

The title "empowering communities" is centered on the page. "empowering" is written in a white, lowercase, cursive script font. "communities" is written in a bold, lowercase, orange sans-serif font. The background of the entire page is a blurred photograph of people's hands using tablets, with a decorative graphic of thin, white, curved lines overlaid on the left and bottom edges.

empowering
communities

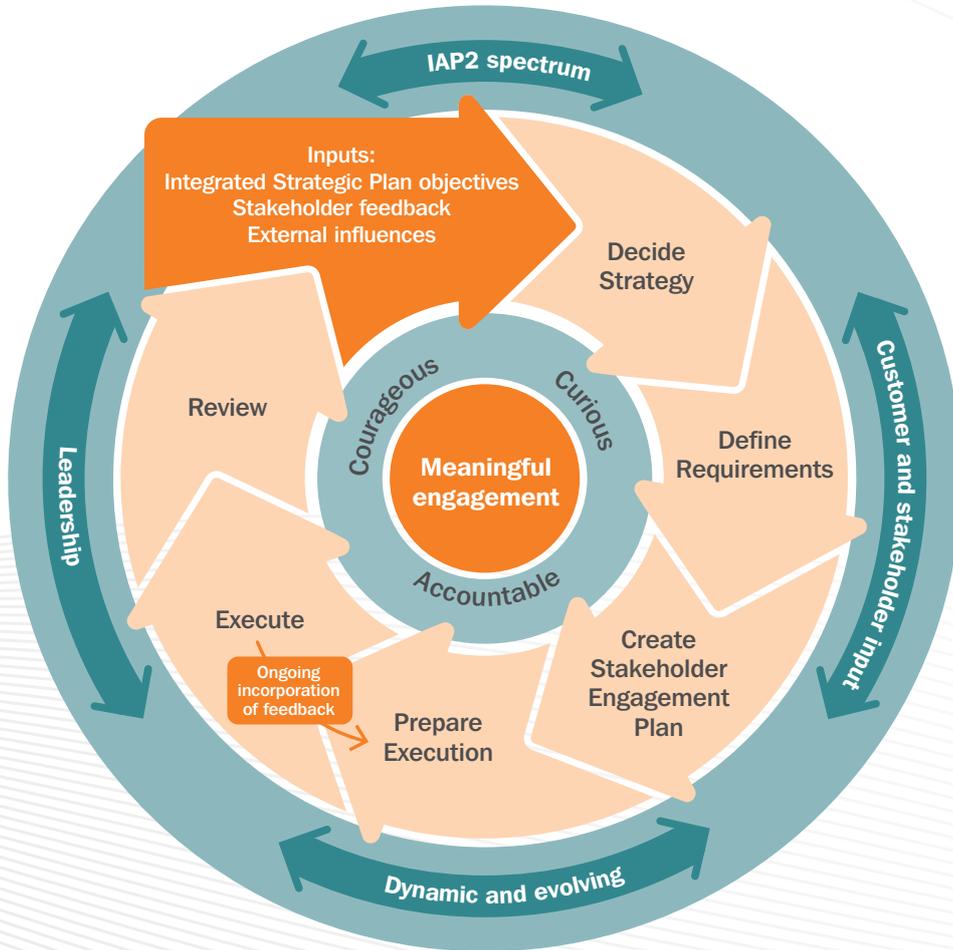
Attachment 4.1

Stakeholder Engagement Framework

Draft 2019-24 Regulatory Proposal

April 2018

Stakeholder Engagement Framework on a page



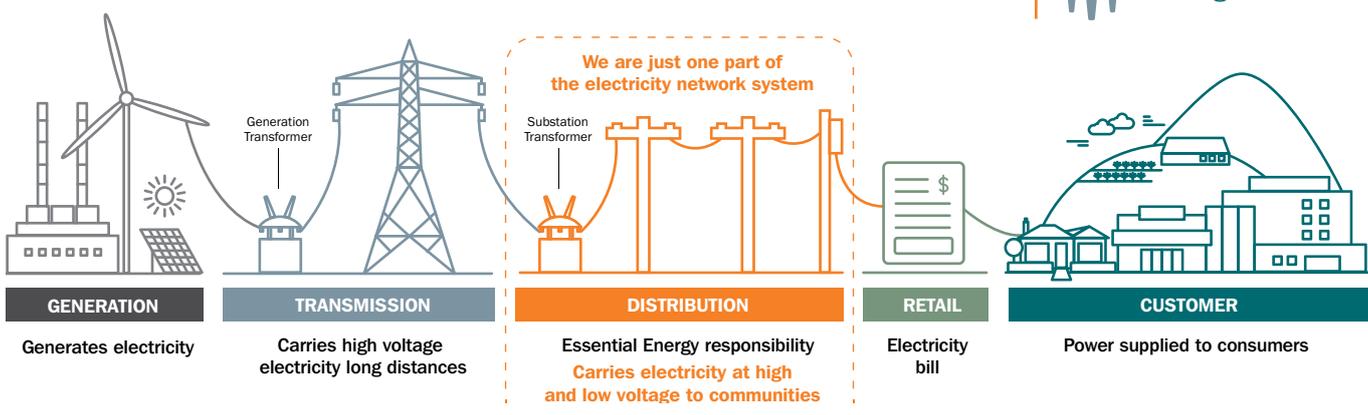
Our Vision
Empowering communities to share and use energy for a better tomorrow

Our Purpose
To enable energy solutions that improve life

- Our Customer Commitment**
- Listen
 - Respect
 - Deliver

- Customers Priorities**
- Our customer and stakeholder engagement activities have shown our customers value:
- Affordability
 - Reliability
 - Good customer service and communication
 - Transparency/bill itemisation
 - Innovative technologies
 - Environmentally friendly/encouraging renewables

- We will be**
- Curious
 - Accountable
 - Courageous



Purpose of the Stakeholder Engagement Framework

Customer and stakeholder engagement informs all of our decision-making processes.

Background

Our Stakeholder Engagement Framework (SEF) has been prepared to guide Essential Energy across all department and project teams in their adoption of stakeholder engagement protocols, ensuring customer and stakeholder research and analysis informs future projects and activities.

Previously reviewed and updated in August 2016, Essential Energy's SEF should be regularly refreshed to reflect feedback received through consultation, research, the changing dynamics of stakeholders and projects, and emerging trends and important innovations in engagement practice.

Our SEF promotes a culture within Essential Energy that recognises and values working with customers and stakeholders, recognising the diversity of customers and the importance of developing appropriate engagement programs to support customer and business objectives. Application of the SEF helps us to manage material risks and inform strategic business decisions to meet our business objectives.

Our SEF links directly to Essential Energy's Strategic Vision and Purpose and underpins Essential Energy's three-year strategic plan and has been informed by industry best practice, including the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) *Quality Assurance Standard* (2015), AccountAbility *AA1000 Stakeholder Engagement Standard* (2011), AER *Stakeholder Engagement Framework* (2017) and CSIRO and Energy Networks Association 2016, *Electricity Transformation Roadmap: Customer Engagement Handbook*.

We will be



Curious

Engaging early, to build respectful, inclusive, and collaborative relationships with our diverse stakeholders. Recognising that our stakeholders are diverse, we design our engagement activities to meet the needs of stakeholders, actively seeking feedback to learn and improve.



Accountable

We are transparent, setting clear deliverables for measuring and evaluating the quality of our engagement. Outcomes from engagement are visible to stakeholders.



Courageous

Action-orientated, open-minded and acting with integrity. Our business is continuously informed and shaped by our engagement.

Our plans:

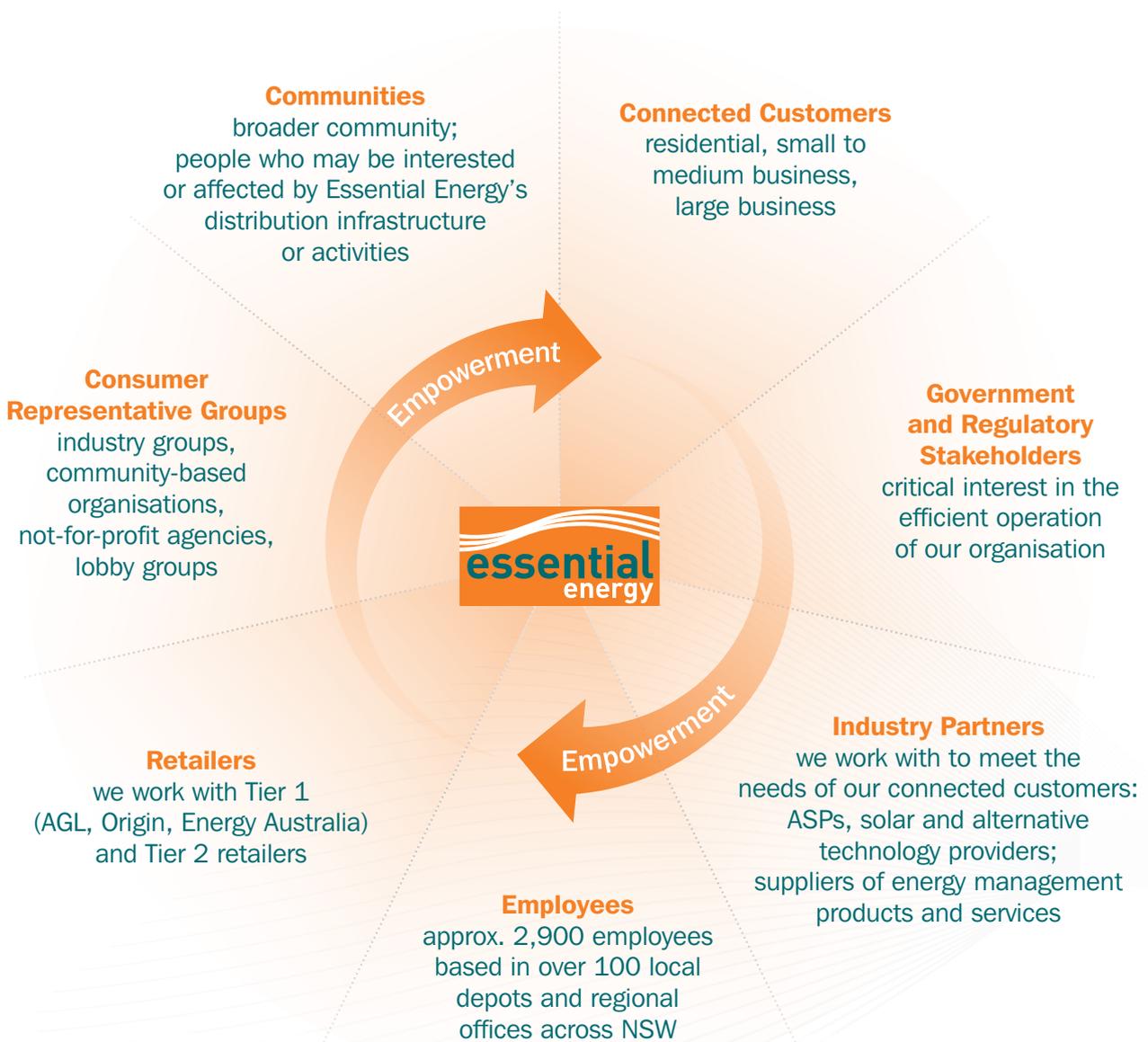
- > Implement a stakeholder management system
- > Deliver on the actions from our 2019-24 Regulatory Proposal engagement
- > Roll out an evaluation and reporting framework across the business
- > Deliver on our engagement programs

Understanding our customers and stakeholders

Our stakeholder relationships are evolving as we interact with customers and stakeholders to structure our programs and inform our business strategy in a way that is meaningful and relevant to our business and our customer and stakeholder groups. Our community consultation committees, such as our Customer Advocacy Group provide valuable insight and feedback.

Everyone is different and within each stakeholder group there will be varying levels of interest, impact, needs, concerns, values, wants, ideas, relationships, perceptions, bias and influence.

Therefore, stakeholder identification and analysis is an integral part of our engagement planning process and for each engagement activity we seek to engage stakeholders who are impacted or interested in our business activity, process or outcome.



Our stakeholder engagement approach

Our approach to stakeholder engagement is based on the IAP2 framework, but designed specifically for each engagement to meet the needs of our business and our stakeholders. It is adapted to support input from stakeholders when decisions are required.



Evaluation



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Strategy development

Decide engagement strategy

In this stage:

- > Analyse the objectives of Integrated Strategic Plan
- > Deliver integrated risk assessment
- > Use this information to develop our Engagement Plan

Ref.	Checkpoint	N/A	Yes	No
1.1	Review Integrated Strategic Plan against Customers Priorities.			
1.2	Clearly articulate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Project goals > Engagement goals > Desired project outcome 			
1.3	Participate in project risk assessments for key-decision making and business planning processes for identification of issues and mitigation strategies.			
1.4	Analyse our stakeholder feedback and lessons learned from previous engagement activities.			
1.5	Questions for consideration: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > What are the issues you will engage on? > What risks/challenges are anticipated? > Have decisions already been made on these issues? > What issues are not negotiable? > Is community profiling required to understand the nature of stakeholders and the community? 			
1.6	Assess the risks of delivering the engagement.			
1.7	Consider the constraints to delivering the engagement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Political, social, economic, technical and cultural context > Timing > Availability of resources and budget 			
1.8	Review to ensure we are being Curious, Accountable and Courageous.			

Strategy development

Define requirements

In this stage:

- > Stakeholder identification and analysis
- > Establish governance

Ref.	Checkpoint	N/A	Yes	No
2.1	Identify and categorise stakeholders based on impact, level of interest and influence.			
2.2	Develop the questions that should be asked during consultation, and consider the impact those questions may have.			
2.3	Articulate what is negotiable and not negotiable and how this will be explained.			
2.4	Plan for effective engagement to be implemented as early as practical, to facilitate stakeholder input and participation in the decision-making process.			
2.5	Determine the budget.			
2.6	Understand the governance processes including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Approval process > Internal stakeholders: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Who should be informed? > Involved? > Reporting All media enquires must be referred to Essential Energy Corporate Affairs Team.			
2.7	Invite program partners to be involved in the design, implementation, and evaluation of the program.			
2.8	Review to ensure we are being Curious, Accountable and Courageous.			

Planning

Create engagement plan

In this stage:

- > Set specific objectives for engagement with stakeholder groups
- > Define the approaches we will take for each engagement based on the IAP2 spectrum of engagement

Ref.	Checkpoint	N/A	Yes	No
3.1	Anticipate customer touchpoints and the opportunities for stakeholder consultation. What contributes to their World View so that we can reach them through engagement			
3.2	Identify the most effective engagement techniques which encourage open dialogue.			
3.3	Identify opportunities for innovative engagement activities.			
3.4	Engagement activities are accessible, proactive, and inclusive.			
3.5	Leverage communication channels and identify ways to create different virtual, physical, and digital experiences to take stakeholders on the journey of the project.			
3.6	If appropriate, establish a community advisory committee.			
3.7	Understand the stakeholder history: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Level of knowledge? > Previous engagement? > Broken promises? > Relationships – positive, negative? > Level of trust? 			
3.8	Is there an opportunity for CAG members to facilitate participation in engagement activities by their members?			
3.9	The communication plan, an element of engagement plan, describes the communication approaches and tools for targeted, inclusive communication and reporting against defined milestones.			
3.10	Identify opportunities for coaching and support – internal and external stakeholders.			
3.11	Establish indicators to measure the impacts of engagement. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Qualitative > Quantitative 			
3.12	Review to ensure we are being Curious, Accountable and Courageous.			

Planning

Prepare for engagement

In this stage:

- > Finalise engagement plans
- > Continue to adjust and refine based on stakeholder feedback

Ref.	Checkpoint	N/A	Yes	No
4.1	Ensure the engagement plan is timely and has clear objectives and outcomes.			
4.2	Stakeholder representation is inclusive and supportive of minority and disengaged groups.			
4.3	The most appropriate person is engaging with the stakeholder (technical experts, management, engagement professionals, decision-makers)			
4.4	Consultation and communication material is approved.			
4.5	The right approvals processes have been followed.			
4.6	All engagements and strategies are recorded in stakeholder management system and reviewed throughout the project.			
4.7	Review to ensure we are being Curious, Accountable and Courageous.			

Delivery

Implement engagement plan

In this stage:

- > Engage and collaborate with our stakeholders
- > Seek feedback
- > Record our interactions and stakeholder feedback

Ref.	Checkpoint	N/A	Yes	No
5.1	Consultation activities address needs of stakeholders, delivering the most appropriate level of engagement.			
5.2	The communication and engagement plan has been integrated into the project schedule and is reported on through team meetings and regular reports.			
5.3	Key messages are tailored to meet the needs of relevant stakeholder groups and individuals.			
5.4	Communication and engagement material is clear, accurate, and timely.			
5.5	Mechanisms are in place for feedback to stakeholder groups.			
5.6	Prepare for and manage emerging issues.			
5.7	Evidence of consultation activities are captured.			
5.8	Additional stakeholders may be identified throughout the engagement process therefore refine effective and relevant consultation and communication materials.			
5.9	In the event of intensified opponent activity and need for outage management, employees and identified stakeholders will have access to training and development to support engagement program delivery (e.g. resilience training, IAP2 training, outage management training).			
5.10	Review to ensure we are being Curious, Accountable and Courageous.			

Feedback and reporting

Review engagement outcomes

In this stage:

- > Monitor and evaluate our engagement activities
- > Review engagement program against IAP2 Quality Assurance Standard
- > Summarise and report the outcomes of our engagement with stakeholders
- > Use the feedback as input into future strategies including the Stakeholder Engagement Framework

Ref.	Checkpoint	N/A	Yes	No
6.1	Evidence of clear and transparent reporting on community engagement activities is demonstrated.			
6.2	Records to include details of engagement including who was consulted and why, channels used, dates and times, objectives of engagement, what was discussed and issues raised, and details of the feedback and commitments met.			
6.3	Participation in a project team Lessons Learned Workshop identifies successes and areas for improvement.			
6.4	Lessons learned are incorporated into an action plan.			
6.5	Complaints and concerns have been actioned as per Essential Energy's Complaints Policy.			
6.6	Employees within Essential Energy, engaging with external stakeholders, have appropriate training and development.			
6.7	Review to ensure we are being Curious, Accountable and Courageous.			

Reference List

AccountAbility. (2015). AA1000 Stakeholder Engagement Standard (SES) 2015.

AER. (2017). Stakeholder Engagement Framework. <https://www.aer.gov.au/publications/corporate-documents/aer-stakeholder-engagement-framework-2017>.

ENA/CSIRO. (2016a). Electricity Network Transformation Roadmap: Customer Engagement Handbook. http://www.energynetworks.com.au/sites/default/files/customer_engagement_handbook_july_2016.pdf

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Have your say

You can provide feedback on our plans in a number of ways:

Email yoursay@essentialenergy.com.au

Post Manager Customer Service
Essential Energy
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Port Macquarie NSW 2444

Phone 13 23 91

Web essentialenergy.com.au/yoursay

Essential Engagement
engage.essentialenergy.com.au

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Letters

