Federal and State Government

Phase	What we set out to do	What we've done / changed
<b>1</b> <b>Deep dive conversations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will invite Federal and State Government stakeholders to participate in a series of one-on-one conversations as part of ongoing programs of interviews with key stakeholders. These would take place throughout Phases 1 and 2 structured around our reset topics and questions.</li> <li>These conversations will include meetings with TfNSW, delivered as part of the Transport stream above.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We communicated to 27 Federal members and 47 State members – 74 MPs in total.</li> </ul>
<b>2</b> <b>Energy in transport Forum</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will invite stakeholders to participate in a series of forums throughout Phase 2, structured around our reset topics and questions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We have engaged with the Committee for Sydney to work collaboratively on a joint plan for achieving a net zero Sydney.</li> </ul>
<b>3</b> <b>Co-design Resilience Framework</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Co-design with RCP a Resilience Framework that provides additional expenditure governance.</li> </ul>
<b>3</b> <b>TBD: Energy Industry Forum</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Subject to how conversations with government, industry, and business customer progress, during Phase 3, we may bring together representatives from across these stakeholder groups to provide feedback on the Draft Plan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will share our Draft Plan with MP's and provide a mechanism for them to provide feedback online.</li> </ul>



# Program at a glance

Engagement to shape the Draft Plan							Draft Plan				
Group	RCP/CCC	Phase 1: September 2021 to February 2022			Phase 2: February to June 2022		June - August 2022	Phase 3: September - December 2022			
		Fair; sustainable; future network; customer experience; resilient; value for money What do these topics mean to you? How does Ausgrid need to change to.....				Fair; sustainable; future network; resilient; customer experience; value for money Develop trade-off questions Tariff / pricing questions			Fair; sustainable; future network; resilient; customer experience; value for money How well have we responded in our Draft Plan?		
INDIVIDUAL CUSTOMERS											
Prosumers	Grant Stepa	Planning	VoC Panel		Phase 1	VoC Panel		Phase 2	Voice of Community Panel - Recall session and Town Hall	Public consultation on draft proposal	
Individual consumers - grid	Mike Swanston			Voice of Community Panel -meet and greet		Voice of Community Panel Seven sessions - in regions and all together Online and face to face					
Regional, remote or rural	Tony Robinson										
Key voices	Youth		Iain Maitland	Youth blended with Lived Experience Stream							
	CALD		In-language focus groups				Response to VoC ideas				
	Indigenous			Yarns		Yarns					
LIVED EXPERIENCE											
Community interest groups	Gavin Dufty	Internal consultation and data collection		Round table and deep dive conversations with peak groups and community groups							
Emergency services				MP survey		Community focus groups - disruptive events			Round Table and customer discussion to gain 'light touch' response to VoC Panel initial ideas.		
Customers in vulnerable circumstances						Discussion groups with customers					
BUSINESS CUSTOMERS											
Small business	Toby Robinson	Small business profiling		Structured interviews with Peak groups			Response to VoC Panel ideas			Town Hall	Public consultation
Councils	Toby Robinson	Stakeholder mapping		Topic-based roundtables on vegetation and street lightening		Emergency response and resilience	Second round of roundtables		Stakeholder briefings		
Large connection customers	Mark Grenning					Interviews with 10-20 large customers	2 x large customer forums				
Transport	Pascale Labouze		Incorporated with BAU activities			Incorporated with BAU activities					
PARTNERS											
Regulators	Louise Benjamin	Stakeholder mapping	Ongoing involvement with all customer streams			Ongoing involvement with all customer streams				Stakeholder briefings	
Federal and State	Louise Benjamin					MP surveys					
Energy supply chain	Mark Grenning			ASP forums		Aggregator forums	ASP forums				
INTERNAL											
Ausgrid	N/A	Extensive staff engagement across all engagement sessions									





## Evaluation

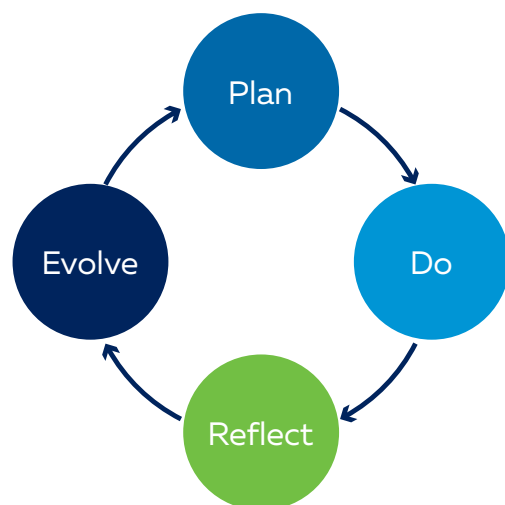
Capturing feedback accurately will ensure we identify themes and issues across our engagement topics and balance them with other considerations in the Reset process. Evaluation will help us continuously improve our engagement approach so that we are reaching the right voices and garnering the insights to shape our Draft Plan in our customers' interests.

### Approach

Throughout this Reset process, we will adopt an iterative approach to refining and improving our stakeholder and customer engagement. This will be delivered through the four steps outlined to the right.

Our evaluation will be conducted by the Ausgrid team at every phase of the Reset process, and we will also build in external validation and critique to help us strive for continuous improvement.

Evaluation will focus on what we heard from stakeholders and how we are doing in terms of the quality of our engagement and meeting our commitments.



## Feedback capture

### Insights

At the end of **each engagement event**, or series of engagement events, the Ausgrid team will summarise feedback and insights in a template. This template will outline the engagement date, forum, venue and stakeholders; and summarise the Reset topics covered, and the feedback received.

### Feedback

In addition, participants will be asked to complete a satisfaction survey comprising four consistent evaluation questions. These will be:

- **How would you rate the Ausgrid people who you dealt with?** Were they knowledgeable, approachable, clear, and friendly?
- **How would you rate the information that was provided to you?** Was it clear, understandable, in a language you understand?
- **How would you rate the way you were engaged?** Was it at a time and in a place that suited you? Were you given help to take part?
- **To what extent do you feel your feedback will be acted upon?** Do you feel you were heard? Do you trust Ausgrid to act?

## Evaluation

At the end of **each engagement phase** (in February and June 2022, and December 2023) the Ausgrid team and RCP will undertake a Post Implementation Evaluation, using the summarised feedback to determine:

- what we have heard and how might we modify engagement questions for the next phase
- what cross-cutting themes are emerging across customer and stakeholder groups
- how we might begin to address key issues in the Draft Plan and
- what do customers think of our engagement, and how we might modify approaches for the next phase.



# Engagement questions





## Engagement questions

CCC/RCP		Fair	Place	Phase 1: Understanding values and aspirations (October – December 2021)	Understanding trade-offs	Verifying the next five years
		Fair	Personalised		Phase 2: (January – May 2022)	
CCC/ RCP		Intergenerational equity No one left behind Who pays?	One size does not fit all Treat cohorts in a continuum differently.			
Fair	Fair	<p><b>Description</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Intergenerational equity</li><li>• No one left behind – access as well as pricing</li><li>• Who pays? – cost allocation</li></ul> <p><b>To note for design:</b> Consistent tense and use of future time ‘intervals’ for common time horizon – note for approach</p>	<p><b>Definitions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What does fairness mean to you?</li><li>• What does vulnerability mean to you?</li><li>• What does “not leaving anyone behind” mean to you?</li><li>• What does fairness mean to you in relation to energy?</li><li>• What does energy vulnerability mean to you?</li><li>• What does “not leaving anyone behind” mean to you in the context of energy?</li><li>• Is vulnerability static, or does it change over time? How?</li></ul> <p><b>Values and aspirations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If a particular decision makes some people worse-off, but the community as a whole better off, is this fair?</li><li>• Is it fair to make people worse off today if it makes future generations better off (and vice versa)?</li><li>• If you are generally satisfied with your life, is it important to you to know if you are being treated fairly?</li><li>• There can be disparities in the way people access (engage with) electricity based on geography / technology / finances / living conditions or other factors. Do you think this is fair? Why/why not?</li><li>• If access to support measures was only improved for some vulnerable customers but not all, would this improve fairness in outcomes for the community?</li><li>• What would make the transition to renewables fairer?</li><li>• What would make a transition to EVs fair?</li></ul> <p><b>Roles and responsibilities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Do you think enough is being done in NSW to support vulnerable people and businesses?</li><li>• Who do you see as responsible for ensuring you are getting a fair deal for your electricity supply?</li><li>• What can be done to make access to a good energy deal fairer?</li><li>• What responsibilities should landlords have to tenants in relation to fairness in energy supply and heating/cooling including energy efficiency, access to solar/batteries, and home insulation?</li><li>• What if anything should Ausgrid change to make things fairer? How does this differ to other parties involved in supplying power to NSW communities?</li></ul>	<p><b>Present options to address phase 1 feedback</b></p> <p><b>Trade offs</b></p> <p>We make long-term investments that impact current <i>and</i> future generations. How should we understand what future generations value? How do we balance this against the needs of current customers?</p> <p>Given the suggestions made last year to make energy fairer and considering how the cost of these is spread across many customers, would you consider paying more to make energy supply fairer for others in your community today?</p> <p>Would you consider paying more to make energy supply fairer for future generations?</p> <p>What should Ausgrid consider when investing in initiatives that might support vulnerable people?</p> <p>Is addressing fairness – by Ausgrid implementing these initiatives – more or less important than other changes Ausgrid could make?</p> <p>If we could offer a price reduction of 10%, should all of our customers receive the same 10% price reduction? Or are there circumstances where some should receive a greater reduction, meaning some get less of a reduction?</p> <p>Is “user-pays” always a fair approach to pricing? Should there ever be exceptions to the user-pays principle?</p> <p>In some cases, the service Ausgrid provides may vary from household to household or business to business. How can this be done fairly?</p> <p>Community batteries may become more prevalent in local neighbourhoods. What opportunities or risks do you see to community batteries improving fairness in energy supply for our communities?</p>	<p><b>Specific questions will be driven from phase 2A (understanding trade-offs) – but could be across the following topics for example:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Solar export tariffs and rewards</li><li>• Public EV charging tariffs</li><li>• Tariff structures and transitional/ complementary measures</li><li>• Connection policies</li><li>• Embedded networks</li><li>• Vulnerable customer initiatives</li><li>• Our role funding customer representatives (additional funding)</li><li>• Replacement/maintenance trade-offs</li><li>• Electronic vs written comms options (e.g. SMS for outages)</li><li>• Community energy – our role</li></ul>	

## Engagement questions

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Clean	Sustainable	<b>Description</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community values on net zero by 2050</li> <li>Definitions of 'clean and sustainable'</li> <li>Cost vs net zero trade-offs</li> <li>The role of Ausgrid and DNSPs in transition.</li> </ul> <b>To note for design</b> <p>Approach - need to provide context so customers make suggestions for Ausgrid actions that fit within the organisation's remit and capabilities</p>			<b>Definitions</b> <p>What does sustainable mean to you?</p> <p>What does net zero mean to you?</p> <p>What does energy sustainability mean to you?</p> <b>Values and aspirations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is responding to climate change important to you? Do you think its importance to you has decreased/ increased/ stayed same over the past 10 years?</li> <li>What should determine how a business responds to climate change and how quickly? e.g. commercial priorities, community priorities, government priorities, shareholder priorities?</li> <li>Think about businesses looking to achieve net zero emissions ('the transition')?</li> <li>How quickly should they move?</li> <li>What actions should they take?</li> <li>What reporting should they provide?</li> <li>Some countries are starting to implement bans on the sale of petrol/ diesel cars. What do you think about this?</li> <li>Do you plan on installing solar panels or a battery soon? What factors influence your decision?</li> <li>Do you plan on buying an EV soon? What factors influence your decision?</li> <li>Is increased solar and batteries on the network good, even if not everyone can do it?</li> </ul> <b>Roles and responsibilities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What do you think Ausgrid should be doing in relation to sustainability and climate change in their business operation or in relation to the grid? And by when?</li> <li>What is the role of Ausgrid in driving social change?</li> <li>What is the role of Government (local, state and federal) vs the role of energy companies in responding to climate change?</li> <li>What could Ausgrid offer to customers to help them participate more greatly to net zero objectives?</li> </ul>	<b>Present options to address phase 1 feedback</b> <b>Trade offs</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If some community members do not think that responding to climate change is particularly important, is it fair if they still pay for initiatives that respond to climate change?</li> <li>How much more are you willing to pay to decarbonise the energy system? What information do you need to make this decision?</li> <li>Is addressing net zero emissions - by Ausgrid implementing these initiatives - more or less important than other changes Ausgrid could make?</li> <li>Should the cost of the energy system's response to climate change be separately reported on customer bills? How do you balance more information with bill complexity?</li> <li>If there is a cost or a saving in 'the transition' Who should pay that price or reap the reward? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How much should customers contribute or benefit - and how is it shared between customer cohorts?</li> <li>If there is an upfront cost for a longer-term saving, how should that be managed?</li> <li>How do we balance user pays and the ability/ capacity to respond/ participate in the market?</li> <li>How should we ensure the benefits of the transition are captured?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<b>Specific questions will be driven from phase 2A (understanding trade-offs) - but could be across the following topics for example:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Solar export tariffs and rewards</li> <li>Public EV charging tariffs</li> <li>Connection policies</li> <li>Community energy - our role</li> <li>Measures of success</li> <li>NSW electricity infrastructure roadmap</li> <li>Diversity and Inclusion programs</li> <li>First Nations Issues</li> <li>Tree Pruning and replacement programs</li> <li>Community initiatives and social enterprise</li> <li>Modern Slavery</li> <li>Public / community safety programs</li> </ul>

## Engagement questions

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		CCC/ RCP	Intergenerational equity No one left behind Who pays?	One size does not fit all Treat cohorts in a continuum differently.			
None	Future network	<b>Description</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Changing customer and community expectations.</li> <li>Building social licence and trust</li> <li>Transparency of short- and long-term future network planning</li> <li>Encouraging DER across different geographic customer segments</li> <li>Understanding varying dependences on reliable supply and related consequences</li> <li>Creating shared value in the community</li> <li>The speed of Ausgrid's transition to clean and distributed energy</li> </ul> <b>To note in design</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide people with support to visualise 2050</li> <li>Unpack the 'Power of Choice'</li> </ul>			<b>Definitions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What does the phrase "electricity network" evoke in your mind?</li> <li>What are the characteristics of businesses you trust?</li> </ul> <b>Values and aspirations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Paint a series of alternative future customer scenarios – which future/s are appealing? What do you like or dislike about them?</li> <li>How do you think you (or your children or grandchildren) will be living in 2030? What about 2050?</li> <li>How do you think you might be using electricity in 2030? What about 2050? Do you think you will be generating your own electricity in 2030? What changes might there be to the appliances you have?</li> <li>What does this mean for what electricity might look like at these points in time?</li> <li>What industries do you think are leading and laggards when it comes to technological innovation? How would you rate your electricity service? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– And your Retailer?</li> <li>– And your network provider?</li> </ul> </li> <li>How do we meet customer expectations that networks will reasonably accommodate new technologies like solar, batteries, electric vehicles?</li> <li>Do you see yourself benefiting from the transition to solar? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Does the transition to renewables suit your needs?</li> <li>– Are there people or business that benefit more than others?</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <b>Roles and responsibilities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is the role of a business in supporting the community?</li> <li>What is the role of electricity networks in our community?</li> <li>How should networks support the transition to more distributed energy sources?</li> <li>Should Ausgrid change how it supports customers with different needs?</li> <li>Should Ausgrid drive the vision for the future or should it simply facilitate what the community wants?</li> <li>Does Ausgrid have a role in advocating for changes that our customers want even where we may have no direct influence or interest in the outcome?</li> <li>Would you like Ausgrid to play a role in explaining the opportunities offered by new technologies, and in facilitating access to them?</li> </ul>	<b>Present options to address phase 1 feedback</b> <b>Trade offs</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Given the future is uncertain, how should Ausgrid prioritise its investment in electricity services going forward? Should we plan to meet all futures (which could be more expensive)? Or try and pick winners (less expensive)?</li> <li>Is preparing for the future more or less important than other changes Ausgrid could make?</li> <li>What is an acceptable price to pay for future planning and modernisation of the grid?</li> <li>As people diverge their use of electricity, how should that be reflected in the price they pay?</li> <li>How should Ausgrid earn greater trust from the community?</li> <li>How do the community's aspirations align with the Power Of Choice aspirations and are all the relevant Power Of Choice aspirations still relevant some 10 years on?</li> </ul>	<b>Specific questions will be driven from phase 2A (understanding trade-offs) – but could be across the following topics</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grid modernisation expenditure</li> <li>Two-way market facilitation – LUOS and peer to peer trading.</li> <li>DER hosting expenditure</li> <li>Solar export tariffs and rewards</li> <li>Role of NIAC / innovation funding</li> <li>Role of networks vs role of others.</li> </ul>



## Engagement questions

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		CCC/ RCP	Intergenerational equity No one left behind Who pays?	One size does not fit all Treat cohorts in a continuum differently.			
Quality service	Customer experience	<b>Description</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cost vs service level trade-offs</li><li>• Digitisation of services</li><li>• Customer communications</li><li>• Enhancing customer energy literacy</li><li>• Quality of service and bespoke experiences and outcomes</li></ul>			<b>Definitions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What does good service mean to you?</li><li>• Your views on ‘good service’ in general<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– What are the features of good service?</li><li>– How have your expectations of good service changed over the last 5 years?</li><li>– What would good service look like in 5 years?</li></ul></li></ul> <b>Values and aspirations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What do you need from your electricity supply?<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– What, how and when?</li><li>– Does Ausgrid deliver on its promises?</li><li>– Do we keep our promises?</li><li>– Do we keep you informed?</li></ul></li><li>• Your views on ‘good service’ from network businesses<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– What services do you expect from an electricity network?</li><li>– When it comes to electricity what aspects of good service are important?</li><li>– When do you need or expect the different aspects of service?</li><li>– What services would you like from an electricity network?</li></ul></li><li>• How do your circumstances impact the level of service you’d like or expect?</li><li>• What value do you place on having access to real time usage information?</li><li>• Should we shape our services to respond to the needs of particular groups? If so how?</li><li>• Should we increase energy literacy / people’s ability to access a good energy deal or energy services? If so how?</li><li>• Do you feel you have enough information about the energy market/ options available to you?</li><li>• Do you think there is enough information available on electricity?</li><li>• What if any information is not available or hard to get?</li></ul> <b>Roles and responsibilities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Whose responsibility is it to ensure people understand the energy services available to them?</li><li>• Whose responsibility is it to ensure people understand the services DNSPs are required to provide?</li></ul>	<b>Present options to address phase 1 feedback</b> <b>Trade offs</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Are there some elements of your electricity supply experience which you think are out-dated and should be modernised?</li><li>• Which of the options presented do you think Ausgrid should pursue?</li><li>• Is improving customer service more or less important than other changes Ausgrid could make?</li><li>• Over what period should the upfront costs of improved efficiency be paid back?</li></ul> <b>Refining priorities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Is your preference contact by phone or self-serve?</li><li>• How do you want to receive service?</li><li>• Personalised vs mass communications – where do we find the sweet spot?</li></ul>	<b>Specific questions will be driven from phase 2A (understanding trade-offs) – but could be across the following topics</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• CSIS – approach and measures</li><li>• Reporting</li><li>• Improving experience/ease at specific touchpoints and potential implications for investment (e.g. digital solutions, battery during planned outages).</li></ul>

## Engagement questions

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		CCC/ RCP	Intergenerational equity No one left behind Who pays?	One size does not fit all Treat cohorts in a continuum differently.			
Resilient	Resilient		<b>Description</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community expectations around resilience vs reliability</li> <li>Cost vs service level trade-offs</li> <li>Cost vs risk trade-offs</li> <li>Ausgrid's role during outages and extreme events</li> <li>Financial resilience</li> <li>Long-term asset strategy</li> <li>Cybersecurity</li> </ul> <b>To note in design:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognise the different starting lines for people's understanding and views of resilience</li> </ul>		<b>Definitions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What does resilience mean to you? (Consider asking after discussing the impacts of outages)</li> <li>What impact does an electricity network's resilience have on you?</li> </ul> <b>Values and aspirations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What are the features of a resilient community?</li> <li>How resilient do you think our communities are? How might their levels of resilience differ? Why do you think this is?</li> <li>How resilient is your household?</li> <li>What would a resilient electricity network look like?</li> <li>Your views on power outages: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What are the impacts to you or your business of an outage (30min – 3 days – break down into smaller increments)?</li> <li>In what circumstances is an outage acceptable? (forced and planned etc.)</li> </ul> </li> <li>Your understanding of resilience threats <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What do you think are the biggest threats to a stable electricity network?</li> <li>How do you think these threats will change over time?</li> <li>How much of a gap, if any, is there between your expectation of the network's resilience when there is a loss of supply (i.e. due to extreme events) and the current reality? Including at what point (in loss of agency) should Ausgrid intervene?</li> <li>Should Ausgrid make the network more secure than it is today?</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <b>Roles and responsibilities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Who should be responsible for the resilience of our community to extreme weather and natural disasters (i.e. pre-emptive)?</li> <li>What do you expect of your distributor during natural disasters or other outages?</li> <li>What is Ausgrid's role in making your community more resilient to extreme weather events?</li> <li>What is an appropriate level of understanding/education on new installations etc.? Is it Ausgrid's role to educate customers about how Solar PV will operate in a daytime grid outage, how backup circuits operate and what it means to have a backup circuit, (how long it will last, what should I use it for etc)?</li> </ul>	<b>Present options to address phase 1 feedback</b> <b>Trade offs</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Should the networks have a role in providing basic services (hot meals, showers etc) to customers experiencing prolonged outages in extreme weather events?</li> <li>Would you be willing to pay more for Ausgrid to invest in making the network more resilient to extreme weather events?</li> <li>What would you expect Ausgrid to investigate and understand before spending more on the network to make it more resilient to extreme weather?</li> <li>Is making the network more resilient more or less important than other changes Ausgrid could make?</li> <li>What is better/the least disruptive for you: a planned outage of x long or an unplanned outage of Y long?</li> <li>In the event of an outage how should we prioritise reconnection of services – eg. Hospitals or rural properties – valuing the way energy companies respond?</li> </ul>	<b>Specific questions will be driven from phase 2A (understanding trade-offs) – but could be across the following topics</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cost/risk trade-offs between upfront investment, maintenance, insurance, cost-pass through and reliability metrics.</li> <li>Cost/Value trade-off of targeted initiatives.</li> <li>What are the measures of success that Ausgrid should adopt?</li> </ul>

## Engagement questions

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CCC/ RCP		Intergenerational equity No one left behind Who pays?	One size does not fit all Treat cohorts in a continuum differently.				
Value for money	Value for money	<div><b>Description</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>What is ‘value’ from a customer and a DNSP perspective</li><li>Role of Ausgrid in power bills and raising customer awareness</li><li>Trade-offs between what customers would like and what represents value for money</li><li>Return on investment</li><li>Utilisation of assets</li><li>Contribution / benefit towards the transition to net zero</li><li>Community sharing / storage</li></ul></div> <div><b>To note in design:</b> Set context on price impacts, including interest rates, generation, rate of return, NSW Government roadmap etc. outside of Ausgrid’s control (and, therefore, negotiation table) and focus on understanding priorities as well as particular price points</div>			<div><b>Definitions</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>What does “value for money” mean to you?</li><li>Your understanding of energy</li><li>Do you understand what services / benefits you get from energy?</li><li>Do you understand your bill and what you are paying for?</li><li>What proportion of your current bills / income does electricity currently account for?</li><li>To what extent are you able to adapt your behaviour to lower your energy bill?</li><li>How has the value for money of your electricity service changed for you over time?</li></ul></div> <div><b>Values and aspirations</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>What services do you currently receive that represent good value for money? Why? What about poor value for money?</li><li>What services/ benefits do you expect to receive from x (retailer) and Y(network)?</li><li>How much have you spent/ are thinking of spending on appliances that will change your energy bill?</li><li>Are you happy to pay the amount you do for the contribution energy makes to your lifestyle?</li><li>What extra benefits should you be getting based on what you’re currently paying?</li><li>What should the energy industry focus on to improve value for money into the future?</li><li>Are you prepared to / have you made changes to achieve better value for money?</li><li>Where would you want Ausgrid to invest more and/or less in the network?</li></ul></div> <div><b>Roles and responsibilities</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Do you know who is involved in supplying your electricity?</li><li>Who do you hold accountable for the value for money of your electricity supply?</li></ul></div>		



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## Contact us

All correspondence in relation to this document should be directed to:  
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