



Draft Proposal Customer Engagement - Forums and Discussion Groups Report

**Report prepared for CitiPower, Powercor and United Energy
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Executive Summary

Across CitiPower, Powercor and United Energy (CPPCUE), there is a strong commitment to engaging with customers to help develop future priorities and directions for the three networks. As planners and managers of the electricity grid, the distributors place a high priority on understanding what customers define as 'value' and what they see to be most important in planning the future electricity network.

Customers' opinions and feedback have been progressively sought to assist in developing the Regulatory Proposals for the next Regulatory period. The Energised 2021-2025 program includes four phases of customer engagement. Phases 1 and 2 undertaken in 2017 were pivotal in identifying and confirming CPPCUE's key audiences and engagement framework as well as being vital to the exploration of customers' preliminary views on regulatory issues. In Phase 3, more advanced customer insights and opinions were obtained from: community opinion leader forums, a region-wide customer survey, interviews with large customers plus a series of deliberative engagement forums. Collectively, these findings input to the distributors' Draft Proposals in February 2019. In Phase 4 (part of which is this report), customers and community opinion leaders from Phase 3 were asked to return to take part in forums to assess their reactions to some of the key features being addressed within the Draft Proposals.

Draft Proposal Forums

The Draft Proposal Forums hosted by CPPCUE in February 2019 offered participants an opportunity to respond to the proposals put forward within the three themes of the Draft Regulatory Proposals (safe and dependable network, flexible network, and affordable network).

135 residents and small to medium business enterprises (SMEs) participated in these forums held across CitiPower (Melbourne CBD), United Energy (Glen Waverley) and Powercor (Ballarat and Warrnambool) areas. Participating customers had diverse demographic backgrounds and insights to energy.

Vulnerable and CALD Groups

In April 2019, N=2 groups were conducted in each distributor area, one group of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) and one group of vulnerable customers, defined as those who had difficulty paying bills in the last 12 months and were lower socio-economic. Forty (40) CALD and vulnerable residents took part in total.

Theme 1 – Safe and Dependable Network

Overall, there was a general sense of support for the initiatives put forward for the Draft Proposal in the area of providing a safe and dependable network, with the vast majority of participants across the CitiPower, Powercor and United Energy forums and CALD and vulnerable groups supporting the proposed initiatives. Participants were particularly supportive of the initiatives proposed under the safe environment for customers and workers such as the formation of research partnerships with Universities and others to deliver world-class safety initiatives and using data analytics to identify priority assets before they fail.

Within the Powercor and United Energy regions customers supported bushfire initiatives, with particular support for the moving forward of the undergrounding of single-wire earth return (SWER) lines in bushfire areas. Participants in the Warrnambool area were particularly in favour of the proposals to increase the number of poles being inspected and replaced however they felt this could be taken even further to ensure no future bushfires are caused by faulty poles. Those in the CALD and vulnerable groups also had a strong desire for more to be done regarding bushfire protection.

There was concern amongst some United Energy customers that Rapid Earth Fault Current Limiter (REFCL) implementation would only cover almost 60% of the network's risk area, even though it was stated that further REFCLs would not see customer benefits that exceed the costs.

Amongst CitiPower customers there were some questions regarding termite treatment in poles with some suggesting that it may be more effective to replace wooden power poles with termite proof materials.

While most participants felt that the theme was well covered there were a few areas where more information was needed including, further detail on smart meters and how data would be collected and used and 'black spot' areas – what are the alternatives to undergrounding.

There was also some unfamiliarity with some of the concepts within the CALD and vulnerable groups which made it difficult for them to comment.

Supporting customers in lower reliability areas

There was slight disappointment from some customers across all areas that there were no plans to improve reliability for those in lower reliability areas, however there was an understanding that it was not cost effective to do so. Participants came up with a diverse range of solutions to rectify this disappointment that generally focused on community education, compensation schemes and means of sharing or storing energy.

Theme 2 – Flexible Network

There was a high level of overall support for all the elements that comprised a Flexible Network in the forums. All Powercor forum participants and all but one participant in both CitiPower and United Energy supported a flexible network. Participants from across the three locations were satisfied that their suggestions from previous forums had been taken into account in the formulation of the draft proposal.

Participants responded particularly well to the proposal that would allow them to make greater use of their own energy data. Amongst the CALD and vulnerable groups, there was particular interest in using energy data if it helped to save money, however it needed to be easy to understand and worth the savings for them to make behaviour changes.

The one-stop-shop online portal was seen as a key feature of this, while there was also appreciation for the investment in data security.

There was also strong interest and support for the solar and battery use initiatives across all forums, however, there was only medium interest amongst CALD and Vulnerable customers as they were less likely to be home owners and often lived in rental properties of apartments. The investment in 'flexible grid' technology was seen as a good way to maximise use of current assets, and participants responded well to the notion of fewer restrictions being placed on electricity exports. However, some wanted to see more detail of what was being done in the area of battery power storage.

The new connection initiatives were also seen favourably, although was felt to be less relevant to vulnerable and CALD customers. The decommissioning of some zone substations, and upgrading other zone substations was seen as a way to improve the overall efficiency of the network. Those who attended the United Energy forum also responded well to the e-connect portal – which was seen as a way of making improvements to the overall level of customer service.

The Warrnambool participants were provided with a further proposal relevant to the area of increasing the capacity of power lines to dairy farmers to help them expand their operations. The brief options presented included customers investing themselves at their own expense or Powercor investing in capacity paid for by the customer in need or by all customers. There were mixed reactions to the idea of farmers versus all customers paying. Many felt that the expense needed to be at least shared by the farmers because they are the ones benefitting directly however at the same time they felt that farmers should be helped or subsidised somehow and expansion of the industry should be encouraged.

Theme 3 – Affordable Network

The majority of participants from across the forums and groups supported the key elements of the affordability network theme.

Maintaining affordability by reducing prices

Whilst participants acknowledged their concern for affordability and appreciated the reduction in network charges, the actual reduction amounts were seen as unremarkable, including amongst vulnerable customers for Powercor and CitiPower (although United Energy vulnerable customers thought the price reduction was more reasonable). There was consensus that the entire reduction should be introduced in the first year as opposed to spreading the savings over the whole period. The specific detail of what is planned to keep costs under control was seen to be prudent business conduct. There were concerns, particularly amongst vulnerable customers that retailers might not pass on price reductions.

There were some comments regarding the plan to maintain cost efficiencies and only invest when needed, with some participants regarding this as a reactionary approach as opposed to being proactive and planning for the future.

Setting simple and fair price structures

Participants tended to support the concept of considering different tariff options as most agreed that consumers needed choice to be able to choose the plan that best suited them. However they also agreed that the options needed to be simple and easy to understand, particularly amongst CALD and vulnerable customers. There was a feeling amongst some that it was the providers' responsibility to help some people choose the tariff that best suited their energy needs, perhaps via an online calculator.

Whilst the status quo flat rate was well understood, participants tended to agree that it did not encourage people to change their usage behaviour. Forum participants expressed some concern for lower socio-economic customers and the sick/elderly who could not change their behaviour when moving to more cost reflective pricing.

Time of use was preferred across most customers as it was easy to understand. However some participants questioned their ability to take advantage of time use tariffs whilst most felt they could change their behaviour easily using timers for washing machines for example.

Amongst the CALD and vulnerable groups, there was some concern over how they would fare under a time of use pricing structure, with some who were more likely to be at home during non-

peak times assuming they would benefit, and those who worked or who had large families (especially CALD), being worried that they would not enjoy any savings.

Demand tariffs were confusing to some participants and were interpreted as being unfair in that you would be charged according to a one off spike for the rest of the month when the rest of the month your usage could be really low. However, frequently the Opinion Leaders, particularly from CitiPower and United Energy who understood the demand tariff, were more positive toward this option.

The peak usage packages also needed more explanation, however the overall concept of choosing a package that suits the customer was well received and was seen to potentially help to predict bills and avoid bill shock.

When asked if they would prefer to be automatically assigned to a new tariff or opt to choose a new tariff, the majority felt that an opt-in system and/or having the ability to choose from the different options would be preferable. Amongst CALD and vulnerable it was also felt important to be able to switch back easily if they did not find the new pricing beneficial. In the CitiPower forum, Opinion Leaders felt that the tariff options lacked details, whereas the SME and Opinion Leaders from the Powercor forums felt that education would be key and any new tariff would need to be carefully implemented.

Overall the feedback from the Draft Proposal forums was positive and supported CPPCUE's proposed initiatives and directions moving forward.

1.0 Introduction

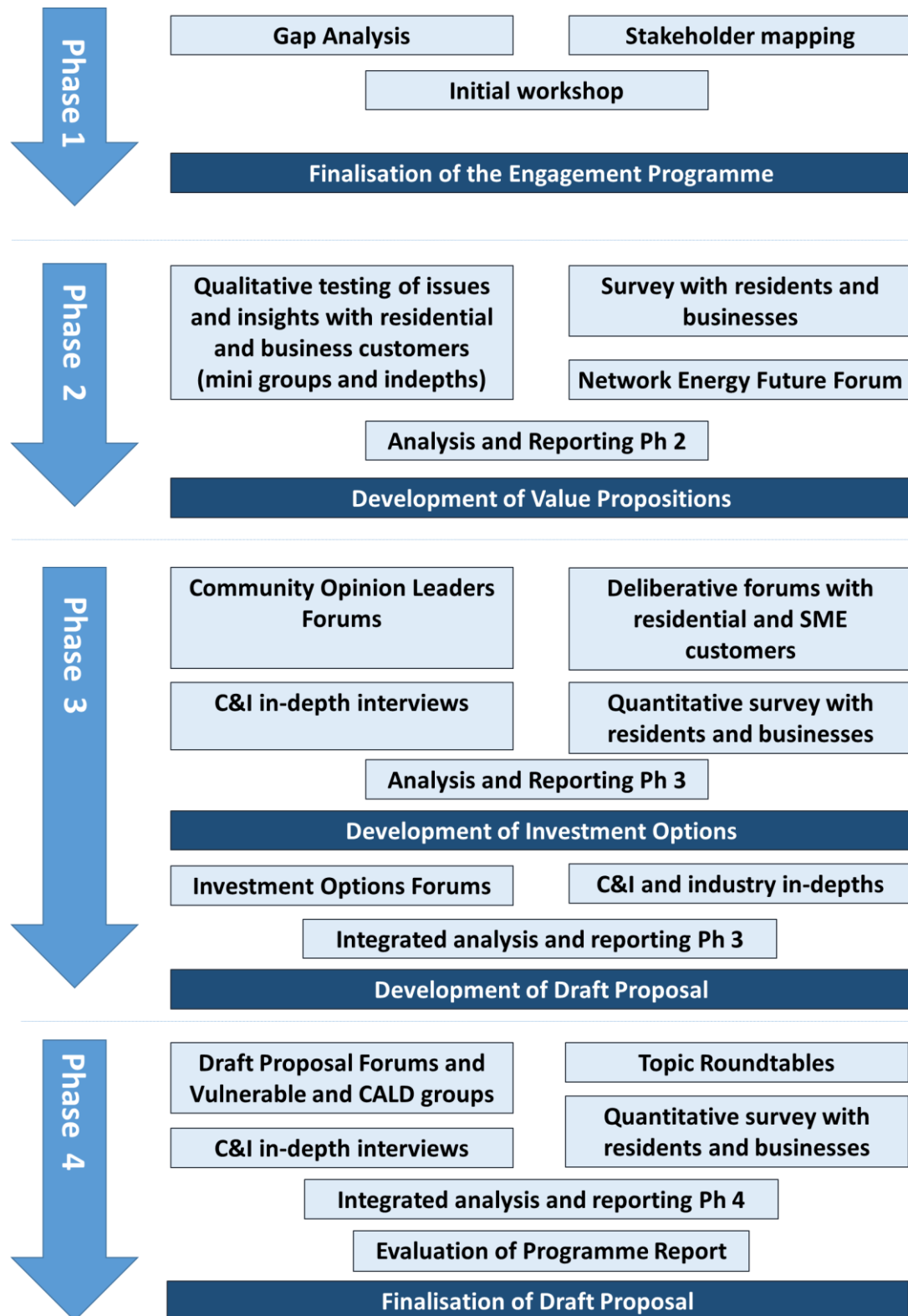
CitiPower, Powercor and United Energy are required to provide regulatory proposals to the Australian Energy Regulator (AER) every five years, detailing their predicted expenditure and revenue requirements over the regulatory period. The businesses are currently developing their proposals for the 2021-2025 regulatory period.

Woolcott Research and Engagement is contracted to conduct customer and stakeholder research to support the preparation of the regulatory proposals as part of the Energised 2021-2025 program. This program involves four key Phases for engagement from January 2017 to 2019.

Figure 1 presents the overview of the research program that supports engagement as part of Energised 2021-2025. We are currently in Phase 4 of the program.

This report outlines the findings from the Draft Proposal Forums and CALD and vulnerable discussion groups.

Figure 1: Components of the research program for the regulatory reset



2.0 Methodology

2.1 Draft Proposal Forums

Four 'Draft Proposal' forums were hosted by CitiPower, United Energy and Powercor across February 2019 at the locations and times shown below:

- United Energy (Glen Waverley) – Monday 11th February 5.30-8.00pm.
- CitiPower (Melbourne CBD) – Monday 18th February 5.30-8.00pm.
- Powercor (Ballarat) – Tuesday 19th February 5.30-8.00pm and (Warrnambool) Wednesday 13th March 5.30-8.30pm.

This report discusses key findings from the forums that involved customer's and opinion leaders' assessment of the Draft Proposals that have been developed using feedback from previous research phases.

As shown below, a total of n=135 residents and SMEs/Opinion Leaders attended the forums. Everyone who attended the forums had previously attended at least one of the forums last year, with the exception of the Warrnambool forum which was amongst first time attendees. A separate Opinion Leader forum was conducted in Warrnambool, with a separate report provided.

Table 1: Forum participation

Distributor	Residents	SMEs*/opinion leaders**	Total
CitiPower	24	9	33
United Energy	30	6	36
Powercor			
- Ballarat	29	7	36
- Warrnambool	26	4	30

*This included both business owners and decision makers in small businesses

** Warrnambool forum did not include Opinion Leaders

Woolcott Research provided a Lead Facilitator, who chaired the forums, and participants spent most of the time working on tables in small groups each with a table facilitator from Woolcott to guide the discussion and record the main points raised.

The SMEs and Opinion Leaders were seated on a separate table to the residents (there were three tables of residents and one of SMEs and Opinion Leaders at all forums except Warrnambool).

The forum began with an introduction from the Lead Facilitator and an overview of the Draft Proposal by Renate Vogt. Following this, participants were invited to walk around and view six summary boards that displayed the main points of the proposals under the three themes of:

- Safe and dependable network
- Flexible network
- Affordable network

Participants were given post-it notes on which to write any questions that came to mind when viewing the summary boards. These questions were provided to the Lead Facilitator to put to Panel Members in the subsequent Q&A session. Panel Members were:

- Renate Vogt - General Manager of Regulation.
- Brent Cleeve - Head of Regulation.
- Neil Watt - Senior Engineer for CitiPower and Powercor
- Rodney Bray – Senior Engineer for Untied Energy.
- Mark De Villiers or Jay Stein - Pricing Managers.

Answers were provided to a selection of questions across the themes (the questions used are shown in this report). Following the Q&A session participants were taken through information in more detail and asked to discuss and complete feedback sheets. Each of the residents' table facilitators was tasked with taking their group through the information on one of the themes and gathering their feedback. In most forums the resident tables rotated so that by the end of the forum they had covered each of the themes. The SME and Opinion Leader table went through each of the themes with their facilitator. Each facilitator was equipped with a laptop to record time-coded storage of all qualitative data – which was downloaded into grids for subsequent detailed analysis.

Participants also utilised table worksheets to record their own perspectives for each key topic, as well as an overview of the table priorities. Individual votes were tallied at the end of each session and this feedback was presented at the end of each forum to gain a better understanding of overall support for the Draft Proposal. Copies of the agendas, materials and worksheets are included in the Appendix 1, 2 and 3 respectively).

Towards the end of the forum there was a 'sharing session' when a spokesperson from each table shared a summary of the feedback across the three themes from their table.

Participants were then asked for any final observations on their tables before the close of the forum.

Recruitment for the forums took place up to three weeks before each forum. Participants were invited back from those who attended the Opinion Leaders Forum, Residential and SME Forum and Investment Options Forums in 2018. The exception to this was Warrnambool where previous forums had not been conducted so participants were all first time attendees.

Over forty were recruited for each forum. Confirmation emails were sent and reminder telephone calls made in the days leading up to each forum.

2.2 CALD and vulnerable group discussions

Six group discussions (three mini-groups and three full groups) were held across the network areas at the locations and times shown below:

- United Energy (Dandenong) – Thursday 18th April 6.00pm and 7.30pm.
- CitiPower (Melbourne CBD) – Tuesday 16th April 6.00pm and 7.30pm.
- Powercor (Geelong) – Wednesday 17th April 6.00pm and 7.30pm.

These locations were selected as being both high on the Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) index and having large populations of people from a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) background.

The SEIFA index is an Australian Bureau of Statistics product that ranks areas in Australia according to relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage. The SEIFA score of an area is based on information from the five-yearly Census of Population and Housing. This score is standardised against a mean of 1000 with a standard deviation of 100. This means that the average SEIFA score will be 1000 and the middle two-thirds of SEIFA scores will fall between 900 and 1100 (approximately). A high score suggests that an area is thought to be disadvantaged compared to other areas.

A recruitment screener was used by a recruiter to select participants for all groups and quotas were set on age and gender. Past or current employees of any of the distributors were excluded and all were main or joint decision makers with regards to electricity in their households (if over the age of 25). CALD participants were recruited as those who speak a language other than English at home. Vulnerable groups involved those who had a household income before tax of under \$50,000 and had had difficulty paying their electricity bills in the last 12 months such as having to borrow money, ask for an extension or paid late, been on a special payment plan or been disconnected.

Mini-groups involved five to six participants and full groups eight participants. The following table shows the number of participants for each group.

Table 2: Discussion group participation

Distributor	CALD	Vulnerable	Total
CitiPower	8	5	13
United Energy	5	8	13
Powercor	6	8	14
Total	19	21	40

The discussion guides and materials were similar to the forums and are included in Appendix 5 and 6.

Detailed findings

3.0 CitiPower – findings

Findings from the CALD and vulnerable groups have been included in the relevant sections of the forum findings below and clearly identified.

3.1 Opening Question and Answer Session

As mentioned, at the beginning of each forum, participants were introduced to the evening by the lead facilitator and then an executive from CitiPower provided a brief overview of the Draft Proposal. CitiPower recapped on its role and the need to develop a regulatory proposal, then introduced what they had heard from customers with regard to energy delivery and what CitiPower's response to those needs will be.

Highlights of the Draft Proposal were also communicated on large display boards and participants were encouraged, following the introductory presentations, to walk around and view the boards. On reading the overview display boards, participants were directed to write down any questions they had on stick post-it notes.

These questions were collected and due to limited time, only a few were selected to be asked of the panel. The panel was at the front of the room and consisted of subject matter experts from CitiPower.

The questions that were collected are listed below under each of the three themes, with those included in the Q&A session highlighted in red. CitiPower provided answers to the questions on its Talking Electricity website.

Table 3: Questions posed at the forum

Questions Sorted into Themes
Affordable Network
Could all 4 pricing options be offered? (aligned to customer profile)
Could you please go into more detail about how peak usage packages will work?
It would be beneficial to see some worked examples of the different pricing models.
Time of use - mandatory or opt in?
What % of average power bill belongs to CitiPower?
Is the charge reduction (\$25) mandated to be passed to customers & not swallowed by retailers?
The last board, why do the savings to the nearest \$ kick in 2021, why not immediately?
How to deliver price options through 'screen' of retailers?
Explain how you might introduce cost reflective network tariff?
Does keeping prices low include resistance to carbon pricing?
Peak usage package: how will the bill be the same each month?
The price structure does not appear to fit with solar power use as the peak solar power use would be

during the day. How will CitiPower rectify this inequality?
How can CitiPower assist its customers to seek out better deals via the retail network?
What will the fair & simple option be based on? Will it be just residential?
Affordable Network price structure - considering options?
There are 4 price structure examples. Do the first 3 still contain daily charge?
Could we have examples of the different price structures to see how they differ?
\$25 bill decrease - per year/month bill?
Would rebates be monthly or quarterly?
Dependable Network
How is CitiPower going to inspect all the country areas? Our old home recently nearly was burnt down from 3 fronts?
What are the research Initiatives that CitiPower is looking to partner with Universities and Governments with on safety?
Flexible Network
How are you projecting Electric Vehicle uptake (where, how much) on the network? And what response?
How does one-stop shop work?
Will consumer data be shared (de-personalised) to assist with policy development and emissions targets?
What are the timeframe goals for the proposals in regards to: "preparing the network to be flexible to your energy needs"?
Flexible Networks - one stop shop usage data. - What other info can be found?
What practices will be put in place to ensure data security?
How secure will the usage data be?
How will the proposed portal be different to portals available on energy provider's sites?
What does it mean by 'interested in smarter storage facilities for customers' power'? Is this for solar or CitiPower?
Other
Within your proposal what do you believe to be the most important change for customers?
Will the regulatory proposals be published in both hard copy and electronic formats?
What is CitiPower planning to do to assist with renewable energy projects?
1630 doesn't sound like many batteries?
What does it mean that CitiPower will "Facilitate" solar installations?
Is CitiPower proposing any capex specifically to assist with DER integration?
How are you encouraging large customers with potential to produce solar power to feed back into the grid, i.e. schools with large roof space?
Solar - one third said might get solar? You assume that or less?
Can country people use solar?
Smart meters - How will they be used to identify & respond to safety risks before they occur?
Support major infrastructure - what does "support" mean?

There was no question and answer session in the discussion groups.

3.2 Theme 1 – Safe and Dependable Network

At the forums and in groups participants were given an information sheet (see Appendix 2A for forum sheets and Appendix 6B for group sheets) outlining the current findings, what CitiPower had planned as a result of these findings, and some more details on these plans regarding a Safe and Dependable network. Table facilitators went through the information sheets with forum participants and, where applicable, asked an ‘expert’ to come to the table to clarify any questions or uncertainty.

Participants were also given a feedback sheet (Appendix 3A) and asked to provide their level of support for the proposals within this theme and the reasons for their support. The table below indicates that there was a high level of support for these key elements, with all participants at the forum (n=33) ‘supporting’ the proposals (29 strongly; 4 slightly) as well as all those in the groups (n=13). The written reasons for their support are appended (see Appendix 4A).

Table 4: Feedback responses from CitiPower’s Draft Proposal Forums on ‘safe and dependable network’

Safe and Dependable	Forum N=33 #	CALD & vulnerable N=13 #
Support strongly	29	6
Support slightly	4	7
Don’t really support	-	-
Do not support at all	-	-
Don’t know	-	-

Q1. Please rate your level of support for the proposals for each theme in the Draft Proposal - safe and dependable network

Base: Respondents attending CitiPower’s Draft Proposal Forum (n=33) and CALD/ vulnerable groups (n=13)

Overall, there was a general sense of support for the initiatives put forward for the Draft Proposal with some participants particularly happy to see that they had thought out all the options, and were only implementing those that were cost-effective.

“It’s good to hear that they have thought things through and they are NOT doing some things considering the cost it would have to the customer” (CP customer)

Participants particularly mentioned their support for initiatives under the topic of ‘a safe environment for customers and workers’. These included both the research partnerships with universities and others to deliver world-class safety initiatives, as well as using data analytics and evidence to identify high and moderate priority assets before they fail.

"I'm glad to see they are using the universities to look into new solutions." (CP customer)

"Love the idea of the research partnerships – a by-product of that is a symbiotic partnership, new technologies and continued problem solving" (CP customer)

"They're really looking at the long term health of the network, it really benefits the whole network not just one person or entity" (CP customer)

"Remotely testing and using data analytics and technology sounds good and cost effective" (CP customer)

In a general sense the vulnerable and CALD customers also supported the initiatives being presented to them, although many were not familiar with the details of the safety initiatives that were being discussed and the terminology that was being used (e.g. replacing deteriorated neutral earthing at your home).

At the forum there was some apprehension regarding maintaining reliability with some participants worried that five years was potentially too long between asset inspections, however many also noted that assets in declining condition would have more frequent inspections.

There was also some concern regarding 'termite treatment trials to identify more effective wood pole treatment alternatives', with some noting that perhaps it would just be more effective to replace wooden poles with another material like concrete or steel.

While most participants felt that the theme was well covered there were a few areas where some requested further information. These included:

- *Other initiatives in 'black spot' areas:* it was noted that while it was not cost effective to underground power lines in traffic 'black spot' areas, some participants wanted more information on what initiatives were currently in place or more information on potential alternatives for peace of mind;
- *Further detail on information collection through Smart Meters:* there was some interest in what type of data would be collected through Smart Meters and explicitly how this could benefit the consumer; and
- *The outcome of previously discussed issues such as 'dog bones':* as returning participants, some recalled discussing the replacement of dog bones and wanted to know what CitiPower had decided to do about this issue specifically.

3.2.1 Supporting customers in lower reliability areas

There was some disappointment at the forum that CitiPower was not planning to improve reliability for those in lower reliability areas, however there was some understanding that it was not cost effective to do so. As an alternative, participants were specifically asked how CitiPower could support those in low reliability areas, rather than providing compensation payments. A number of ideas were put forward:

- *Compensation or incentives for providing their own electricity:* a common suggestion was that the residents in lower reliability areas have access to some kind of back up electricity supplies that could in some way be compensated by the government or CitiPower. Ideas included home or community battery supplies powered by solar, or some kind of generator scheme.
- *Sharing schemes:* Some participants recalled an idea from previous forums that looked at sharing electricity between households/neighbours, from solar and battery installations, instead of putting it back into the grid (peer to peer trading).

“If they have solar tech and batteries then they are not drawing from the network and they are helping one another” (CP customer)

“They could be guinea pigs for new technology” (CP customer)

- *Education:* It was thought that people in lower reliability areas needed to be better informed about what alternatives they had when their supply was unavailable, or any ideas that could help them financially in these situations.

Vulnerable and CALD customers suggested that they did not suffer reliability problems themselves however they too felt that worst served customers should be getting a better level of service. Some, particularly the vulnerable participants, suggested that there was no reason for people to suffer in this day and age and that they would rather it be fixed than be compensated if it were happening to them.

“I would rather be fixed than compensated. There shouldn’t be any reason for people to suffer” (CP vulnerable customer)

“I support everything, but worst served customers should be getting better service” (CP vulnerable customer)

Some CALD group members in the CitiPower area could not understand why it was so difficult to provide good service to all customers citing Europe as an example.

“Is there a plan to at least give worst served customers solar?” (CP CALD customer)

The Opinion Leaders and SMEs at the forum had similar viewpoints to the residents. They were very supportive of the proposals in this theme with particular mention of the good use of technology and data analytics to test network safety and improve reliability as well as the use of university partnerships to research safety initiatives. They did not have an issue with not including the undergrounding of powerlines in traffic black spots as long as alternatives are considered. They also supported the continuation of compensation payments for customers with frequent long outages, again with the stipulation that alternative solutions should be explored for these customers. However, it was not thought to be a big issue in the CitiPower area.

“Partnering with the universities is good. Research might be carried out that might not otherwise have been done” (SME/Opinion Leader)

“Should try to increase their reliability or they could go on stand-alone power systems. Should explore those other options. Compensation is not going to help – you want power not money.” (SME/Opinion Leader)

3.3 Theme 2 – Flexible Network

Participants were given an information sheet (see Appendix 2B for forum information sheets and Appendix 6C for group information sheets) with the current findings, what CitiPower had planned as a result of these findings, and some more details on the plans regarding the Flexible Network. Table facilitators went through the information sheets with forum participants and, where applicable, asked an ‘expert’ to come to the table to clarify any questions or uncertainty.

Participants were also given a feedback sheet and asked to provide their level of support for the proposals within this theme and the reasons for their support. The table below indicates that there was a high level of support, with almost all participants at the forum (n=32) ‘supporting’ the proposals in this theme (27 strongly; 5 slightly) as well as all in the groups (n=13). The written reasons for their support are appended (see Appendix 4A).

Table 5: Feedback responses from CitiPower's Draft Proposal Forum on 'flexible network that supports your choices'

Flexible and Supportive	Forum N=33 #	CALD & vulnerable N=13 #
Support strongly	27	6
Support slightly	5	7
Don't really support	-	-
Do not support at all	1	-
Don't know	-	-

Q3. Please rate your level of support for the proposals for each theme in the Draft Proposal - flexible network that supports your choices
Base: Respondents attending CitiPower's Draft Proposal Forum (n=33) and CALD/ vulnerable groups (n=13)

Overall, in the forum there was a very high level of support for the initiatives put forward for the Draft Proposal in the flexible network section. Several participants expressed satisfaction with the overall process – indicating that what they were seeing shows that CitiPower has listened to their feedback throughout the process, and has incorporated this into the Draft Proposal.

"It seems like they have listened to what we said in previous forums. It shows through in the summary here" (CP customer)

One of the topics in this section that gained particular attention was the 'one-stop-shop' online portal. Participants indicated that they liked the idea of knowing more about their own electricity usage, and suggested that they (and potentially others) were likely to make more informed decisions with access to their usage. They also liked the idea of bringing different information and feedback portals together - suggesting that this would simplify things from the customer perspective.

"The portal thing probably isn't for everyone, but I think I'd use it" (CP customer)

"I would certainly be interested in looking more at my usage. Thinking about it, I may only do that for a while to see what my patterns are, and potentially make changes based on that. I'm not sure I'd make use of it continuously if I've already optimised my behaviour" (CP customer)

CALD and vulnerable customers in particular, liked the idea of the one stop shop and being able to look at their usage to help them save money. They also agreed with ensuring data security as this was seen to be vital in current times.

"It would help if you got a surge in your bill to understand how to lower your bill" (CP CALD customer)

The Summer Saver program was introduced to customers within the CALD and vulnerable group discussions and this appealed to some of the vulnerable participants however, many agreed that the program would need to be easy to understand and the savings worth the effort.

"I would be willing to take part in demand management programs if they were available" (CP CALD customer)

Participants in the forum also responded well to CitiPower providing greater assurances that customers would be able to export excess electricity if they made the investment to have a household solar system. They interpreted this as improving the efficiency of the network to allow for more exporting to occur.

"Anyone who has paid out the sort of money that those systems involve would not want to know that they may not be able to recoup any money from selling the power" (CP customer)

Being able to export and accommodate more solar customers was recognised to be a positive move amongst the CALD and vulnerable customers, however solar panels was of little relevance to them (especially vulnerable customers) as many lived in rental homes or apartments.

The other main point of discussion in the forum in this section related to the new network connections information. The decommissioning of zone substations was seen as a measure undertaken to improve the efficiency of the network and to better utilise the newer technology that they owned.

"It will cost money to do, but will probably save us all money in the long run" (CP customer)

Amongst some of the CALD and vulnerable customers there was confusion as to why it was costing so much to decommission and move people to other substations and wondered if the amounts being quoted could be used to build new assets now rather than delaying it.

There was also concern amongst some in the groups who lived in the areas targeted for decommissioning regarding the reliability of supply if they were transferred to somewhere else.

"Will my electricity reliability change? Will Collingwood be able to cope? That is where I live!" (CP vulnerable customer)

While there was appreciation for the plan in relation to making it easier to use solar systems, a few of the participants at the forum wanted to know if anything was going to be done to allow for

greater use of battery storage, while there were also a few comments relating to the perceived need to encourage more businesses to use solar technology.

“The way I read it they will be doing things to help us out, but they should also be doing more with businesses and encourage them to generate and export solar generated power. Think about some of the roof areas involved in commercial properties” (CP customer)

There were relatively few negative comments relating to the proposals in this section in both the forum and groups, though some wanted to see more detail in the information that was presented to them. They suggested that statements like “utilising demand management where possible” were too generic, and required further clarification. Along similar lines, there were questions about the “demand response options” that they were investigating.

Although the SMEs and Opinion Leaders were also supportive of the proposals within this theme, they too wanted to see more detail about some of the aspects, in particular demand management, solar infrastructure/upgrades, how connection times will be reduced and the one-stop-shop (how the end user will benefit and the integration with retailers).

“This proposal is good because it puts power back into the customers’ hands” (SME/Opinion Leader)

“Data is the way of the future. More data enables more solar and battery integration. Using information to predict problems is good” (SME/Opinion Leader)

I like the demand management. I think they could be a bit more specific and far reaching for that though. They could provide some really strong feedback on that for people. It is a bit vague” (SME/Opinion Leader)

Some suggested that CitiPower could be a bit more forward thinking in the Proposal, particular in areas such as demand management.

“Going in the right direction in terms of what networks around the world are doing but it doesn’t quite go far enough. For example, if they map where there is more solar then they can push demand management to areas where there is less solar” (SME/Opinion Leader)

They also suggested that education will be important for customers regarding demand management and how to use their electricity usage data. Information will need to be provided to meet different levels of expertise and interest, making sure it is accessible to everyone. For example, although there is a requirement for CitiPower to provide usage data at 5 minute intervals, there should be an option to access data at 30 minute or daily intervals too.

3.4 Theme 3 – Affordable Network

Participants were given an information sheet (see Appendix 2C for forum information sheets and Appendix 6D for groups information sheets) with the current findings, what CitiPower had planned as a result of these findings, and some more details on these plans regarding an affordable network. Facilitators went through the information sheets with participants and, where applicable at the forum, asked an ‘expert’ to come to the table to clarify any questions or uncertainty.

Participants were also given a feedback sheet and asked to provide their level of support for the proposals within this theme and the reasons for their support. The table below indicates that there was a high level of support, with 27 out of the 33 participants at the forum ‘supporting’ the proposals within an affordable network (14 strongly; 13 slightly) and 12 of the 13 participants at the groups also supporting. The written reasons for their support are appended (see Appendix 4A).

Table 6: Feedback responses from CitiPower’s Draft Proposal Forum on ‘affordable network’

Affordable Network	Forum N=33 #	CALD & vulnerable N=13 #
Support strongly	14	9
Support slightly	13	3
Don’t really support	4	1
Do not support at all	1	-
Don’t know	1	-

Q5. Please rate your level of support for the proposals for each theme in the Draft Proposal - affordable network
Base: Respondents attending CitiPower’s Draft Proposal Forum (n=33) and CALD/ vulnerable groups (n=13)

3.4.1 Maintaining affordability by reducing prices

Initial reactions at the forum and groups were generally positive, with most participants agreeing that affordability was a key concern and that networks needed to find ways of reducing their costs or ensuring that electricity prices do not keep increasing in the future.

In that regard, reaction in the forum to the \$25 reduction in residential network charges and \$94 in business charges in 2021 was regarded positively, however, the actual amount was felt to be relatively small. One or two commented that the retailers would probably not pass on this small amount anyway.

“\$25 is not much, there is nothing to discuss” (CP customer)

“What are the retailers going to do?” (CP customer)

Twenty five dollars (\$25) was also not seen as a significant reduction by either the CALD or vulnerable participants. Some of the vulnerable customers exclaimed that it would help them marginally but they too wondered if the reduction would be passed on by the retailers.

“\$25 is not a huge amount but it is still good” (CP vulnerable customer)

“I am a pensioner and a carer and \$25 would not help me out” (CP vulnerable customer)

“It is like \$2 a month – that’s nothing” (CP CALD customer)

Due to the amount, there was consensus amongst forum participants and CALD and vulnerable customers that the entire reduction should be introduced in the first year as opposed to spreading the savings over the whole period.

The specific detail of what is planned to keep costs under control was seen to be prudent business conduct, particularly with regard to continuing to negotiate contract prices and engaging in competitive processes for large jobs.

There were some comments however, regarding the plan to maintain cost efficiencies and only invest when needed. While participants understood that building extra capacity was a costly exercise, there was some concern that this was a reactionary approach. Most suggested that they would like to see CitiPower planning for the future and if that included building capacity then it should occur before it is needed.

Similarly, claiming that CitiPower would continue to operate at capacity seemed to indicate that more preparation for the future was needed, if there were high utilisation rates currently.

3.4.2 Setting simple and fair price structures

Forum participants, and CALD and vulnerable group participants tended to support the concept of different tariff options as most agreed that consumers needed choice to be able to choose the plan that best suited them. However they also agreed that the options needed to be simple and easy to understand.

“Different pricing structures will benefit people but it needs to be simple” (CP customer)

“I agree with cost reflective pricing. It’s about taking responsibility for your usage and the environment” (CP customer)

“People on low income can have the opportunity to turn off the electricity and use power at a different time to save money” (CP customer)

Many residents recognised that pricing structures could be complicated and whilst providing options was well liked, there was a feeling amongst some that CitiPower would have to help some people choose the tariff that best suited their energy needs. Many suggested perhaps having a calculator on the CitiPower website that allowed you to input your current details and usage after which it would calculate which option would be best for you.

"I would like them to give you an indication what option would be best for you based on your past year's usage and recommend the best package" (CP customer)

"I would want a portal to show the options – then I can choose" (CP customer)

With regard to the options presented in the forum, there were mixed reactions and a varied level of understanding of how they worked and what they would mean for the individual. The status quo or flat rate was well understood by all and was preferred by some of the participants.

"I think the status quo is easiest – you only pay for what you use" (CP customer)

"I like the status quo because I don't want to think about when I use electricity" (CP customer)

"I prefer the status quo as it is easier to understand" (CP customer)

"It is important to still offer the status quo. Some people can't change their usage." (SME/Opinion Leader)

Whilst a flat rate was easy to understand, participants tended to agree that it did not encourage people to change their usage behaviour, and many felt that customers needed to be encouraged to reduce their energy consumption.

"If people are using more electricity in a manner which is wasteful then they should be charged" (CP customer)

There were however, some participants in the forum who were concerned about the lower socio-economic customers or the sick/elderly people who perhaps cannot change their behaviour and would be disadvantaged by a different type of tariff. There was also a question regarding whether it was fair for solar customers without battery storage who have to draw from the grid at night.

"None of the focus is on households who are struggling. But is that a retailer issue rather than a distributor issue? The way the retailers handle it is morally wrong at the moment. The distributors could step in." (SME/Opinion Leader)

“It assumes people have modern appliances that can be programmed –it could disadvantage some people” (CP customer)

“If you are sick or elderly it is hard to change – it is penalising these people” (CP Customer)

“If you have solar people and have no battery to store it you have to use electricity from the grid at night.” (CP customer)

Of the other options presented at the forum, time of use was the easiest for customers to understand and the one that seemed to be the most popular. Some of the key questions were around the times for peak and off peak, with most guessing that the peak would be around dinner time (say 5-9pm). Others queried whether the peak would change if everyone started turning on washing machines and dishwashers after 10pm, and would CitiPower then change the peak times around to suit.

“What are the peak times? Everyone’s peaks are different” (CP customer)

“I think time of use is going to encourage people to reduce power consumption” (CP customer)

“Time of use incentivises you to think about when you use power and encourages you to reduce your usage” (CP customer)

CALD and vulnerable customers reacted similarly to the idea of a time of use tariff, with one or two thinking they were already on one and adopting behaviours to help reduce prices.

Some CALD participants suggested that they would find it difficult to change their behaviour and shift their usage as they were working full time and had families. However, for some of the lower income households a move to time of use pricing was seen to be positive in that they were often home when people were at work so would find it easier to change their behaviour, however it was recognised as not being practical for everyone.

“For me it would be hard and I would not benefit” (CP CALD customer)

“I am not going to make a lot of sacrifices if it doesn’t save me money” (CP CALD customer)

“It is good for low income households who are home when people are at work” (CP vulnerable customer)

Participants in the forum also felt that changing their behaviour to take advantage of a time of use tariff would be easy, whilst others indicated that they would find it quite difficult, particularly those who worked full time and those with younger school aged children.

"It only works for people who do shift work or the unemployed or super rich" (CP customer)

"Depends on your situation. You are only going to be home at peak times so time of use is more expensive for me" (CP customer)

The other two tariff options presented at the forum were considered confusing and many participants felt they needed more information to be able to comment on whether they would prefer these options. Demand tariffs were most confusing to participants and were interpreted as unfair in that you would be charged according to a one off spike for the rest of the month when the rest of the month your usage could be really low. Opinion Leaders however, who were more likely to understand demand pricing, were in favour of it.

"I like the idea of demand pricing – reflects the cost of using the system. But only if that is linked so that people can understand those pricing signals and can act on them."
(SME/Opinion Leader)

The peak usage packages, also needed more explanation however, the overall concept of choosing a package that suits was well received and was seen to potentially help to predict bills and avoid bill shock.

"I like the step charges idea – the more you use the more you pay – e.g. a usage banding structure" (CP customer)

"What happens if you use more than you expect on the peak usage package – how do they choose?" (CP customer)

When asked if they would prefer to be automatically assigned to a new tariff or opt to choose a new tariff, the majority felt that an opt-in system would be preferable.

"I wouldn't want them to assign me" (CP customer)

"I would rather have an opt in system – I would need a choice" (CP customer)

It was also suggested that it would be preferable to have different options to choose from, and that if none of them were suitable, flat rate should be the default. Others felt that if there were too many options, people would become confused.

"You would need lots of detail to be able to make a decision" (CP customer)

"I think the four price structures should be given as an option" (CP customer)

"I would want to have examples to be able to see what would be better for me." (CP customer)

In an overall sense, the tariff options were felt to be lacking in detail and many in the forum could not formulate a strong view. Similarly many in both the CALD and vulnerable groups also needed more understanding as to how much they would save before committing to a preference.

SME and Opinion Leaders were sceptical.

"Don't know if I support them. The devil is in the detail and there is no detail. Is it mandatory reassignment?" (SME/Opinion Leaders)

"My criticism is that this is not cost reflective. But the biggest problem is the Minister not CitiPower. They don't support mandated cost reflective network tariffs" (SME/Opinion Leaders)

"We want to avoid the smart meter mistakes – we thought that was a good idea but it didn't go well" (SME/Opinion Leaders)

Amongst the CALD and vulnerable CP customers, most felt they needed more information to be able to decide on the tariff that best suited them and so were in favour of a being able to trial a new system without being locked in.

3.5 Final Observations

In the final session of the forum participants were asked to take into account all that they had seen and discussed, and to comment on the highlights, key strengths and aspects they would like to see featured more strongly in the Draft Proposal.

There were frequent comments that CitiPower had done some good work so far and that what they were proposing was positive. Opinion Leaders and SME were particularly pleased that distributors were making the effort to engage with customers, by-passing the retailers.

"Good that distributors are trying to have an identity and a voice – people are more used to dealing with retailers than distributors." (SME/Opinion Leader)

It was also seen as refreshing to observe that CitiPower were partnering with universities to look at new ways of doing things.

Many mentioned highlights such as the flexible grid, the addressing of old assets, the efforts CitiPower had made to connect to the public and the move towards providing more usage information to customers to help them reduce costs.

Some of the Opinion Leaders felt that the Proposal could go further and be more radical or ambitious in its approach.

“It is incrementalism. It all seems good, in the right direction, it’s ‘fit for purpose’. We are heading in a direction where we need more radical forward thinking. There could be more ambitious end points.” (SME Opinion Leader)

There were suggestions for more involvement and discussion with retailers, and some mentioned that more help from Government would be good regarding solar incentives or rebates. Other considerations suggested included, doing more work in the area of helping customers move toward renewables, looking at affordable pricing for charging electric vehicles in the future and other reliability initiatives.

“See solar power as being a key issue, and more needs to be done in this area.” (CP Customer)

Some participants also wanted to see more work in the area of other generation methods such as wind power.

“There has been no mention of wind power or any other generation methods. They should be looking at other forms of renewable power” (CP Customer)

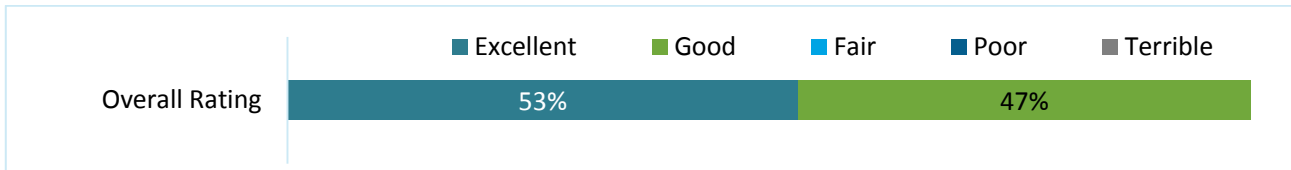
There were some comments that CitiPower still need to improve and develop the proposal in the area of pricing, to make it as simple as possible to understand, especially for older people.

“Need to see more details of pricing. They should give examples. Hypothetical situations. Input data from last bill to see the impact on your household.” (CP Customer)

3.6 Forum Participant Evaluation Results

At the end of the forum, all participants were provided with an evaluation sheet which enabled them to give feedback on the engagement session. Overall, the CitiPower forum was rated highly (see Figure 4) with over half of the participants (53%) rating the forum as ‘excellent’. The remaining participants (47%) rated the forums as ‘good’.

Figure 2: Overall rating of CitiPower Forum



Overall, how would you rate the forum?

Base: CitiPower (n=32)

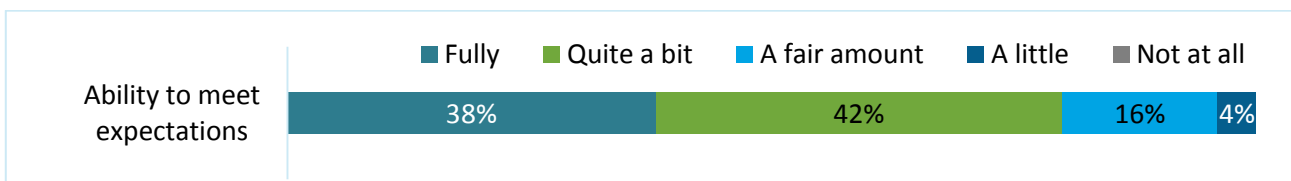
Many participants expected the forum to develop their knowledge of CitiPower's future direction and/or provide them with an opportunity to inform policy. A number of participants also expected that the forum would demonstrate that their previous contributions had been considered by CitiPower.

"To see what the final outcome would be" (CP customer)

"To hear about outcomes/proposals adopted as a result of previous forums" (CP customer)

The feedback showed that almost all of the participants had their expectations met 'fully' (47%) or 'quite a bit' (47%).

Figure 3: Expectations of the CitiPower Forum

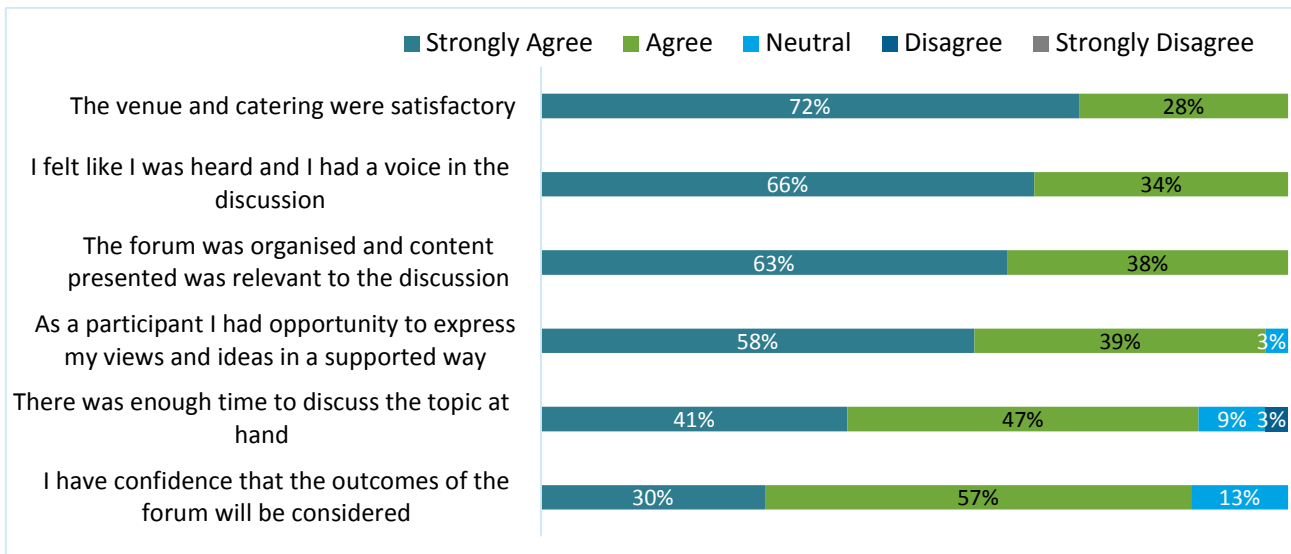


How much did the forum live up to your expectations?

Base: CitiPower (n=32)

Participants also indicated their level of agreement with a number of statements regarding the forum outcomes, the running of the forum and their overall participation. Figure 6 shows that all participants (100%) 'felt heard and had a voice in the discussion' and the majority (97%) agreed that they 'had the opportunity to express their views and ideas in a supported way'. Almost nine out of ten participants (87%) felt that the outcomes from the forum would be considered.

Figure 4: CitiPower Forum Agreement Statements



Please read the statements below about the forum and select the response with which you most agree, from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree

Base: CitiPower (n=32)

Overall, CitiPower's engagement with the community about its plans for 2021-25 was well received. Participants felt that their voices had been heard from previous forums and they valued the opportunity to discuss CitiPower's plans further.

"Great to know you listened to us and implemented things that concerned us!" (CP customer)

"Really enjoyed the opportunity that CitiPower extended to us to participate in the development of their plans." (CP customer)

Several participants commented however that there was not enough detail presented and not enough time to discuss what was needed.

"More detail required, particularly about pricing." (CP customer)

4.0 Powercor – findings

4.1 Opening Question and Answer Session

As mentioned, at the beginning of both forums (one in Ballarat and one in Warrnambool), participants were introduced to the evening by the Lead Facilitator and then an executive from Powercor provided a brief overview of the Draft Proposal. Powercor outlined its role and the reasons for the regulatory submission then introduced what they had heard from customers with regard to energy delivery and what Powercor's response to those needs will be.

Highlights of the Draft Proposal were also communicated on large display boards and participants were encouraged, following the introductory presentations, to walk around and view the boards. On reading the overview display boards, participants were directed to write down any questions they had on stick post-it notes.

These questions were collected and, due to limited time, only a few were selected to be asked of a panel. The panel was at the front of the room and consisted of subject matter experts from Powercor.

The questions that were collected are listed below, with those included in the Q&A session highlighted in red. Powercor provided answers to all questions raised in the forum on its Talking Electricity website.

Table 7: Questions posed at the Ballarat forum

Questions Sorted into Themes
Affordable Network
Is the maximum demand level going to be calculated on a half hour basis (rather than quarter of an hour basis)?
Is there a different cost for undergrounding powerlines - if so, how different?
How can Powercor pass on rebates for reducing electricity demands when they don't bill customers?
Which price structure is Powercor leaning towards?
What time are peak and other times?
Peak season blackout - \$14.00 per kilowatt to \$29.00 per kilowatt?
Still continue to include EVERYONE pricing (flat rate)?
If draft plan is being released with 4 pricing structure options, when will the final pricing structure be determined?
Can you please explain the three new proposals for pricing structures?
Are you concerned about the sustainability of the business given the reduction in price for consumers?
How will the pricing structure be decided?
What is peak time?
Does "value improvement more than cost" mean increases in long term pricing?

What is "demand management solution"? To reduce peak demand?
Will the retailers pass on the reductions in your charges? (Do they have to?)
Price structure; with solar panels installed - oriented for peak usage time or peak pricing time?
Peak usage customers, what happens if you go over?
What time do I have to stay up until to do my washing to get cheaper rates?
Price structure - with a demand price what would be the rate difference for high/peak of off peak?
Rebates for reducing demand? Smaller bill anyway!
Dependable Network
In the South West, why in some areas is power not underground, instead of using poles that deteriorate overtime? And cause a lot of bushfires?
Undergrounding? - bush fire safety
How do smart meters undertake safety risk?
Are vulnerable customers prioritised in outages?
A couple weeks ago in a heat wave half of Ballarat blacked out. Why?
Pole inspectors. Are these qualified or trained by Powercor?
What was the decision regarding how often trees were going to be cut back from lines? How harsh they were going to be cut?
Why only South West getting pole inspections?
If you are committed to a suitable source of energy - why is it that every year in the hottest part of the holidays there are a number of power outages in the Ballarat area?
Flexible Network
Substation upgrade for existing suburbs for exporting electricity to the grid or just new suburbs?
Is there going to be more capacity for solar power to go back into the grid? Currently some customers are limited by their export amount.
What sort of information management costs will Powercor face in providing data to customers and making it secure?
Easy to access usage information - close to real time?
In flexible network what does "demand management solutions" mean?
The one-stop-shop - is this an app or a web portal? What will be available?
Demand management systems, how does that work?
How are you going to make it easier for customers to export solar to and use batteries?
How accurate is the 110,000 new customer figure?
Roughly how many new residential properties do you expect to connect in the next five years given the growth in Western Melbourne?
Has Powercor considered building their own large Solar Farms? What considerations has Powercor had around this potential 'game-changer', especially in areas where 'embedded generation' maybe an alternative to upgrading conductors/wires?
Are the batteries compatible with existing solar systems?
Replacement repair + how frequently batteries + solar?
Electric vehicles stations part of strategy?
How will you support increase in electric vehicle use? + is that just for Powercor service providers?
Do Powercor provide charging points for cars?
Solid information about renewals for domestic use?
Are we going to get smart charger Electric Vehicles at work/urban/home?
How soon will the electric vehicles be in the system?

Will the portal for data usage be available quickly & interact with the pricing structure?

Table 8: Questions posed at the Warrnambool forum

Questions Sorted into Themes
Affordable Network
Charges base on peak time usage? What happens when or if you have highs or lows in usage?
Peak usage packages? What are they and what does that mean for the average Aussie?
Dependable Network
What other than solar & renewables are environmental considerations? Simple question: What happens to old poles & wires?
Reliability of supply? Disability that relies on Reverse Cycle Aircon + electric lift chair - needed! If power out for more than 4-ish hours result can be life threatening.
In real terms what does the 35% reduction in safety incidents mean? How many incidents are there a year?
Swier Lines. For farmers, REFCLS don't work on Swier. Why are they not being replaced to 3 Phase BRGR?
How long to place existing pole & wires to underground in bushfire prone areas?
Flexible Network
What are you doing to keep power constant when the Sun and wind stops? Farmers are having trouble with technology with power.
How are you making it easier to export solar and use batteries? What, in the future, are the plans and programmes?
Security of network operating system. Is this regularly reviewed and updated?
Time frame for connecting renewable supply to the network?
How secure is the One-stop-shop? Can data be disassociated from the individual to be safer?
How can you hope to achieve the Victorian 40% renewable goal without support on the Federal level?
You say you are investing in smarter technology - what is the smarter technology?
You say you are going to invest \$180m - new ways to use, store electricity, can you give some examples of that?
Live data in wrong hands - could be used by the server to target which houses don't have someone home. Can data be disassociated from the address for security?
If going to increase solar + battery into grid - will it increase the cost to consumer to upgrade the network?
Talking electricity online customer engagement. Why the variation in solar rebates between providers and decreases?

There were no question and answer sessions in the groups.

4.2 Theme 1 – Safe and Dependable Network

Participants were given an information sheet (see Appendix 2D for Ballarat, 2G for Warrnambool and 6F for the groups) with the current findings, what Powercor had planned as a result of these findings, and some more details on these plans regarding the Safe and Dependable network. Facilitators went through the information sheets with participants and at the forums, where applicable, asked an ‘expert’ to come to the table to clarify any questions or uncertainty.

Participants were also given a feedback sheet and asked to provide their level of support for the proposals within this theme and the reasons for their support. The table below indicates that there was a high level of support across both forums, with 64 out of 66 participants ‘supporting’ the elements of the proposal within a safe and dependable network (49 strongly; 15 slightly). There was also a high level of support at the groups with all supporting these elements of the proposal (10 strongly; 4 slightly). The written reasons for their support are appended (see Appendix 4B).

Table 9: Feedback responses from Powercor’s Draft Proposal Forums on ‘safe and dependable network’

Safe and Dependable	Ballarat N=36 #	Warrnambool N=30 #	CALD & vulnerable N=14 #
Support strongly	28	21	10
Support slightly	8	7	4
Don’t really support	-	2	-
Do not support at all	-	-	-
Don’t know	-	-	-

Q1. Please rate your level of support for the proposals for each theme in the Draft Proposal - safe and dependable network

Base: Respondents attending Powercor’s Draft Proposal Forums (n=36 and n=30) and CALD/ vulnerable groups (n=14)

Overall, there was a general sense of support for the initiatives put forward in the Draft Proposal and participants felt that all the key areas were well-covered.

Participants at the forums particularly mentioned their support for proposals under the safe environment for customers and workers. These included both the research partnerships with universities and the CSIRO to deliver world-class safety initiatives, as well as using data analytics and evidence to identify high and moderate priority assets before they fail.

Powercor participants also mentioned their support for bushfire safety strategies, and felt that it was important for Powercor to try to move forward the undergrounding of SWER lines in bushfire

areas. Participants wanted further information regarding this proposal, especially in regards to costs that would impact them directly.

“We know this is ‘costly’ – but how much per person does that work out? It’s really a matter of priority in regards to which parts are undergrounded first” (PC customer - Ballarat)

“It sounds good but what is the actual cost to consumers?” (PC customer - Ballarat)

There was strong support from participants in the CALD and vulnerable groups for increased frequency of inspections of both the network and private lines. To some this was felt to be a ‘no brainer’ and they were surprised that Powercor was not already doing this.

“How often do they inspect those [private lines] at the moment... shouldn’t they already be doing that now?” (PC vulnerable customer – Geelong)

Some Warrnambool forum participants felt that the additional 5000 poles and \$50m investment in the South West did not seem like a high amount relative to other amounts of money they were spending, and requested that more investment be made into this issue. There was strong feeling in the room that priority must be given to this issue and ensuring that bushfires are not started in the future by faulty poles. Participants also questioned whether or not alternative materials for the poles were being investigated and potentially used instead of wood to help prevent bushfires.

“5000 doesn’t seem like a big enough number – there are 15 poles in my street alone” (PC customer – Warrnambool)

“It all seems a bit like a token effort – it’s like band aid methods nothing new... the ideas are good but not enough money is being spent on it, the plans don’t match the budget” (PC customer – Warrnambool)

Following from this, participants in Ballarat were slightly disappointed to see that undergrounding was not going to occur. Many felt that the long term benefits of undergrounding outweighed the significant upfront cost. This viewpoint was also raised by several participants in the CALD and vulnerable groups.

“Some of the older areas where the poles are very old... you want to see them undergrounded. We know it can be expensive but the long term benefit outweighs the cost!” (PC customer - Ballarat)

“There seems to be all these arguments for the system as it is, but don’t all these costs mean that it should be undergrounded moving forward” (PC customer - Ballarat)

Warrnambool forum participants and participants in the vulnerable and CALD groups were told that Powercor was considering undergrounding powerlines in bushfire areas by 2025 requiring an investment of \$140 million, by 2025 (i.e. \$7.40 per year per customer) and there was general support for this additional expense.

“\$140m to put underground seems low – not a large amount for them there is some very rocky goat country so it would be hard there but other areas would be ok” (PC customer – Warrnambool)

“Yes I’m very supportive of this as they haven’t put poles in the right category in the past for checking, I have concerns about their checking processes - so going underground would solve this” (PC customer - Warrnambool)

However, there were some in the vulnerable and CALD groups who were concerned that the proposed undergrounding was only being considered rather than being included within the proposal.

“Undergrounding should have been addressed already...it’s just so dangerous having over-line poles in bush fire areas” (PC CALD customer – Geelong)

While most participants felt that the theme was well covered there were some areas where further information was requested. As mentioned, there were some more specific information requests regarding costs around undergrounding SWER lines in bushfire areas. Participants also wanted to know a bit more about using smart meters for safety aspects and how their data would be collected and used.

“How many bushfires are a result of electricity faults? Hard to give my support without knowing the statistics” (SME/Opinion Leader)

“The preventative approach has been made stronger in this Proposal, rather than waiting for things to happen. An ounce of prevention is worth a ton of cure” (SME/Opinion Leader)

Additionally Warrnambool participants wanted to learn more about what else Powercor were doing to prevent bushfires occurring in the future, such as how often they were checking the poles, whether or not they were using qualified and experienced people to check the poles, and information about whether or not they would be responsible or provide assistance if their assets started a fire again in the future.

“Our community is still fragile because of poles snapping off and the fires....Powercor should have accepted responsibility for what happened...I am in support of what they’re doing but they are only doing it because of public scrutiny” (PC customer – Warrnambool)

“There is nothing here about them taking responsibility – will they address this?...we want more on their liability and what responsibility they will take, what options do customers have if it happens again, what is the process, do they have enough insurance” (PC customer – Warrnambool)

There were also some in Warrnambool and the CALD and vulnerable groups who questioned the definition of high bush fire risk areas and how Powercor determined this and whether or not they consulted with the Country Fire Authority.

4.2.1 Supporting customers in lower reliability areas

Reactions to the idea of using the latest technology to reduce costs and increase network reliability were generally positive. There was some disappointment that Powercor was not planning to improve reliability for those in lower reliability areas, however there was some understanding that it was not cost effective to do so. This was consistent across the Ballarat and Warrnambool forums, as well as the CALD and vulnerable groups.

“Using new technology is a good thing – it cuts down on possible risks to workers” (PC customer – Warrnambool)

“It is more cost effective to pay people compensation than to invest in improving reliability. They need to make sure they are paying them enough.” (SME/Opinion Leader)

As an alternative, participants were specifically asked how Powercor could support those in low reliability areas, rather than providing compensation payments. A number of ideas were put forward:

- *Initiating a priority based system for those at risk:* there was some concern for people at risk in lower reliability areas, for example, the elderly, sick or people with young children who were potentially more dependent on electricity. It was felt that these people should be able to register somewhere to identify their need for electricity, and that Powercor could provide special services or priority to these people in the event of a failure.

“I need electricity for my medical condition but I am not considered to be a high priority case as it is not seen as life threatening... I am not in townsometimes monetary compensation doesn’t do it, people need reliable power” (PC customer – Warrnambool)

- *Community initiatives:* participants came up with the idea that Powercor could go into partnership with local communities to help establish alternative power solutions for when

outages occur, including the development of solar panel farms and batteries that could supply power in the event of a failure.

“If they have already identified the area then they should be installing solar there so that they are self-sufficient” (PC customer - Ballarat)

“They could pay for them to be on solar and batteries rather than provide compensation payments” (SME/Opinion Leader)

Others felt that Powercor should be helping people in remote areas and bush fire areas to use solar to help generate their own energy, increase reliability and reduce the risk of bushfires.

“They should be helping remote customers to get solar and help generate their own energy so they don’t need poles and wires that start fires...Powercor should help them put solar on which should outweigh the cost of rebates” (PC customer – Warrnambool)

4.3 Theme 2 – Flexible Network

Participants were given an information sheet (see Appendix 2E for Ballarat, 2H for Warrnambool and 6G for the groups) which included the current findings, what Powercor had planned as a result of these findings, and some more details on these plans regarding ensuring a flexible network. Facilitators went through the information sheets with participants and at the forums, where applicable, asked an ‘expert’ to come to the table to clarify any questions or uncertainty.

Participants were also given a feedback sheet and asked to provide their level of support for the proposals within this theme and the reasons for their support. The table below indicates that there was consistent support, with all forum participants (n=66) strongly or slightly supporting the proposals for a flexible and supportive network (35 strongly; 31 slightly). Most of the group participants (12 out of 14) also supported the proposals. The written reasons for their support are appended (see Appendix 4B).

Table 10: Feedback responses from Powercor's Draft Proposal Forums on 'flexible network that supports your choices'

Flexible and Supportive	Ballarat N=36 #	Warrnambool N=30 #	CALD & vulnerable N=14 #
Support strongly	18	17	6
Support slightly	18	13	6
Don't really support	-	-	-
Do not support at all	-	-	-
Don't know	-	-	2

Q1. Please rate your level of support for the proposals for each theme in the Draft Proposal - a flexible network that supports your choices
Base: Respondents attending Powercor's Draft Proposal Forums (n=36 and n=30) and CALD/ vulnerable groups (n=14)

All of the participants at the Powercor forums supported the initiatives put forward for the Draft Proposal in the flexible network section. Participants in the Ballarat forum felt that the suggested proposals provided evidence that their feedback (from previous forums) had been taken into account in formulating a response in this area.

"They have clearly taken what we said seriously, and they're acting on it" (PC customer - Ballarat)

Participants in the CALD and vulnerable groups were not as familiar with the subject matter and so some did not understand this topic immediately. However, on the whole feedback was positive after the various parts had been explained.

Participants across both forums responded particularly well to the idea of creating a more flexible network, and in doing so allowing customers to export electricity from their houses back into the network. They saw this as using existing resources in a 'smarter' way, and making the most of them to give customers what they want.

"I understand that the system isn't necessarily set up to do it, but I like the idea of ensuring that people will be able to export back as much as they can" (PC customer - Ballarat)

"It needs to be flexible to accommodate for a range of different inputs" (PC customer - Ballarat)

"Yes it's good - there should be more reasons to invest in solar. They need to improve the network ready for everyone to use solar. They need to educate customers on electricity usage - explain to people the benefits of spreading their electricity" (PC customer - Warrnambool)

CALD and vulnerable customers concurred with the need for the network to support electricity exports, although for many of the vulnerable customers these technologies were felt to be unobtainable for them personally. Instead, they wanted incentives or regulations to encourage landlords to install solar systems for use by renters. In addition, one participant suggested that solar systems should also be provided on public housing.

“They’re pushing that everyone should get solar panels, but what happens if you’re in a rental? There should be incentives or something to encourage landlords to buy solar panels and try to bring down your electricity usage” (PC vulnerable customer – Geelong)

The participants also displayed appreciation for the improvements in efficiency that were indicated in the ‘new connections’ section of the information provided to them. Again, this was seen as a way of using existing assets more efficiently and effectively – rather than spending money ‘unnecessarily’. Some participants in the CALD and vulnerable groups had experienced long waiting periods to have a property connected and so were very positive about these plans.

“I think in the past there has been a tendency to just throw money at building more infrastructure, but this seems to indicate that they want to use what they have in a better way” (PC customer - Ballarat)

“When we moved from one house to another, on my god the hassle to get the electricity put on was just insane” (PC vulnerable customer – Geelong)

Opinion Leaders expressed concern about Powercor not being able to connect all the wind farms in the area. It was believed that this was creating unrest in the local community. Some in Warrnambool were confused and questioned why Powercor are involved in connecting wind farms as they thought that it was the role of the transmission companies, however regardless they were happy for wind to be used as a top up as long as more traditional sources were also used to ensure reliability.

“There are fairness issues with wind farms – those who have been able to connect have more income coming in which is creating unrest in the community. Powercor are encouraging wind farms so they have to be able to connect them.” (SME/Opinion Leader)

“Why are Powercor involved in connecting wind farms? - I thought this was a transmission thing.... I like to see investing in wind but I want coal too – it’s good just a top up. They should be looking at nuclear too” (PC customer – Warrnambool)

Opinion Leaders also suggested that the Proposal does not look far enough into the future, with reference being made to ‘Virtual Power Plants’ - aggregated power generation that can be managed externally in a region. It was thought that these should be mentioned in the Proposal.

“The Proposal needs more inclusion of changing trends – Powercor expects a lot more rooftop solar and batteries but there is no mention of virtual power plants. How are they going to manage the new paradigm? They are not looking far enough ahead in the Proposal.” (SME/Opinion Leader)

The participants across the forums and groups also responded positively to the one-stop-shop portal initiative. It was seen as a way of simplifying things for customers, and providing them with information that they could use to make better decisions for themselves. However, Opinion Leaders suggested that this won’t be accessible by everyone if it is just online. Additionally some raised concerns that the elderly or those less ‘tech savvy’ would not be able to access the information so they would need to have alternatives for them.

“The one-stop-shop is a good thing. I just hope they market it, and explain to people how to make the most out of it” (PC customer - Ballarat)

“It would be good to be able to access usage data in real time. Learn where your peak times are and perhaps change your habits if they make it incentivized” (PC customer – Warrnambool)

“I think it’s very important to be able to access real time data, otherwise you only receive a bill every 3 months which is a long time” (PC CALD customer – Geelong)

“If you’re older and not tech savvy how would you get this information? Would a call centre be there still?” (PC customer – Warrnambool)

There were some who questioned whether or not they would have an app, with suggestions to include an app so the information could be access when they were at work or not near their computer.

“It should have an app as well – at least you’ve got that with you all the time, or a mobile friendly website” (PC customer – Warrnambool)

There were also a few positive reactions to the notion of enhancing data security. Some saw this as an emerging area of concern, and liked the idea of more investment being made in this area. However, discussion in this area did lead to questions about the detail behind this spend. There were questions raised in relation to what the \$18m would be spent on, and whether the amount was sufficient.

“That amount of money sounds impressive, but I personally have no idea how much it costs to do that sort of thing. Maybe they need more, or maybe that’s excessive....I don’t know” (PC customer - Ballarat)

“Can the postal address be separated from the data? Joe Blow who doesn’t have a secure password can make the whole system unstable. It’s open to hackers. I’m concerned about everything going digital. Do they upgrade their Powercor systems?” (PC customer – Warrnambool)

While there was appreciation for the plan relating to use of household solar systems, a few of the participants wanted to know if anything was going to be done to allow for greater use of battery storage, while there were also a few comments relating to the perceived need to encourage more businesses to use solar technology.

“The way I read it they will be doing things to help us out, but they should also be doing more with businesses to encourage them to generate and export solar generated power. Think about some of the roof areas involved in commercial properties” (PC customer - Ballarat)

The participants were also ideally wanting more detail in relation to the potential incentives that may be offered to customers to manage demand. While most were open to the option of some form of incentive being offered, they weren’t sure how this would work, and what scale of incentive would be involved. A few of the participants also wondered if some customers may be tempted to take up a financial incentive to the detriment of their own health.

“I’m thinking that an older person on a pension may find the incentive attractive, but they’re probably the ones that should keep their air conditioner running” (PC customer)

There was immediate interest in the incentives to spread usage amongst those in the CALD and vulnerable groups. These participants were provided with information about United Energy’s ‘Sun Saver Program’ as an example of the sort of program that could be introduced in the Powercor area. Most indicated that they would join a program like this if it was available, although some indicated that their ability to comply would depend on the exact day and time.

“It depends, so maybe if on another day I’ve got a lot of work then that’s going to take priority” (PC CALD customer – Geelong)

At the forums there were also questions raised in relation to the 26 week connection timeframe posed for large customers. However, once the reasoning for this was outlined, most were satisfied with the proposal.

Warrnambool forum participants were asked their opinions about increasing capacity of power lines to dairy farmers to help them expand their operations. Options considered included customers investing themselves at their own expense or Powercor investing in capacity paid for by the customer in need or by all customers. There were mixed reactions to the idea of farmers versus all customers paying. Many felt that the expense needed to be at least shared by the

farmers because they are the ones benefitting directly, however, they simultaneously felt that farmers should be helped or subsidised somehow and expansion of the industry should be encouraged.

"I think it has to come back on the farmers a bit because it is their business. But they should be subsidised somehow as we need to encourage expansion.....perhaps give farmers incentives to put generators in or upgrade the network, I feel that the user should pay" (PC customer – Warrnambool)

"Definitely support. Farmers are food producing. We don't give enough support to our farmers now. One of these days we won't be able to feed our population. By making the farming industry stronger you create more jobs in other areas. Keeping factories going. Economic benefit for the region and for the country. Same as if it was orchards, crop growers."

There were also mixed opinions amongst the dairy farmers that attended the Warrnambool forum – with some suggesting alternative ways of sharing the cost such as a number of farmers sharing the cost or being helped financially in other ways.

"We got together with other farmers and upgraded the lines and we all contributed. That helped reduce costs" (PC customer – Warrnambool)

"We (farmers) have to pay to put the line in to be connected. If we pay that then we should be able to get the electricity without paying more" (PC customer – Warrnambool)

"Definitely get the network up to capacity – generators are annoying, they breakdown, it's another thing to worry about. Don't want to rely on generators - Option 1 (customer pays) is not a good option" (PC customer – Warrnambool)

While many participants felt that all customers should pay to help the farmers, for some it was dependent upon the amount of money, as this information was not provided in the forum.

"If it's a small contribution by all, it would help so it is not so much of a burden for the dairy farmer, but there are people in our community who can't afford electricity as it is. I get a rebate but others can't afford it. It depends on what the cost is. It doesn't say how much everyone will have to pay" (PC customer – Warrnambool)

"It's worth helping farmers. Conceptually – it's a good idea but depends how much it will cost. They have to look at it case by case. Powercor should lobby the Government to help subsidise the cost" (PC customer – Warrnambool)

This proposal was mentioned in the handout for CALD and vulnerable groups but didn't generate much discussion – either positive or negative.

4.4 Theme 3 – Affordable Network

Participants were given an information sheet (see Appendix 2F for Ballarat, 2I for Warrnambool and 6H for the groups) which included the current findings, what Powercor had planned as a result of these findings, and some more details on these plans regarding the Affordable network. Facilitators went through the information sheets with participants and at the forums, where applicable, asked an 'expert' to come to the table to clarify any questions or uncertainty.

Participants were also given a feedback sheet and asked to provide their level of support for the proposals within this theme and the reasons for their support. The table below indicates that there was a good level of support, with 55 out of the 66 forum participants 'supporting' the proposals within an affordable network (30 strongly; 25 slightly). The majority of the group participants also supported the elements (8 strongly; 5 slightly). The written reasons for their support are appended (see Appendix 4B and 4C).

Table 11: Feedback responses from Powercor's Draft Proposal Forums on 'affordable network'

Affordable	Ballarat N=36 #	Warrnambool N=30 #	CALD & vulnerable N=14 #
Support strongly	15	15	8
Support slightly	15	10	5
Don't really support	2	5	-
Do not support at all	-	-	-
Don't know	4	-	1

Q1. Please rate your level of support for the proposals for each theme in the Draft Proposal - affordable network

Base: Respondents attending Powercor's Draft Proposal Forums (n=36 and n=30) and CALD/ vulnerable groups (n=14)

4.4.1 Maintaining affordability by reducing prices

Initial reactions were generally positive in the forums and groups, with most participants agreeing that affordability was a key concern and that electricity networks needed to find ways of reducing their costs or ensuring that electricity prices do not keep increasing in the future.

Reactions to the \$24 reduction in residential network charges and \$90 in business charges in 2021 were largely positive, however, the amounts were seen to be very low and unremarkable. The main positive to emerge was that it was at least a signal that prices were not increasing.

"The \$24 is saying that my bill is not going to go up" (PC Customer - Ballarat)

"Reducing our prices – I don't believe it! The retailers need to drop the price" (PC customer – Warrnambool)

"I mean that's good but I wouldn't think that your typical household would find it significant" (PC CALD customer – Geelong)

"\$24 per annum reduction doesn't seem a lot considering they have made all these cost savings. But considering it normally goes up it is positive" (SME/Opinion Leader)

"It's not a great improvement in terms of affordability" (SME/Opinion Leader)

"The retailers would have to get on board with this" (SME/Opinion Leader)

There was consensus that the entire reduction should be introduced in the first year as opposed to spreading the savings over the whole period.

The specific detail of what is planned to keep costs under control was seen to be prudent business conduct, particularly with regard to continuing to negotiate contract prices and engaging in competitive processes for large jobs.

There were some comments however, regarding the plan to maintain cost efficiencies and only invest when needed. While participants understood that building extra capacity was a costly exercise, there was some concern that this was a reactionary approach. Most suggested that they would like to see Powercor planning for the future and if that included building capacity then it should occur before it is needed.

Similarly, claiming that Powercor would continue to operate at capacity seemed to indicate that more preparation for the future was needed, if there were high utilisation rates currently.

4.4.2 Setting simple and fair price structures

Participants tended to support the concept of the consideration of different tariff options as most agreed that consumers needed choice to be able to select the plan that best suited them. However they also agreed that the options needed to be simple and easy to understand, and no lock-in contracts.

"We want the choice. People want to be able to choose the pricing mechanism that suits them best" (PC customer – Warrnambool)

"There needs to be more than one option to be fair" (PC Customer - Ballarat)

"I would like people to have the option. What works for one household won't work for the other" (PC vulnerable customer – Geelong)

"I think different pricing options is good - You can have more flexibility to suit your own needs. If you lock yourself into a package how easy would it be to get out of it – is there going to be a lock in contract. Circumstances change" (PC customer – Warrnambool)

There was some concern in the forums that moving to cost reflective pricing may disadvantage some lower socio-economic customers and those on medical equipment.

"Will higher users be penalised under these cost reflective pricing options, if some people are paying less and some are paying more" (PC Customer - Ballarat)

"If you are a pensioner and need heating and cooling you will be disadvantaged" (PC Customer - Ballarat)

"What happens to those on medical equipment" (PC Customer - Ballarat)

"Time of use would not suit the working poor. They can't help when they use electricity. I also see families being twin peaks and they will be disadvantaged" (PC customer – Warrnambool)

Many residents recognised that pricing structures could be complicated and whilst providing options was well liked, there was a feeling amongst some that Powercor would have to help some people choose the tariff that best suited their energy needs. Many suggested perhaps having a calculator on the Powercor website that allowed you to input your current details and usage after which it would calculate which option would be best for you.

"Need to be able to change your option if necessary" (PC Customer- Ballarat)

"You need to know the impact of the option you choose over a period of time" (PC Customer - Ballarat)

"There are so many people in many different situations so we need lots of options" (PC Customer - Ballarat)

“They should have a calculator so people can see what the difference would be on their bill for the different pricing options” (SME/Opinion Leader)

With regard to the options presented in the forums, there were mixed reactions and a varied level of understanding of how they worked and what they would mean for the individual. The status quo or flat rate was well understood and most participants recognised that this was the tariff they were currently on.

“I prefer the status quo – I feel like I know what I am up for” (PC customer - Ballarat)

“I prefer status quo because it’s simple...I’m happy to accept that I’m probably paying a bit more (as a retiree) but I’m happy to pay more to help the families” (PC customer – Warrnambool)

Complexity was a key issue for participants in the CALD and vulnerable groups, with many stating that they find it hard to understand their bills and do not really know how to influence their usage. Accordingly, they tended to state a preference for the maintaining the status quo flat rate option.

“It [time of use] wouldn’t work for me cause I’m too thick. I just turn it on when I want and turn it off whenever” (PC vulnerable customer – Geelong)

“I think if you’ve got appliances that you can program...it’d be easier and more practical but I’d say that the majority of people don’t” (PC CALD customer – Geelong)

Forum participants agreed that the flat rate was easy to understand, however were more concerned that it did not encourage customers to change their usage behaviour.

Of the other options presented, time of use was the easiest for customers to understand and the one that seemed to be the most popular. In fact, a minority felt they were already on time of use.

“I feel time of use is already in use – I think the retailers are offering this” (PC customer - Ballarat)

Some of the key questions were around the times for peak and off peak, with most guessing that the peak would be around dinner time (say 5-9pm). Others queried whether the peak would change if everyone started turning on washing machines and dishwashers after 10pm, and would Powercor then change the peak times to suit.

“Time of use is an incentive for people to drop their price down” (PC customer - Ballarat)

“Time of use is fairer because it takes stress off the network” (PC customer - Ballarat)

“What if everyone changes their habits and starts doing their washing at 10pm then the peak time would change” (PC customer - Ballarat)

Despite these comments, some participants felt that changing their behaviour to take advantage of a time of use tariff would be easy, whilst others indicated that they would find it quite difficult, particularly those who worked full time and those with younger school aged children.

“I already try and do my washing either in the middle of the day or at midnight” (PC customer - Ballarat)

“I take our iPads to charge at work, so we are not charging them at night during peak times” (PC customer)

“Time of use depends on who you are and your lifestyle. I’d worry that it may disadvantage working parents” (PC customer - Ballarat)

“I am flexible and can use electricity when I want” (PC customer - Ballarat)

“Air conditioning is the biggest user of electricity and we can’t change the time we need to use this” (PC customer - Ballarat)

CALD and vulnerable group participants were largely unsure of the potential bill impact of time of use and many expressed a reluctance to change their behaviours. Despite this, almost all indicated that they would adjust some aspects of their usage if time of use was introduced, for example washing and drying. Some of the vulnerable customers complained about having inefficient electric ovens and that this usage would have to be during peak times regardless of the tariff structure.

“If the price is significantly lower off-peak then maybe I’ll try to make some changes (PC CALD customer – Geelong)

“Yeah the cooking kills you, if you’ve got electric” (PC vulnerable customer – Geelong)

The other two tariff options presented at the forums (demand and peak usage) were considered confusing and many participants felt they needed more information to be able to comment on whether they would prefer these options. Demand tariffs were most confusing to participants (particularly Warrnambool forum attendees who had not discussed the idea previously) and were interpreted as unfair in that you could be charged according to a one off spike when the rest of the month your usage could be really low. Others felt they would be disadvantaged by a demand tariff.

“I do five loads of washing a day so I wouldn’t want to pay demand charges” (PC customer)

"It would be too confusing to move to demand pricing or packages" (PC customer)

"Time of use is very straightforward. The others are not so straightforward. You can't tell how you are going until you get the bill" (SME/Opinion Leader)

"I'm completely confused and don't know which way to swing – I work 7-3, what's best for me?" (PC customer – Warrnambool)

"Demand pricing makes sense but it's going to be too confusing for people to understand and do" (PC Customer – Warrnambool)

"Demand pricing seems unfair because you could have one busy month and be charged a lot. We need education on this – there are too many answered questions, it's too hard to choose" (PC customer – Warrnambool)

The peak usage packages also needed more explanation however, the overall concept of choosing a package that suits the customer was well received and was seen to potentially help to predict bills and avoid bill shock.

"Peak usage packages seem good and easy to understand but they need to tell us what the peak times are, this needs to be on the website or app" (PC customer – Warrnambool)

When asked if they would prefer to be automatically assigned to a new tariff or opt to choose a new tariff, the majority felt that an opt-in system would be preferable.

"Opt in is easier because gives people time to assess" (PC customer - Ballarat)

"Opt in – opt out is rubbish. For example, with the recent eHealth records - my medical history is all over the internet now. I didn't realise you could opt out. People don't realise that they can opt out of things if you make it opt out" (PC customer – Warrnambool)

It was also suggested that it would be preferable to have different options to choose from, and that if none of them were suitable, flat rate should be the default. Others felt that if there were too many options, people would become confused.

"These are hard to decide on because we don't know the details" (PC customer - Ballarat)

"I would prefer to opt in – I would like to trial it for 12 months to see if it ends up cheaper – go through the seasons" (PC customer - Ballarat)

"I think new pricing structures should be an opt-in because there is a lot of education needed for people so they can understand them. Not everyone will understand them so it shouldn't be forced" (SME/Opinion Leader)

The SME and Opinion Leaders were quite concerned with presenting customers with pricing options and the degree to which they would be able to understand them. There was a feeling amongst this group that education would be key and any new tariff would need to be carefully implemented.

"My concern is how they will communicate the different pricing options. People who may not be as knowledgeable might not understand how they can make savings. If they continue to use electricity as they are they might get bill shock. Very careful implementation is needed. If all information on usage is online then that would be a problem. How are they going to monitor their usage if they are not online?" (SME/Opinion Leader)

4.5 Final Observations

In the final session of the forum participants were asked to take into account all that they had seen and discussed and to comment on the highlights, key strengths and aspects they would like to see featured more strongly in the Draft Proposal.

There were frequent comments that Powercor had done some good work so far and that what they were proposing was positive. Many mentioned highlights such as the flexible grid (being able to export solar), the use of laser technology, the move towards providing more usage information to customers to help them reduce costs and the undergrounding of powerlines.

Of particular interest in this region were the safety initiatives to help reduce the onset of bushfires. Participants felt that this was really important and liked the idea of using new technology, undergrounding and increased pole inspections.

"It is good there is a general drive to get the power underground everywhere. We should be looking at underground power" (PC Customer - Ballarat)

Opinion Leaders and SME's also felt it was positive that Powercor was engaging with Universities and other providers to help improve performance.

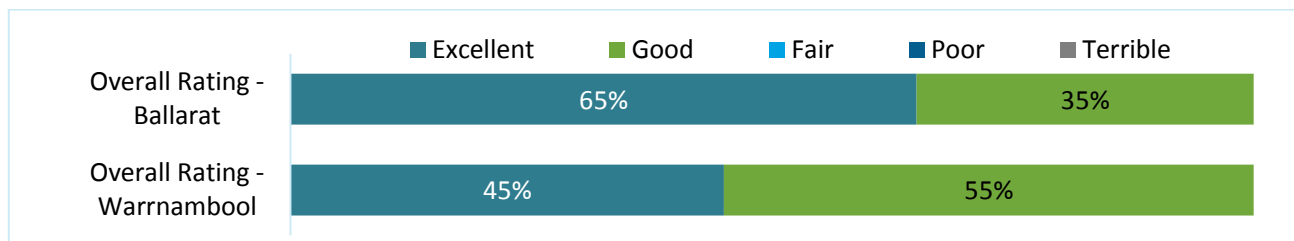
There were suggestions for more involvement and discussion with retailers, and some mentioned that more help from Government would be good regarding solar incentives or rebates. Other considerations suggested included, doing more work in the area of helping customers move toward renewables, and educating customers on pricing structures and how to save money.

“Powercor needs to put more pressure on the retailers to lower their prices and pass on the savings that retailers get – it should not just be a way for them to increase their profits.” (PC customer - Ballarat)

4.6 Forum Participant Evaluation Results

At the end of both Powercor forums, participants were provided with an evaluation sheet which enabled them to give feedback on the engagement session. Rating results were slightly different across the two forums with Ballarat participants rating the forum more positively overall than Warrnambool attendees (see Figure 5). On average, over half (51%) of participants rated the forum as 'excellent', and 45% rated it as 'good'.

Figure 5: Overall rating of Powercor Forum

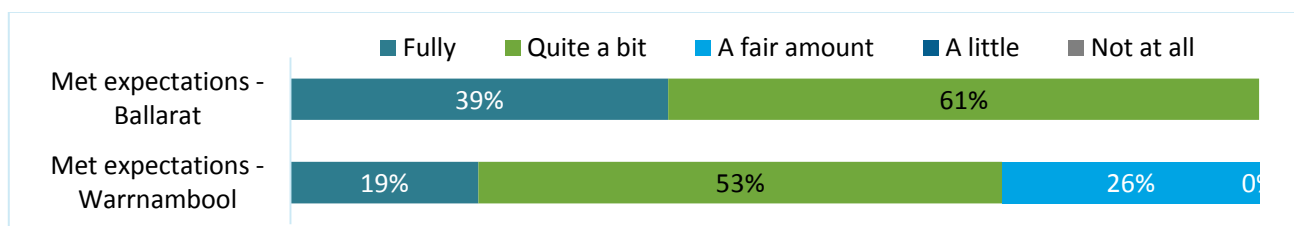


Overall, how would you rate the forum?

Base: Powercor forum attendees (Ballarat n=38 and Warrnambool n=29)

Many participants expected to receive more information about the intentions of Powercor in the future or had no expectations for the forum. The results indicated that all of the Ballarat Powercor forum participants had their expectations met 'fully' (39%) or 'quite a bit' (61%), while fewer Warrnambool participants had their expectations met 'fully' (19%) or 'quite a bit' (53%). (See figure 6). On average, the majority (86%) had their expectations met fully or quite a bit.

Figure 6: Expectations of the Powercor Forum



How much did the forum live up to your expectations?

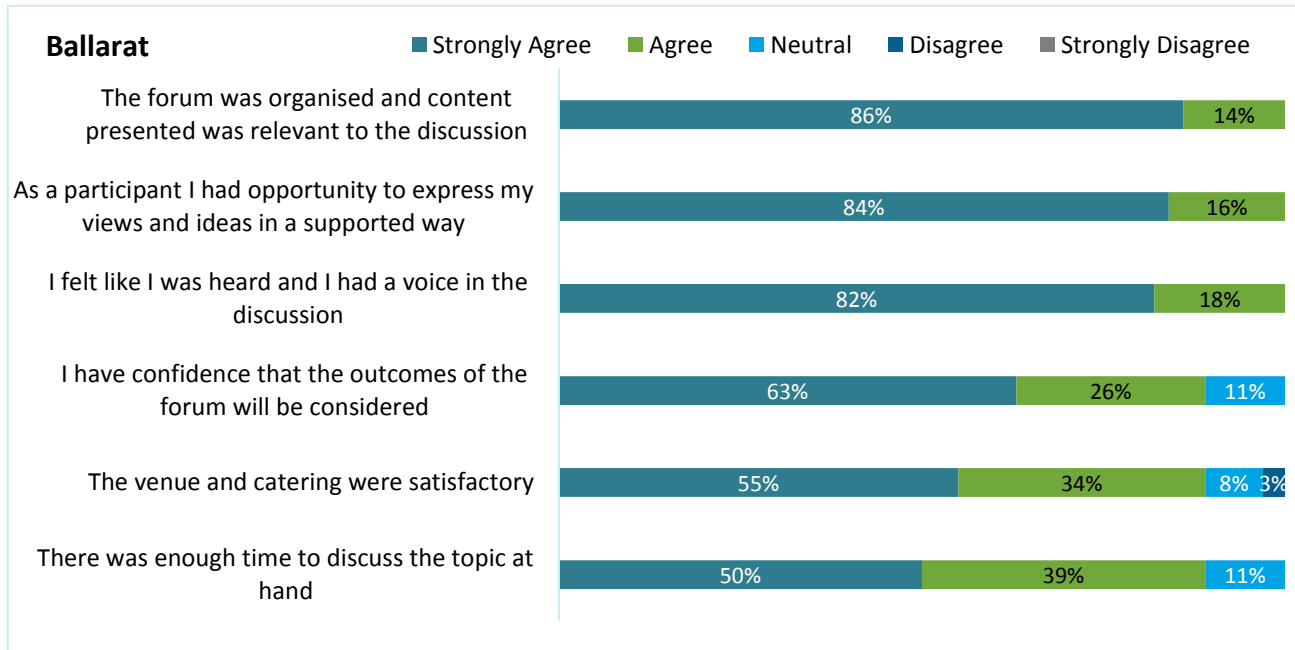
Base: Powercor forum attendees (Ballarat n=38 and Warrnambool n=29)

Participants were also asked to indicate their agreement with a number of statements regarding the forum outcomes, the running of the forum and their overall participation.

Figure 7 shows that all Ballarat participants (100%) felt they were able to 'express their views in a supported way', and that they 'felt heard and had a voice in the discussion'. Almost nine out of ten

(89%) of participants agreed that the outcomes from the forum would be considered by the distributor.

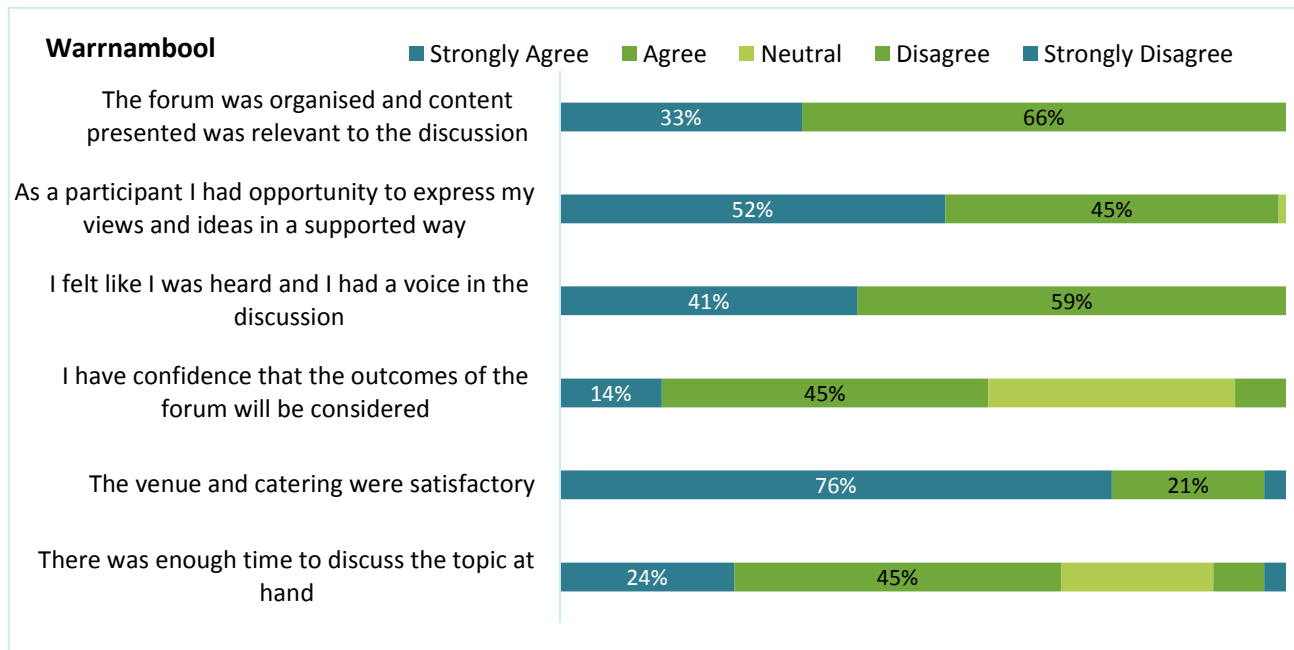
Figure 7: Powercor Forum Agreement Statements - Ballarat



Please read the statements below about the forum and select the response with which you most agree, from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. Base: Powercor Ballarat forum attendees (n=38)

Agreement levels were lower amongst Warrnambool participants compared to their Ballarat counterparts across all aspects rated – particularly at the ‘strongly agree’ level. In particular there was lower agreement in Warrnambool that ‘I have the confidence that the outcomes of the forum will be considered’ and ‘there was enough time to discuss the topic at hand’ (as shown in Figure 8 below).

Figure 8: Powercor Forum Agreement Statements - Warrnambool



Please read the statements below about the forum and select the response with which you most agree, from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree

Base: Powercor Warrnambool forum attendees (n=29)

Overall, within the end of session questionnaires participants expressed a positive opinion of Powercor and were glad to have contributed to their energy future and to have also learned more about their energy distributor. Many participants felt they wanted to know more in the future.

"I had a great group to work with and I enjoyed the presentation" (PC customer - Ballarat)

"The information was open and uninhibited" (PC customer - Ballarat)

"It's very interesting to know what the future holds" (PC customer - Ballarat)

"I learnt more info about my power & what Powercor does for me" (PC customer – Warrnambool)

"Discussed relevant topics facilitated by a variety of people from various community demographics" (PC Customer - Warrnambool)

"Positive problem-solving mindset. Felt I was listened to" (PC customer - Warrnambool)

5.0 United Energy - findings

5.1 Opening Question and Answer Session

At the beginning of each forum, participants were introduced to the evening by the lead facilitator and then an executive from United Energy provided a brief overview of the Draft Proposal. United Energy recapped on its role and the reasons for the regulatory submission then introduced what they had heard from customers with regard to energy delivery and what United Energy's response to those needs will be.

Highlights of the Draft Proposal were also communicated on large display boards and participants were encouraged, following the introductory presentations, to walk around and view the boards. On reading the overview display boards, participants were directed to write down any questions they had on stick post-it notes.

These questions were collected and due to limited time, only a few were selected to be asked of a panel. The panel was at the front of the room and consisted of subject matter experts from United Energy.

The questions that were collected are listed below, with those included in the Q&A session highlighted in red. United Energy published the answers to all the questions asked at the forum on its Talking Electricity website.

Table 12: Questions posed at the forum

Questions Sorted into Themes
Affordable Network
Savings are great but I would prefer to pay more for safety and supply.
Reduce your supply prices. Being able to select supplier would make it very competitive.
Which price structure would ultimately work to be cheaper for the customer? Is there a catch?
How likely are you to provide the 'new' price options? Are retailers then obliged to offer these to customers?
\$44 reduction per quarter or year? From 2021? Or just in 2021?
UE is offering a saving of \$44 for residents and \$117 for SMEs. What will stop the retailers taking the savings?
Cost of batteries subsidies?
What will the peak and off peak periods be?
Will there be a choice between the three pricing options?
Clear education and information regarding billing and off peak savings and efficient energy use
Peak usage charges - please explain.
Explain price structure proposed
Can peak and non-peak times be made more obvious and available e.g. TV adverts? Worried these things

will be introduced and no one will know about them or understand
I don't really understand the proposed price structures - can you explain further? Thanks
Do peak times change i.e. school holidays?
UE is 27% of the bill only. How do we ensure pricing of the other 73% of the bill is controlled?
You are reducing costs, does that mean that the retailers will just increase costs? How can we stop this?
Rebate to install batteries
Dependable Network
With the increasing demand for electricity, can we meet this beyond this decade and maintain ongoing cost reductions?
How will you communicate with your customers in future when there are problems?
Why did we have power failure on hot days?
Firming the network - Given the increase in distributed energy generation how does UE propose to firm up the network?
"2040 batteries installed" - are these UE batteries to strengthen the grid?
There were blackouts during peak demand 2-3 weeks ago on a hot day. Why? Is the infrastructure in place insufficient for peak demand?
I saw in the news a worker was electrocuted in the last 2 weeks. Power failure on hot days does not help safety.
With prioritising safety, will this see more bundled insulated cables and undergrounding?
Flexible Network
How will renewables impact my bill?
What does timely and efficient connections mean? One-stop online ordering?
What extra demand does UE see with the uptake of electric vehicles?
Can you say more about how you envisage smart meters being used?
"Curtailment" Will UE guarantee all distributed energy generation can be exported to the grid?
"Microgrids" - as local generation and storage is on the rise - is there an opportunity to re-distribute energy locally?
What % of customers will have solar by the end of 2025? How many of them do you expect to have batteries?
Battery storage - cost of purchase and installing?
If people are concerned about the environment, how come they whinge about their usage? Whose responsibility is it to educate to switch off?
Not everybody qualifies for the rebate. Why?
What are savings for shifting use?
How is it planned to offer rebates for reduced demand? Will battery storage play into this?
How will eConnect be organised to enable connection?
Will eConnect replace your current website (that lets you look at usage, see the effects of tariff changes)?
Electric cars - how much do they cost to run compared to petrol cars?
Using electricity for motor vehicles - will that overload the network as there is more and more uptake over the next 10-20 years?
Will there be any government legislation on electric vehicles like overseas?
Do you think the electric car is the future? How will you support it?
How can we access the real time data? App? Computer?
Who provides power usage data? Solar installation inspections?
How do you access real time data?

Customers selling electricity - will they be able to sell the full amount or be penalised or receive a fee for selling?
A third plan to install solar panels 2021-2025. What will the total solar % of households and SMEs be? What will be the take up of batteries?
When are the peak demand periods? Are they covered by rooftop solar systems or will it be necessary to have home batteries to deal with peak demand?
Will UE actively promote the use of solar in residential properties?
Other
Is anything being done to reduce fossil fuel?
Clean coal - there is no mention of this and its important.
What percentage of the market is the 854/922 customers surveyed?
What is the smart technology you propose to use by the customer, what about batteries?

A question and answer session was not included in the groups.

5.2 Theme 1 – Safe and Dependable Network

Participants were given an information sheet (see Appendix 2G for the forum sheets and Appendix 6J for the group sheets) with the current findings, what United Energy had planned as a result of these findings, and some more details on these plans regarding the safe and dependable network. Facilitators went through the information sheets with participants and also at the forums had an 'expert' seated at each table with whom participants could clarify any questions or uncertainty.

Participants were also given a feedback sheet and asked to provide their level of support for this proposals within this theme and the reasons for their support. The table below indicates that there was a high level of support, with all participants at the forums (n=36) 'supporting' the proposals within a safe and dependable network (29 strongly; 4 slightly). All the CALD and vulnerable participants also supported the proposals (11 strongly; 2 slightly). The written reasons given for their support are appended (see Appendix 4D).

Table 13: Feedback responses from United Energy's Draft Proposal Forum on 'safe and dependable network'

Safe and Dependable	Forum N=36 #	CALD & vulnerable N=13 #
Support strongly	28	11
Support slightly	7	2
Don't really support	1	-
Do not support at all	-	-
Don't know	-	-

Q1. Please rate your level of support for the proposals for each theme in the Draft Proposal - safe and dependable network

Base: Respondents attending United Energy's Draft Proposal Forum (n=36) and CALD/ vulnerable groups (n=13)

Overall, at the forum there was a general sense of support for the initiatives put forward for the Draft Proposal. Participants mentioned that they seemed to have never or rarely experienced an outage and they were generally happy with communication from United Energy during these incidents. This was also true of the CALD and vulnerable group participants.

Participants particularly mentioned their support for initiatives under the safe environment for customers and workers topic. These included both the research partnerships with Universities to deliver world-class safety initiatives, as well as utilising data analytics from Smart Meters to create a safer and more effective network.

"Seeing that they have all of those links to well know Universities shows me that they're serious about doing the right thing" (United Energy vulnerable customer)

There was also a strong show of support for initiatives regarding bushfire risk mitigation. This aspect came through particularly prominently within the CALD and vulnerable groups.

"It's good to see there is a lot of work being done around bushfires at the moment especially in this territory" (United Energy customer)

"That's what they should be doing. I find this very reassuring. It can save lives" (United Energy CALD customer)

However, there was a call for more to be done. Some participants were unhappy that REFCL implementation had been stopped at only 60% coverage, and were concerned about the remaining 40% of the network that was left 'at risk'. There was a call for more information about why this was not being implemented and where these particular areas were.

The REFCLs help with the bushfires but we are only covering 60% of the risk area.”
(SME/Opinion Leader)

While most participants felt that the theme was well covered there were a few areas where further information was requested. These included:

- *More information on initiatives in traffic ‘black spot’ areas:* it was noted that while it was not cost effective to underground power lines in traffic ‘black spot’ areas, some participants wanted more information on what initiatives were currently in place and potential alternatives for peace of mind; and
- *More information on data collection and inspections:* participants wanted to know how data collection and inspection of assets was going to work and the impact on them. Some participants were particularly interested in understanding the laws regarding their personal property and how ‘at risk’ assets would be managed if United Energy did not have the jurisdiction to fix or replace these assets.

“What happens if the problem is on your private line - how are they going to enforce you to fix it... especially if this is a bushfire risk” (United Energy customer)

Some of the CALD and vulnerable group participants also wanted more explanation regarding some of the terms used (e.g. data analytics, double-stacked poles, and uncovered high voltage switches). Even so, they were impressed with the initiatives outlined, and were supportive in overall terms.

“I really don’t know what double-stacked poles are, but I assume they’re an issue, so it’s good that they’re doing something about it” (United Energy vulnerable customer)

5.2.1 Supporting customers in lower reliability areas

There was some disappointment in the forum that United Energy was not planning to improve reliability for those in lower reliability areas, however there was an understanding that it was not cost effective to do so, and that there was usually a myriad of reasons contributing to the lower reliability in these areas.

“It is high cost and would not benefit customers that much so they are not doing it. Looks like they have thought about it. They have weighed up the options.” (SME/Opinion Leader)

As an alternative, participants were specifically asked how United Energy could support those in low reliability areas, rather than providing compensation payments. Commonly the idea of

compensation or incentives for providing their own electricity were mentioned. More specifically it was suggested that the residents in lower reliability areas have some kind of access to back up electricity supplies that could be in some way compensated by the government or United Energy. Ideas included home or community battery supplies powered by solar.

5.3 Theme 2 – Flexible Network

Participants were given an information sheet (see Appendix 2H for forum sheet and Appendix 6K for group sheet) with the current findings, what United Energy had planned as a result of these findings, and some more details on these plans regarding the flexible network. Facilitators went through the information sheets with participants and at the forum also had an ‘expert’ seated at each table with whom participants could clarify any questions or uncertainty.

Respondents were also given a feedback sheet and asked to provide their level of support for the proposals within this theme of flexible network and the reasons for their support. The results presented in the table below indicate that there was a very high level of support at the forum, with 35 out of the 36 participants ‘supporting’ the proposals within a flexible network (26 strongly supported and 9 slightly supported the proposal). This was also evident in the CALD and vulnerable groups with 12 out of 13 supporting the proposals. The written reasons given for their support are appended (see Appendix 4D).

Table 14: Feedback responses from United Energy’s Draft Proposal Forum on ‘flexible network that supports your choices’

Flexible network	Forum N=36 #	CALD & vulnerable N=13 #
Support strongly	26	8
Support slightly	9	4
Don’t really support	1	-
Do not support at all	-	-
Don’t know	-	1

Q3. Please rate your level of support for the proposals for each theme in the Draft Proposal - flexible network that supports your choices
Base: Respondents attending United Energy’s Draft Proposal Forum (n=36) and CALD/ vulnerable groups (n=13)

As mentioned, overall in the forum and groups there was a very high level of support for the initiatives put forward for the Draft Proposal in the flexible network section. Several participants expressed satisfaction with the overall process – indicating that they could recall most of the

aspects on the sheets from previous forums and it appeared as though United Energy had listened to their feedback, and had incorporated this into the Draft Proposal.

“They’ve covered most things we’ve discussed over the various forums” (United Energy customer)

“It looks good – good work has been done” (United Energy customer)

In particular, there were positive reactions to the idea of a ‘one-stop-shop’ online portal and the idea of helping customers use solar and batteries through flexible grid technology. Other aspects such as increased spending on various sub-stations was also well received however most assumed and trusted United Energy that the amount of money allocated to the project was sufficient especially taking into consideration the growing population and electricity demand.

“Will this amount cover the rapid development planned for this area? With an increasing population we must keep up with demand so it’s good to increase spending” (United Energy customer)

“Yes, I’m happy with the extra money to go into substations” (United Energy customer)

The eConnect proposal was also considered an improvement to customer service and most saw it as a move in the right direction. There were questions such as whether or not it could be accessed via the portal and whether or not it would have an app. Some also expressed concerns regarding the extent to which older customers who were not comfortable using the internet could access eConnect and gain improved communication.

“eConnect is good – it’s more immediate and you won’t have to make a phone call so it’s be quicker and easier” (United Energy customer)

“eConnect is a great idea. I’ve done that – rang and complained about my connection, so it’ll reduce complaints” (United Energy customer)

“It cuts down on multiple agencies involved (eConnect)” (United Energy customer)

“Some older people won’t be used to using the internet so won’t use eConnect” (SME/ Opinion Leader)

In terms of the portal, participants indicated that they liked the idea of knowing more about their own electricity usage, and suggested that they (and potentially others) were likely to make more informed decisions with access to their usage data. Many could see the connection between being better informed about energy usage and potentially saving money by changing their behaviours.

They also liked the idea of bringing different information and feedback portals together - suggesting that this would simplify things from the customer perspective.

“More info can help save money – and change behaviour” (United Energy customer)

The vulnerable and CALD group participants were also very interested in this, as they felt that it provided them with options and the ability to make their own choices - that could ultimately save them money. Similarly, the concept of demand management (once explained in full) that involved incentives for customers was also well received, as it was also seen to allow them the opportunity to reduce their bills.

“Information is key to making savings, and it looks like they are going to be providing us with that information. I will certainly make use of it” (United Energy CALD customer)

While the overall concept of the portal was appealing there was also an expectation that it would be user friendly and it would be easy to navigate. There were also expectations that the portal could be accessed via an app on their phone.

“One-stop-shop is good as long as we can make sense of the information – it’s got to be user friendly, and not just graphs and figures” (United Energy customer)

“Is it going to move to an app? My app for the solar tells me minute by minute usage so I can make decisions during the day from work” (United Energy customer)

Participants reacted very favourably to the overall message conveyed that United Energy seemed to be encouraging and supporting greater solar and battery use in the future by making it easier for people who had solar to store power and export to the grid.

“I’m impressed that they’re encouraging solar and batteries” (United Energy customer)

There was also interest in solar and battery use within the CALD and vulnerable groups. However, the vulnerable participants suggested that these initiatives were unlikely to be of direct relevance to them as they were not home owners, and had no control over property upgrades/changes.

“I think it’s the right thing to do, but I can’t see my landlord putting solar in in any time soon” (United Energy vulnerable customer)

There was strong support for flexible grid technology, with many suggesting that it made sense to make use of the latest technology available. There was an expectation that poles and wires would still need to be maintained or replaced to cope with the increased demand, but moving the electricity around to where it is needed was a good way of managing load because it is using the existing network. It was also thought to be a relatively cost effective option.

"I think it's a good idea to me – just moving the electricity to where they need it" (United Energy customer)

"If the technology is there, why not, because it's using the existing system" (United Energy customer)

"Flexible grid will show them where there is a problem – they'll be able to see where the load is and shift it" (SME/ Opinion Leader)

"It opens up lots of options for the future" (SME/Opinion Leader)

"It's a cost effective method of ensuring the network is capable of supplying demand" (United Energy customer)

Some acknowledged that Victoria experiences some very hot days in summer and that air conditioners place a great deal of strain on the network. With an increasing population it was acknowledged that this was only going to get worse in the future, therefore encouraging solar and batteries and using flexible grid technology was good planning by United Energy.

"It's a shame in this day and age we still lose power on hot days. They're (UE) being caught with the amount of air conditioners going in – they're the big users.....it's good they're catering for the increased number of units" (United Energy customer)

Overall there were predominantly positive reactions to the proposals in this section of the Draft Proposal. Participants were appreciative of the opportunity to be involved in the process and they were delighted to see that themes and issues discussed in previous forums had been addressed. Negative comments were rare and mainly related to wanting to see more detail regarding the flexible grid technology in particular, and wanting to see evidence of similar planning and thinking from the retailers.

"It shows they're thinking about the future and planning for it" (United Energy customer)

5.4 Theme 3 – Affordable Network

Participants were given an information sheet (see Appendix 2I for forum sheet and Appendix 6L for group sheet) with the current findings, what United Energy had planned as a result of these findings, and some more details on these plans regarding the Affordable network. Facilitators went through the information sheets with participants and at the forum also had an 'expert' seated at each table with whom participants could clarify any questions or uncertainty.

Respondents were given a feedback sheet and asked to provide their level of support for the proposals within this theme and the reasons for their support. The table below indicates that there

was a high level of support at the forum, with 32 out of the 36 participants 'supporting' the proposals within an affordable network (16 strongly; 16 slightly). Over half of the group participants also supported the proposals (8 out of 13). The written reasons for their support are appended (see Appendix 4D).

Table 15: Feedback responses from United Energy's Draft Proposal Forum on 'affordable network'

Affordable	Forum N=36 #	CALD & vulnerable N=13 #
Support strongly	16	2
Support slightly	16	6
Don't really support	3	2
Do not support at all	-	2
Don't know	-	1

Q5. Please rate your level of support for the proposals for each theme in the Draft Proposal - affordable network
Base: Respondents attending United Energy's Draft Proposal Forum (n=36) and CALD/ vulnerable groups (n=13)

5.4.1 Maintaining affordability by reducing prices

Initial reactions at the forum and groups were generally positive, with most participants agreeing that affordability was a key concern and that networks needed to find ways of reducing their costs or ensuring that electricity prices do not keep increasing in the future.

In that regard, reaction to the \$44 reduction in residential network charges and \$117 in business charges in 2021 was regarded positively, however, there were a few comments and concerns. The first concern lay in the distrust of retailers passing on the savings to customers. Many argued that retailers would simply absorb the savings and still charge as they like.

"Retailers need to get involved. They should be targeted" (United Energy customer)

"Retailers may not pass on the costs though, which makes it difficult to assess"
(SME/Opinion Leader)

Others felt that a one off reduction of \$44 was insignificant and so were calling for more substantial savings.

"\$44 is not going to make a big difference to me. It is not a lot of money to save. We need more as it is a big expense" (United Energy customer)

The vulnerable and CALD participants were less likely to indicate that the monetary amount was unremarkable. Most indicated that a \$44 reduction was quite reasonable. They seemed happy that prices weren't continuing to increase, but as was suggested by the forum participants, they were unsure that the retailer would pass this saving on to them.

"I'm impressed that they're talking about real savings" (United Energy vulnerable customer)

"Are they able to make sure we see that saving? Or is it totally up to the retailer?" (United Energy CALD customer)

Regardless of the amount of saving involved, there was consensus that the entire reduction should be introduced in the first year as opposed to spreading the savings over the whole period.

The specific detail of what is planned to keep costs under control was seen to be prudent business conduct, particularly with regard to continuing to negotiate contract prices and engaging in competitive processes for large jobs.

There were some comments however, regarding the plan to maintain cost efficiencies and only invest when needed. While participants understood that building extra capacity was a costly exercise, there was some concern that this was a reactionary approach. Most suggested that they would like to see United Energy planning for the future and if that included building capacity then it should occur before it is needed.

Similarly, claiming that United Energy would continue to operate at capacity seemed to indicate that more preparation for the future was needed, if there were high utilisation rates currently.

5.4.2 Setting simple and fair price structures

Participants tended to support the concept of different tariff options as most agreed that consumers needed choice to be able to choose the plan that best suited them. However they also agreed that the options needed to be simple and easy to understand.

"Different price structures are catering to everyone's needs. So it is good" (United Energy customer)

"The more options the better, then we can pick one that suits our lifestyle" (United Energy customer)

The vulnerable and CALD group participants were also generally open to the idea of having different price structures, and to the idea of shifting usage into non-peak periods to reduce their bills. However, the CALD participants were likely to have larger households, and expressed a little

more concern in this regard – suggesting that they not be able to shift usage, and as a result could be disadvantaged by a new price structure.

“Again, they’re giving us options, and it’s up to us to make the most out of those options”
(United Energy vulnerable customer)

“I can see that you will be better off if you can change when you use the bulk of your electricity, but I can’t change when the kids come home and turn things on” (United Energy CALD customer)

Many residents recognised that pricing structures could be complicated and whilst providing options was well liked, there was a feeling amongst some that United Energy would have to help some people choose the tariff that best suited their energy needs. Many suggested perhaps having a calculator on the United Energy website that allowed you to input your current details and usage after which it would calculate which option would be best for you.

“Customers should be able to choose what package they should be on” (United Energy customer)

“UE should help because there are a lot of people who won’t get it” (United Energy customer)

“It would be good if UE recommended what price structure would be best for you. But people will still need to understand it” (United Energy customer)

“They should have a questionnaire so they can recommend what package is best” (United Energy customer)

With regard to the options presented, there were mixed reactions and a varied level of understanding about how they worked and what they would mean for the individual. The status quo or flat rate was well understood and although most participants recognised that this was the tariff they were currently on, a few indicated that thought they were on a time of usage package.

“I feel I’d rather have a flat rate – I feel that it is confusing” (United Energy customer)

Whilst a flat rate was easy to understand, participants tended to agree that it did not encourage people to change their usage behaviour. There were however, one or two participants who were concerned about the lower socio-economic customers who perhaps not change their behaviour and would be disadvantaged by a different type of tariff.

As has already been indicated, the vulnerable group participants were interested in the ability to reduce their bills, and thought that they could shift behaviour to take advantage of a new price

structure. However, some of the CALD group participants with larger households were not sure that they would be able to manage this as easily.

Of the other options presented, time of use was the easiest for customers to understand and the one that seemed to be the most popular. Some of the key questions were around the times for peak and off peak, with most guessing that the peak would be around dinner time (say 5-9pm). Others queried whether the peak would change if everyone started turning on washing machines and dishwashers after 10pm, and would United Energy then change the peak times around to suit.

“What is the off peak period proposed?” (United Energy customer)

Despite these comments, some participants felt that changing their behaviour to take advantage of a time of use tariff would be easy, whilst others indicated that they would find it quite difficult, particularly those who worked full time and those with younger school aged children.

Shift workers claimed that it could be easier for them to change depending on their work times, and so did older people and those who were home during the day.

The other two tariff options presented were considered confusing and many participants felt they needed more information to be able to comment on whether they would prefer these options. Demand tariffs were most confusing to participants and were interpreted as unfair in that you could be charged according to a one off spike when the rest of the month your usage could be really low. However, some Opinion Leaders who understood demand tariffs were more positive toward this option and indicated that they would like to see it introduced.

“Don’t like demand. One day a month – your whole bill is based on that. If there are spikes due to abnormal circumstances then you get penalised for that” (SME/Opinion Leader)

“I like demand because people who put the greatest demand on the grid pay the most. It will depend on how you measure demand. That is the key” (SME/Opinion Leader)

The peak usage packages also needed more explanation, however the overall concept of choosing a package that suits was well received and was seen to potentially help to predict bills and avoid bill shock.

When asked if they would prefer to be automatically assigned to a new tariff or opt to choose a new tariff, the majority felt that an opt-in system would be preferable.

“Putting someone on a time of use automatically may suit some people and not others” (United Energy Customer)

It was also suggested that it would be preferable to have different options to choose from, and that if none of them were suitable, flat rate should be the default. Others felt that if there were too many options, people would become confused.

“If it doesn’t suit flat rate should be an option” (United Energy customer)

“I like the idea of being able to choose between options” (United Energy vulnerable customer)

“The more options the less people will understand it” (United Energy customer)

5.5 Final Observations

In the final session of the forum participants were asked to take into account all that they had seen and discussed and to comment on the highlights, key strengths and aspects they would like to see featured more strongly in the Draft Proposal.

There were frequent comments that United Energy had done some good work so far and that what they were proposing was positive. Many mentioned highlights such as the flexible grid, the efforts United Energy had made to connect to the public and the move towards providing more usage information to customers to help them reduce costs.

There were suggestions for more involvement and discussion with retailers, and some mentioned that more help from Government would be good regarding solar incentives or rebates. Other considerations suggested included more work done on the area of affordable pricing for charging electric vehicles in the future and reliability initiatives.

There were some comments that United Energy still need to improve and develop the proposal in the area of pricing, to make it as simple as possible to understand, especially for older people. It was also felt that while a demand tariff is acceptable and probably a fair scenario it needs to be able to deal with exceptions and abnormal circumstances when abnormal patterns of behaviour occur.

“The pricing – it’s absolutely necessary to make it as simple as possible, especially older people. They’ve still got work to be done there – got to really spell it out” (United Energy customer)

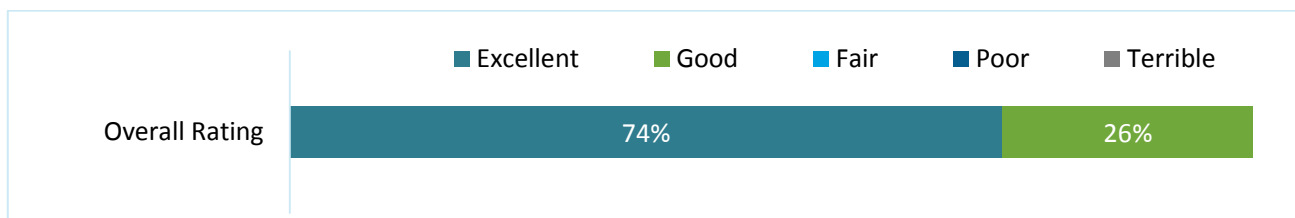
“A demand tariff is ok but it becomes quite difficult when people are not doing what they normally do. Those who make most use of the grid should be charged most – that would be most fair” (United Energy Customer)

Regarding the flexible grid technology there were some who expressed a concern that the move to a flexible grid may not be fast enough.

5.6 Forum Participant Evaluation Results

At the end of the forum, participants were given an evaluation sheet which enabled them to give feedback on the engagement session. Overall, the United Energy forum was rated highly (see Figure 10) with almost three quarters (74%) of participants rating the forum as 'excellent'.

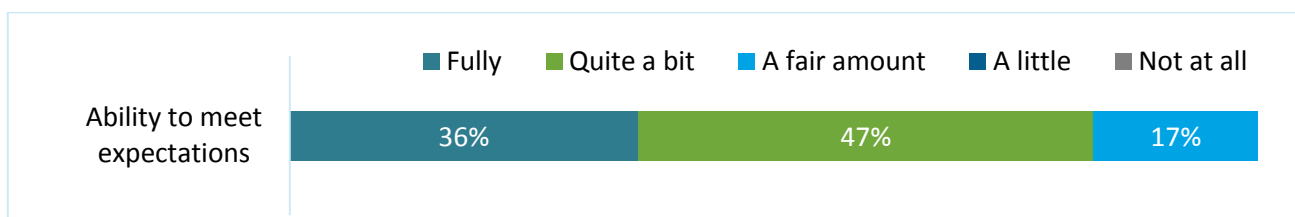
Figure 9: Overall rating of United Energy Forum



Overall, how would you rate the forum?
Base: United Energy (n=36)

The majority of participants also felt that the forum met their expectations 'fully' (36%) or 'quite a bit' (47%).

Figure 10: Expectations of the United Energy Forum



How much did the forum live up to your expectations?
Base: United Energy (n=36)

Participants were also asked to indicate their level of agreement with a number of statements regarding the forum outcomes, the running of the forum and their overall participation. Figure 12 shows that all participants (100%) felt they were able to 'express their views in a supported way', and that the vast majority 'felt heard and had a voice in the discussion' (97%). Participants also felt confident that the outcomes from the forum would be considered (94% indicating 'strongly agree' or 'agree').

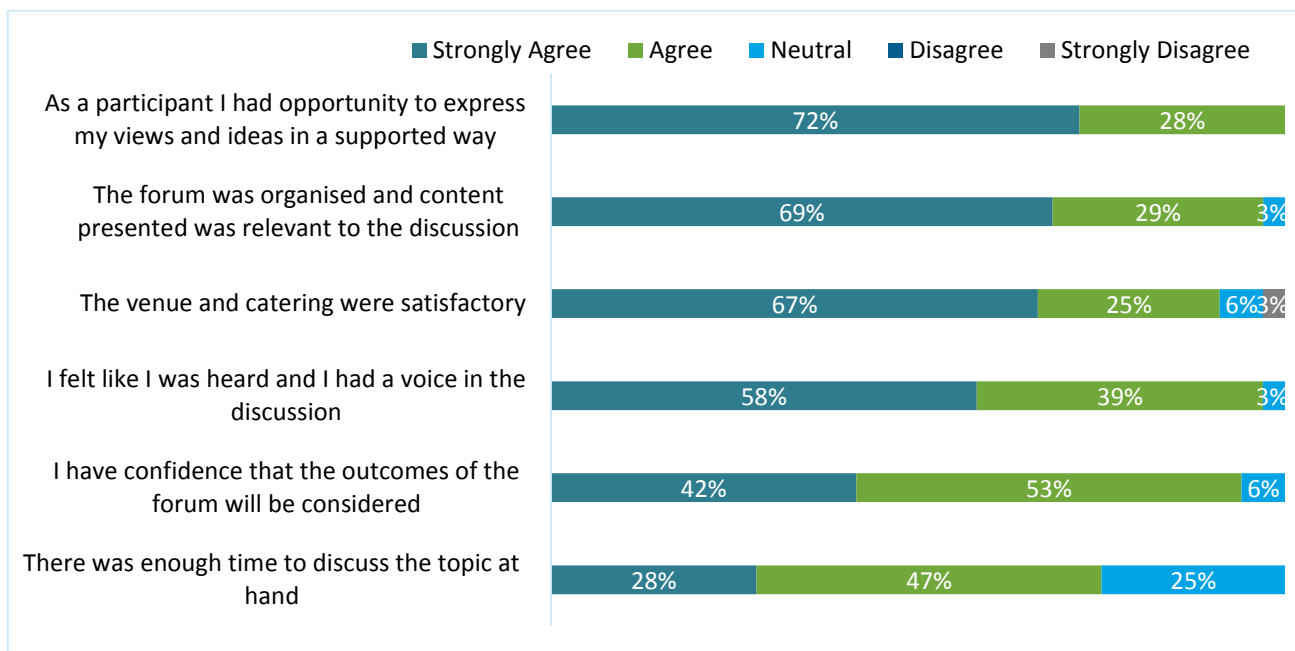
Free response comments were also generally very positive. Participants frequently commented that the forum was well structured, informative and that they had learnt a great deal.

“Finding out about previous results from the forums & learning” (United Energy customer)

“The discussion was informative and interesting” (United Energy customer)

“You’re doing a great job!” (United Energy customer)

Figure 11: United Energy Forum Agreement Statements



Please read the statements below about the forum and select the response with which you most agree, from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree

Base: United Energy (n=36)

Appendix 1: Draft Proposal Forum Agendas

Appendix 1A: CitiPower Agenda

Time	Session details	Responsibility	Materials
5.30-5.40pm	Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welcome attendees to the Draft Proposal Feedback Forum and thank them for coming back. Explain who is in the room and that all have attended before: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents and small and medium businesses Local Council representatives and other local stakeholders Explain that attendees' feedback in the early forums was invaluable and CitiPower has used this to develop its Draft Proposal for the Australian Energy Regulator. Purpose of tonight - specifically CPPCUE will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share what they have heard from customers and stakeholders throughout the engagement; Share what is in the Draft Proposal just released; and Hear your feedback on the Draft Proposal and any further suggestions. Structure of the session is a bit different this time: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> After the overview of the Proposal we will ask you to walk around and view the display boards, ask key questions about the Proposal in a Q&A and then engage in table discussions to provide feedback. There will also be a whole of room feedback session. Each of the three residential tables will look at one 'theme' so we will ask that you rotate tables as a group after each discussion. Brief outline of the session agenda Guidelines recap Housekeeping (mobiles off, toilets, fire evacuation) 	WR Lead Facilitator	PP Slides
5.40-5.45pm	Presentation 1: Overview of Proposal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brief recap on who CPPCUE are/what we do, reason for the regulatory submission and our release of a Draft Proposal Introduction to the Draft Proposal What we've heard from customers and what we will deliver The key themes, top line messages and propositions, and related actions/projects, how you can help to shape the final Proposal. 	Renate Vogt	PP Slides

5.45-6.05pm	Poster display walk around <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants are invited to walk around the room and look at the display boards which will give an overview of what is in the Draft Proposal. Participants to write any questions they have on post-it notes and hand to table facilitators (post it notes will be provided on tables), who will give to Ian 		Posters on stands Post-its
6.00-6.05pm	Working out questions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ian to collect post-it notes to use in the Q&A session next. Ian and the panel to decide what questions to use. 		
6.05-6.20pm	Q and A session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whole of forum Q and A session on the Draft Proposal. Ian to introduce the panellists and roles that they play at CPPCUE and have taken in shaping the Draft Proposal. <p><i>Renate Vogt is the General Manager of Regulation at CitiPower. Renate is responsible for ensuring CitiPower can deliver services to its customers at affordable prices.</i></p> <p><i>Brent Cleeve is the Head of Regulation at CitiPower. Brent is leading the development of the 2021-2025 regulatory proposal.</i></p> <p><i>Neil Watt is a Senior Engineer at CitiPower and is responsible for ensuring the network is built and managed in the most efficient way.</i></p> <p><i>Jay Stein is a Pricing Manger at CitiPower. Jay is responsible for designing the right tariffs for all customers.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ian to ask key questions from the post-it notes. If questions are limited, one or more panellists may remind the audience of the top line focus or projects and one or two questions might be asked of the audience (these will be pre-decided by the team). Ian to close the Q&A and thank panellists. Explain that the next session is to obtain their feedback on the key themes at tables (now hopefully all questions answered). 	WR Lead Facilitator	

START OF THEME DISCUSSIONS

Each SME/residential table is a 'theme' – so each SME/residential table is discussing a different theme at any one time.

The Opinion Leaders table does not move and discusses the themes sequentially.

Table 1: Safe and dependable network

Table 2: Flexible network that supports your choices

Table 3: Affordable network

Table 4: Opinion Leaders (all three themes). This agenda relates to Table 4.

6.20-6.25pm	<p>Information on Theme 1 – Safe and dependable network</p> <p>Give out information sheets (there are 3 for this theme)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitators to go through the information and ensure everyone understands what is being conveyed. If any questions then facilitator to call over a roving CPPCUE representative to answer. 	WR Table Facilitators	3 info sheets: Safe and Dependable Network
6.25-6.40pm	<p>Table discussion on Theme 1 - Safe and dependable network</p> <p><i>Table facilitator to give out participant feedback sheet and ask participants to fill in their level of support for this theme (for tables 1-3 they will take this with them to the next table).</i></p> <p>Overall, do you support the proposals put forward by CitiPower for this theme? Ask for a show of hands for support.</p> <p>What do you like most? Why?</p> <p>Are there any specific proposals you do not support? Why?</p> <p>Specifically, in your view are there different or better ways to support customers with low reliability, rather than providing compensation payments?</p> <p><i>Ask a table spokesperson to jot down a brief summary of key points on the group feedback sheet to summarise the table's views on this theme. They should write down the tally for support from the sheets from the show of hands earlier. They will use this sheet to give feedback to the room at the end on all three themes. (For tables 1-3 they will take this sheet to the next table).</i></p> <p>If time permits: Is there anything that you'd like to see or know more about on this theme?</p>	WR Table Facilitators	Participant feedback sheet Group feedback sheet for spokesperson
6.40-7.05pm	DINNER AND DESSERT BREAK		

RESIDENTIAL AND SMES TO ROTATE TABLES – WR LEAD FACILITATOR

<p>Ask Table 1 to go to Table 2 Ask Table 2 to go to Table 3 Ask Table 3 to go to Table 1</p> <p>Table 4 remains where they are</p>			
7.05-7.10pm	<p>Information on Theme 2 – Flexible network</p> <p>Give out information sheets (there are 3 for this theme)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitators to go through the information and ensure everyone understands what is being conveyed. If any questions then facilitator to call over a roving CPPCUE representative to answer. 	WR Table Facilitators	3 info sheets: Flexible network
7.10-7.25pm	<p>Table discussion on Theme 2 – Flexible network</p> <p><i>Table facilitator to ask participants to fill in their level of support for this theme on the participant feedback sheet.</i></p> <p>Overall, do you support the proposals put forward by CitiPower for this theme? Ask for a show of hands for support. What do you like most? Why? Are there any specific proposals you do not support? Why? Specifically, what are your views on the new data services? How important are these to you? What other information about your electricity use or our network can we provide to support your energy choices?</p> <p><i>Ask the table spokesperson to jot down a brief summary of key points on the group feedback sheet to summarise the table's views on this theme, including tally of support.</i></p> <p>If time permits: Is there anything that you'd like to see or know more about on this theme?</p>	WR Table Facilitators	<p>Participant feedback sheet</p> <p>Group feedback sheet for spokesperson</p>
<p>RESIDENTIAL AND SMES TO ROTATE TABLES – WR LEAD FACILITATOR</p> <p>Ask Table 1 to go to Table 2 Ask Table 2 to go to Table 3 Ask Table 3 to go to Table 1</p> <p>Table 4 remains where they are</p>			
7.25-7.30pm	<p>Information on Theme 3 – Affordable network</p> <p>Give out information sheets (there are 2 for this theme)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitators to go through the information and ensure everyone understands what is being conveyed. If any questions then facilitator to call over a roving 	WR Table Facilitators	2 info sheets – affordable network

	CPPCUE representative to answer.		
7.30-7.45pm	<p>Table discussion on Theme 3 – Affordable network</p> <p><i>Table facilitator to ask participants to fill in their level of support for this theme on the participant feedback sheet.</i></p> <p>Overall, do you support the proposals put forward by CitiPower for this theme? Ask for a show of hands for support.</p> <p>What do you like most? Why?</p> <p>Are there any specific proposals you do not support? Why?</p> <p>Has CITIPOWER struck the right balance between energy flexibility, safety, dependability and affordability? If you think it isn't the right balance what do you want to see more of?</p> <p>In your view, which one of the pricing structures best balances affordability, fairness and simplicity?</p> <p>Should all customers be assigned to a new pricing structure by default (unless they 'opt out') or should new pricing structures just be an 'opt in'?</p> <p>Would you be willing to change the way or time you use electricity every day if you could receive a saving from doing so?</p> <p><i>Ask the table spokesperson to jot down a brief summary of key points on the group feedback sheet to summarise the table's views on this theme, including tally of support.</i></p> <p>If time permits: Is there anything that you'd like to see or know more about on this theme?</p>	WR Table Facilitators	Participant feedback sheet Group feedback sheet for spokesperson
7.45-7.50pm	<p>Sharing session (all tables)</p> <p>Table spokespersons asked to stand and give a brief summary of the views of their table on the three themes (1-2 mins each table).</p>	WR Lead Facilitator	
7.50-7.55pm	<p>Final observations (all tables)</p> <p>Taking into account all that you have seen and discussed today, what are the highlights or key strengths of the Draft Proposal in your view?</p> <p>What aspects, if any, would you like to see featured more strongly or considered further?</p>	WR Table Facilitators	
7.55-8.00pm	<p>Summing up, thank you</p> <p>Renate (or Brent) to thank attendees and acknowledge the value of discussions and feedback provided.</p> <p>Encourage attendees to visit the Talking Electricity page to read the fuller version of the Draft Proposal and</p>	Renate Vogt	

	<p>provide further input. Mention the videos to come, the online quiz and related incentives to get involved. Outline the engagement and consultation to occur during 2019 and further avenues for attendees to inform the preparation of the network's Final Proposal to the AER.</p> <p>Invite attendees to register their interest in attending future engagement events.</p>		
8.00pm	<p>CLOSE</p> <p><i>Woolcott Research Lead Facilitator</i> – thanks and reminder to fill in end of session questionnaire on tables</p>	WR All	End of Session Questionnaire

Appendix 1B: Powercor agenda (Ballarat)

Time	Session details	Responsibility	Materials
5.30-5.40pm	Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welcome attendees to the Draft Proposal Feedback Forum and thank them for coming back. Explain who is in the room and that all have attended before: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents and small and medium businesses Local Council representatives and other local stakeholders Explain that attendees' feedback in the early forums was invaluable and Powercor have used this to develop its Draft Proposal for the Australian Energy Regulator. Purpose of tonight - specifically CPPCUE will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share what they have heard from customers and stakeholders throughout the engagement; Share what is in the Draft Proposal just released; and Hear your feedback on the Draft Proposal and any further suggestions. Structure of the session is a bit different this time: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> After the overview of the Proposal we will ask you to walk around and view the display boards, ask key questions about the Proposal in a Q&A and then engage in table discussions to provide feedback. There will also be a whole of room feedback session. Each of the three residential tables will look at one 'theme' so we will ask that you rotate tables as a group after each discussion. Brief outline of the session agenda Guidelines recap Housekeeping (mobiles off, toilets, fire evacuation) 	WR Lead Facilitator	PP Slides
5.40-5.45pm	Presentation 1: Overview of Proposal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brief recap on who CPPCUE are/what we do, reason for the regulatory submission and our release of a Draft Proposal Introduction to the Draft Proposal What we've heard from customers and what we will deliver The key themes, top line messages and propositions, and related actions/projects, how you can help to shape the final Proposal. 	Renate Vogt	PP Slides
5.45-6.05pm	Poster display walk around <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants are invited to walk around the room and look at the display boards which will give an overview of 		Posters on stands

	<p>what is in the Draft Proposal.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants to write any questions they have on post-it notes and hand to table facilitators, who will give to Ian. 		Post-its
6.00-6.05pm	<p>Working out questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ian to collect post-it notes to use in the Q&A session next. Ian and the panel to decide what questions to use. 		
6.05-6.20pm	<p>Q and A session</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whole of forum Q and A session on the Draft Proposal. Ian to introduce the panellists and roles that they play at CPPCUE and have taken in shaping the Draft Proposal. <p><i>Renate Vogt is the General Manager of Regulation at CitiPower. Renate is responsible for ensuring CitiPower can deliver services to its customers at affordable prices.</i></p> <p><i>Brent Cleeve is the Head of Regulation at CitiPower. Brent is leading the development of the 2021-2025 regulatory proposal.</i></p> <p><i>Neil Watt is a Senior Engineer at CitiPower and is responsible for ensuring the network is built and managed in the most efficient way.</i></p> <p><i>Mark De Villiers is a Pricing Manager at CitiPower. Mark is responsible for designing the right tariffs for all customers.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ian to ask key questions from the post-it notes. If questions are limited, one or more panellists may remind the audience of the top line focus or projects and one or two questions might be asked of the audience (these will be pre-decided by the team). Ian to close the Q&A and thank panellists. Explain that the next session is to obtain their feedback on the key themes at tables (now hopefully all questions answered). 	WR Lead Facilitator	
<p>START OF THEME DISCUSSIONS</p> <p>Each SME/residential table is a 'theme' – so each SME/residential table is discussing a different theme at any one time.</p> <p>The Opinion Leaders table does not move and discusses the themes sequentially.</p> <p>Table 1: Safe and dependable network</p> <p>Table 2: Flexible network that supports your choices</p> <p>Table 3: Affordable network</p> <p>Table 4: Opinion Leaders (all three themes). This agenda relates to Table 4.</p>			

6.20-6.25pm	<p>Information on Theme 1 – Safe and dependable network</p> <p>Give out information sheets (there are 3 for this theme)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitators to go through the information and ensure everyone understands what is being conveyed. If any questions then facilitator to call over a roving CPPCUE representative to answer. 	WR Table Facilitators	3 info sheets: Safe and Dependable Network
6.25-6.40pm	<p>Table discussion on Theme 1 - Safe and dependable network</p> <p><i>Table facilitator to give out participant feedback sheet and ask participants to fill in their level of support for this theme (for tables 1-3 they will take this with them to the next table).</i></p> <p>Overall, do you support the proposals put forward by POWERCOR for this theme? Ask for a show of hands for support. What do you like most? Why? Are there any specific proposals you do not support? Why? Specifically, in your view are there different or better ways to support customers with low reliability, rather than providing compensation payments?</p> <p><i>Ask a table spokesperson to jot down a brief summary of key points on the group feedback sheet to summarise the table's views on this theme. They should write down the tally for support from the sheets from the show of hands earlier. They will use this sheet to give feedback to the room at the end on all three themes. (For tables 1-3 they will take this sheet to the next table).</i></p> <p>If time permits: Is there anything that you'd like to see or know more about on this theme?</p>	WR Table Facilitators	<p>Participant feedback sheet</p> <p>Group feedback sheet for spokesperson</p>
6.40-7.05pm	DINNER AND DESSERT BREAK		
<p>RESIDENTIAL AND SMES TO ROTATE TABLES – WR LEAD FACILITATOR</p> <p>Ask Table 1 to go to Table 2 Ask Table 2 to go to Table 3 Ask Table 3 to go to Table 1</p> <p>Table 4 remains where they are</p>			
7.05-7.10pm	<p>Information on Theme 2 – Flexible network</p> <p>Give out information sheets (there are 3 for this theme)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitators to go through the information and ensure everyone understands what is being conveyed. 	WR Table Facilitators	3 info sheets: Flexible network

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If any questions then facilitator to call over a roving CPPCUE representative to answer. 		
7.10-7.25pm	<p>Table discussion on Theme 2 – Flexible network</p> <p><i>Table facilitator to ask participants to fill in their level of support for this theme on the participant feedback sheet.</i></p> <p>Overall, do you support the proposals put forward by POWERCOR for this theme? Ask for a show of hands for support.</p> <p>What do you like most? Why?</p> <p>Are there any specific proposals you do not support? Why?</p> <p>Specifically, what are your views on flexible grid investment and the new data services? How important are these?</p> <p>Are there any other ways that Powercor can support your energy choices?</p> <p>Do you support the inclusion of broader economic impacts – such as regional employment and growth – in cost-benefit analysis?</p> <p><i>Ask the table spokesperson to jot down a brief summary of key points on the group feedback sheet to summarise the table's views on this theme, including tally of support.</i></p> <p>If time permits: Is there anything that you'd like to see or know more about on this theme?</p>	WR Table Facilitators	<p>Participant feedback sheet</p> <p>Group feedback sheet for spokesperson</p>
<p>RESIDENTIAL AND SMES TO ROTATE TABLES – WR LEAD FACILITATOR</p> <p>Ask Table 1 to go to Table 2 Ask Table 2 to go to Table 3 Ask Table 3 to go to Table 1</p> <p>Table 4 remains where they are</p>			
7.25-7.30pm	<p>Information on Theme 3 – Affordable network</p> <p>Give out information sheets (there are 2 for this theme)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitators to go through the information and ensure everyone understands what is being conveyed. If any questions then facilitator to call over a roving CPPCUE representative to answer. 	WR Table Facilitators	2 info sheets – affordable network
7.30-7.45pm	<p>Table discussion on Theme 3 – Affordable network</p> <p><i>Table facilitator to ask participants to fill in their level of support for this theme on the participant feedback sheet.</i></p> <p>Overall, do you support the proposals put forward by</p>	WR Table Facilitators	Participant feedback sheet

	<p>POWERCOR for this theme? Ask for a show of hands for support. What do you like most? Why? Are there any specific proposals you do not support? Why? Has POWERCOR struck the right balance between energy flexibility, safety, dependability and affordability? If you think it isn't the right balance what do you want to see more of? In your view, which one of the pricing structures best balances affordability, fairness and simplicity? Should all customers be assigned to a new pricing structure by default (unless they 'opt out') or should new pricing structures just be an 'opt in'? Would you be willing to change the way or time you use electricity every day if you could receive a saving from doing so?</p> <p><i>Ask the table spokesperson to jot down a brief summary of key points on the group feedback sheet to summarise the table's views on this theme, including tally of support.</i></p> <p>If time permits: Is there anything that you'd like to see or know more about on this theme?</p>		Group feedback sheet for spokesperson
7.45-7.50pm	<p>Sharing session (all tables) Table spokespeople asked to stand and give a brief summary of the views of their table on the three themes (1-2 mins each table).</p>	WR Lead Facilitator	
7.50-7.55pm	<p>Final observations (all tables) Taking into account all that you have seen and discussed today, what are the highlights or key strengths of the Draft Proposal in your view? What aspects, if any, would you like to see featured more strongly or considered further?</p>	WR Table Facilitators	
7.55-8.00pm	<p>Summing up, thank you Renate (or Brent) to thank attendees and acknowledge the value of discussions and feedback provided. Encourage attendees to visit the Talking Electricity page to read the fuller version of the Draft Proposal and provide further input. Mention the videos to come, the online quiz and related incentives to get involved. Outline the engagement and consultation to occur during 2019 and further avenues for attendees to inform the preparation of the network's Final Proposal to the AER.</p>	Renate Vogt	

	Invite attendees to register their interest in attending future engagement events.		
8.00pm	CLOSE <i>Woolcott Research Lead Facilitator</i> – thanks and reminder to fill in end of session questionnaire on tables	WR All	End of Session Questionnaire

Appendix 1C: Powercor agenda (Warrnambool)

Time	Session details
5.30-5.40pm	<p>Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome attendees to the Powercor Draft Proposal Feedback Forum - Thank for coming. • Introduce Woolcott Research – helping Powercor to run its customer engagement program • Explain that Powercor are the ‘poles and wires’ electricity business and that they are a monopoly. As a monopoly, every five years Powercor has to propose to the regulator what it would like to do and how much money it would like to recover from customers. In order to make those plans it would like to hear what you think.... • So Powercor is running an extensive customer engagement program as part of the preparation of the 2021-2025 Regulatory Proposal. • We have completed three phases of engagement since early 2017 and Powercor has now written a Draft Proposal. • The views of residents in Warrnambool and the South-West will be highly valuable in finalising its Proposal. • Purpose of tonight - Powercor will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Share what they have heard from customers throughout the engagement program so far; ○ Share what is in the Draft Proposal just released; and ○ Hear what you think of the Draft Proposal and any further suggestions. ○ Hear what you think about three specific issues that are especially relevant to this region. • Structure of the session: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ After Powercor has presented a summary of the Proposal we will ask you to view the display boards, ask any questions you might have in a Q&A session and then provide feedback in discussions on your tables. ○ There will also be table feedback sessions when we will hear what each table thinks. ○ There will be experts on hand to answer any questions during the discussions too. • Brief outline of the session agenda • Guidelines recap • Housekeeping (mobiles off, toilets, fire evacuation)
5.40-5.50pm	<p>Presentation 1: Introduction to Powercor and overview of Proposal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain who Powercor is/what it does, reason for the regulatory submission and the release of the Draft Proposal as a preface to final submission • Introduction to the Draft Proposal • What we’ve heard from customers so far and what we propose to deliver • The key themes, top line messages and propositions, and related actions/projects, how Warrnambool residents and businesses can help to shape the final Proposal. • Explain that Powercor are also keen to obtain feedback on 3 issues that are particularly relevant to this region:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Upgrade single-wire earth return (SWER) lines to three-phase for dairy farmers ○ Increased pole inspections and replacement ○ Undergrounding or insulating of SWER lines in bushfire construction areas
5.50-6.05pm	<p>Poster display walk around</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants are invited to walk around the room and look at the display boards which will give an overview of what is in the Draft Proposal. • Participants to write any questions they have on post-it notes and hand to table captains (post it notes will be provided on tables). Captains to give to Ian. • Participants to get cups of tea/coffee and introduce themselves on tables if they finish the walk around earlier than the time specified. • Facilitators could get some overarching views on the Proposal if time permits. <p>Working out questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ian to collect post-it notes to use in the Q&A session next. • Ian and the panel to decide what questions to use. Include any questions on the 3 key issues.
6.05-6.20pm	<p>Q and A session</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole of forum Q and A session on the Draft Proposal. • Ian to introduce the panellists and roles that they play at Powercor and have taken in shaping the Draft Proposal. <p><i>Renate Vogt is the General Manager of Regulation at CitiPower. Renate is responsible for ensuring Powercor can deliver services to its customers at affordable prices.</i></p> <p><i>Brent Cleeve is the Head of Regulation at Powercor. Brent is leading the development of the 2021-2025 regulatory proposal.</i></p> <p><i>Neil Watt is a Senior Engineer at Powercor and is responsible for ensuring the network is built and managed in the most efficient way.</i></p> <p><i>Jay Stein is a Pricing Manager at Powercor. Jay is responsible for designing the right tariffs for all customers.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ian to ask key questions from the post-it notes • If questions are limited, one or more panellists may remind the audience of the top line focus or projects and one or two questions might be asked of the audience (these will be pre-decided by the team). • Ian to close the Q&A and thank panellists. • Explain that the remainder of the forum is to obtain their feedback on the key themes at tables (now hopefully with at least some of your questions answered). First theme is safety and PC will give a brief introduction to this theme.
6.20-	Information on dependable network

6.25pm	<p>Give out information sheets (there are 3 for this theme)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitators to go through the information and ensure everyone understands what is being conveyed. If any questions then facilitator to call over a roving CPPCUE representative to answer.
6.25-6.50pm	<p>Table discussion on safe and dependable network</p> <p><i>Table facilitator to give out participant feedback sheet and ask participants to fill in their level of support for this theme.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall, do you support the proposals put forward by Powercor for this theme? Ask for a show of hands for support. What do you like most? Why? Are there any specific proposals you do not support? Why? Specifically, in your view are there different or better ways to support customers with low reliability, rather than providing compensation payments? <p>Facilitator to explore increasing pole inspections in depth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are your thoughts regarding the increasing pole replacements in this area by an additional 5,000 poles during 2021-2025 at the cost of about \$50m, i.e. bringing forward replacements that would be medium priority for replacement (rather than high priority)? <p>Facilitator to explore undergrounding of power lines in bushfire areas by 2025 in depth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are your thoughts on the timeline for undergrounding or covering all lines in bushfire areas? Are you happy to pay a bit more so that PC can bring forward undergrounding of lines (\$7.40 additional per year per customer)? <p><i>Ask a table spokesperson to jot down a brief summary of key points on the group feedback sheet to summarise the table's views on this theme. They should write down the tally for support from the sheets from the show of hands earlier. They will use this sheet to give feedback to the room.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If time permits: Is there anything that you'd like to see or know more about on this theme?
6.50-6.55pm	<p>Sharing session (all tables)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Table spokespeople asked to stand and give a brief summary of the views of their table on the safe and dependable network theme (1-2 mins each table). Renate to acknowledge and respond as needed.

6.55-7.15pm	DINNER BREAK
7.15-7.20pm	<p>Information on flexible network</p> <p>Give out information sheets (there are 3 for this theme)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitators to go through the information and ensure everyone understands what is being conveyed. If any questions then facilitator to call over a roving CPPCUE representative to answer.
7.20-7.45pm	<p>Table discussion on flexible network</p> <p><i>Table facilitator to ask participants to fill in their level of support for this theme on the participant feedback sheet.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall, do you support the proposals put forward by Powercor for this theme? Ask for a show of hands for support. What do you like most? Why? Are there any specific proposals you do not support? Why? Specifically, what are your views on flexible grid investment and the new data services? How important are these? Are there any other ways that Powercor can support your energy choices? Do you support the inclusion of broader economic impacts – such as regional employment and growth – in cost-benefit analysis? <p>Facilitator to explore in depth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What do you think about the specific issue of investing in greater capacity on the network for dairy farmers (providing 3 phase)? What are the main benefits of doing this? i.e. If a cost benefit analysis is undertaken, what are the benefits to dairy farmers that should be included? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Then prompt with: Could it encourage further industry growth and regional employment? Do you see any barriers or issues to address in doing this? Which of the options outlined do you prefer? <p><i>Ask the table spokesperson to jot down a brief summary of key points on the group feedback sheet to summarise the table's views on this theme, including tally of support.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If time permits: Is there anything that you'd like to see or know more about on this theme?
7.45-7.55pm	DESSERT BREAK

7.55-8.00pm	<p>Information on affordable network</p> <p>Give out information sheets (there are 2 for this theme plus 3 more that try to explain the pricing options)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitators to go through the information and ensure everyone understands what is being conveyed. If any questions then facilitator to call over a roving CPPCUE representative to answer.
8.00-8.20pm	<p>Table discussion on affordable network</p> <p><i>Table facilitator to ask participants to fill in their level of support for this theme on the participant feedback sheet.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall, do you support the proposals put forward by Powercor for this theme? Ask for a show of hands for support. What do you like most? Why? Are there any specific proposals you do not support? Why? Has Powercor struck the right balance between energy flexibility, safety, dependability and affordability? If you think it isn't the right balance what do you want to see more of/less of? In your view, which one of the pricing structures best balances affordability, fairness and simplicity? Should all customers be assigned to a new pricing structure by default (unless they 'opt out') or should new pricing structures just be an 'opt in'? Would you be willing to change the way or time you use electricity every day if you could receive a saving from doing so? <p><i>Ask the table spokesperson to jot down a brief summary of key points on the group feedback sheet to summarise the table's views on this theme, including tally of support.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If time permits: Is there anything that you'd like to see or know more about on this theme?
8.20-8.25pm	<p>Sharing session (all tables)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Table spokespeople asked to stand and give a brief summary of the views of their table on the flexibility and affordability themes (1-2 mins each table).
8.25-8.30pm	<p>Summing up, thank you</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Renate to thank attendees and acknowledge the value of discussions and feedback provided. Restate Powercor's desire to work together to further understand issues and implement sensible strategies for the region to move forward. Encourage attendees to visit the Talking Electricity page to read the fuller version of the Draft Proposal and provide further input. Mention the videos to come, the online quiz and related incentives to get involved.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Outline the engagement and consultation to occur during 2019 and further avenues for attendees to inform the preparation of the network's Final Proposal to the AER.
8.30pm	<p>CLOSE</p> <p><i>Woolcott Research Lead Facilitator</i> – thanks and reminder to fill in end of session questionnaire on tables and for facilitators to collect participant and group feedback forms.</p>

Appendix 1D: United Energy agenda

Time	Session details	Responsibility	Materials
5.30-5.40pm	Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welcome attendees to the Draft Proposal Feedback Forum and thank them for coming back. Explain who is in the room and that all have attended before: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents and small and medium businesses Local Council representatives and other local stakeholders Explain that attendees' feedback in the early forums was invaluable and United Energy have used this to develop its Draft Proposal for the Australian Energy Regulator. Purpose of tonight - specifically CPPCUE will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share what they have heard from customers and stakeholders throughout the engagement; Share what is in the Draft Proposal just released; and Hear your feedback on the Draft Proposal and any further suggestions. Structure of the session is a bit different this time: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> After the overview of the Proposal we will ask you to walk around and view the display boards, ask key questions about the Proposal in a Q&A and then engage in table discussions to provide feedback. There will also be a whole of room feedback session. Each of the three residential tables will look at one 'theme' so we will ask that you rotate tables as a group after each discussion. Brief outline of the session agenda Guidelines recap Housekeeping (mobiles off, toilets, fire evacuation) 	WR Lead Facilitator	PP Slides
5.40-5.45pm	Presentation 1: Overview of Proposal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brief recap on who CPPCUE are/what we do, reason for the regulatory submission and our release of a Draft Proposal Introduction to the Draft Proposal What we've heard from customers and what we will deliver The key themes, top line messages and propositions, and related actions/projects, how you can help to shape the final Proposal. 	Renate Vogt	PP Slides
5.45-6.05pm	Poster display walk around <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants are invited to walk around the room and look at the display boards which will give an overview of 		Posters on stands

	<p>what is in the Draft Proposal.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants to stick post-it notes with any questions they have to the boards (these will be provided on tables) 		Post-its
6.00-6.05pm	<p>Working out questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> During the last five minutes of looking at the boards Ian to collect post-it notes to use in the Q&A session next. Ian and the panel to decide what questions to use in the Q&A session next. 		
6.05-6.20pm	<p>Q and A session</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whole of forum Q and A session on the Draft Proposal. Ian to introduce the panellists and roles that they play at CPPCUE and have taken in shaping the Draft Proposal. <p><i>Renate Vogt is the General Manager of Regulation at United Energy. Renate is responsible for ensuring United Energy can deliver services to its customers at affordable prices.</i></p> <p><i>Brent Cleeve is the Head of Regulation at United Energy. Brent is leading the development of the 2021-2025 regulatory proposal.</i></p> <p><i>Sonja Lekovic is a Regulatory Analyst at United Energy. Sonja is leading the customer engagement program for the development of the 2021-2025 proposal.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ian to ask key questions from the post-it notes. If questions are limited, one or more panellists may remind the audience of the top line focus or projects and one or two questions might be asked of the audience (these will be pre-decided by the team). Ian to close the Q&A and thank panellists. Explain that the next session is to obtain their feedback on the key themes at tables (now hopefully all questions answered). 	WR Lead Facilitator	
<p>START OF THEME DISCUSSIONS</p> <p>Each SME/residential table is a 'theme' – so each SME/residential table is discussing a different theme at any one time.</p> <p>The Opinion Leaders table does not move and discusses the themes sequentially.</p> <p>Table 1: Safe and dependable network</p> <p>Table 2: Flexible network that supports your choices</p> <p>Table 3: Affordable network</p> <p>Table 4: Opinion Leaders (all three themes). This agenda relates to Table 4.</p>			
6.20-6.25pm	Information on Theme 1 – Safe and dependable network	WR Table Facilitators	3 info sheets: Safe

	<p>Give out information sheets (there are 3 for this theme)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitators to go through the information and ensure everyone understands what is being conveyed. Questions answered/more detail given by CPPCUE rep if required. 	and CPPCUE rep on each table	and Dependable Network
6.25-6.35pm	<p>Table discussion on Theme 1 - Safe and dependable network</p> <p><i>Table facilitator to give out participant feedback sheet and ask participants to fill in their level of support for this theme (for tables 1-3 they will take this with them to the next table).</i></p> <p>Overall, do you support the proposals put forward by UE for this theme? Ask for a show of hands for support. What do you like most? Why? Are there any specific proposals you do not support? Why? Specifically, in your view are there different or better ways to support customers with low reliability, rather than providing compensation payments?</p> <p><i>Ask a table spokesperson to jot down a brief summary of key points on the group feedback sheet to summarise the table's views on this theme. They should write down the tally for support from the sheets from the show of hands earlier. They will use this sheet to give feedback to the room at the end on all three themes. (For tables 1-3 they will take this sheet to the next table).</i></p> <p>If time permits: Is there anything that you'd like to see or know more about on this theme?</p>	WR Table Facilitators	<p>Participant feedback sheet</p> <p>Group feedback sheet for spokesperson</p>
6.35-7.05pm	DINNER AND DESSERT BREAK		
<p>RESIDENTIAL AND SMES TO ROTATE TABLES – WR LEAD FACILITATOR</p> <p>Ask Table 1 to go to Table 2 Ask Table 2 to go to Table 3 Ask Table 3 to go to Table 1</p> <p>Table 4 remains where they are</p>			
7.05-7.10pm	<p>Information on Theme 2 – Flexible network</p> <p>Give out information sheets (there are 3 for this theme)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitators to go through the information and ensure everyone understands what is being conveyed. Questions answered/more detail given by CPPCUE rep if required. 	WR Table Facilitators and CPPCUE rep on each table	3 info sheets: Flexible network


7.10-7.20pm	<p>Table discussion on Theme 2 – Flexible network</p> <p><i>Table facilitator to ask participants to fill in their level of support for this theme on the participant feedback sheet.</i></p> <p>Overall, do you support the proposals put forward by UE for this theme? Ask for a show of hands for support. What do you like most? Why? Are there any specific proposals you do not support? Why? Specifically, what are your views on flexible grid investment and the new data services? Are there any other ways that UE can support your energy choices?</p> <p><i>Ask the table spokesperson to jot down a brief summary of key points on the group feedback sheet to summarise the table's views on this theme, including tally of support.</i></p> <p>If time permits: Is there anything that you'd like to see or know more about on this theme?</p>	WR Table Facilitators	<p>Participant feedback sheet</p> <p>Group feedback sheet for spokesperson</p>
<p>RESIDENTIAL AND SMES TO ROTATE TABLES – WR LEAD FACILITATOR</p> <p>Ask Table 1 to go to Table 2 Ask Table 2 to go to Table 3 Ask Table 3 to go to Table 1</p> <p>Table 4 remains where they are</p>			
7.20-7.25pm	<p>Information on Theme 3 – Affordable network</p> <p>Give out information sheets (there are 2 for this theme)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitators to go through the information and ensure everyone understands what is being conveyed. Questions answered/more detail given by CPPCUE rep if required. 	WR Table Facilitators and CPPCUE rep on each table	2 info sheets – affordable network
7.25-7.35pm	<p>Table discussion on Theme 3 – Affordable network</p> <p><i>Table facilitator to ask participants to fill in their level of support for this theme on the participant feedback sheet.</i></p> <p>Overall, do you support the proposals put forward by UE for this theme? Ask for a show of hands for support. What do you like most? Why? Are there any specific proposals you do not support? Why? Specifically, what are your views on UE reducing prices in 2021 than having the same prices until 2025? An</p>	WR Table Facilitators	<p>Participant feedback sheet</p> <p>Group feedback sheet for</p>

	<p>alternative could be to smooth charges more evenly over 2021 to 2025?</p> <p>Has UE struck the right balance between energy flexibility, safety, dependability and affordability? If you think it isn't the right balance what do you want to see more of?</p> <p>In your view, which one of the pricing structures best balances affordability, fairness and simplicity?</p> <p>Should all customers be assigned to a new pricing structure by default (unless they 'opt out') or should new pricing structures just be an 'opt in'?</p> <p><i>Ask the table spokesperson to jot down a brief summary of key points on the group feedback sheet to summarise the table's views on this theme, including tally of support.</i></p> <p>If time permits: Is there anything that you'd like to see or know more about on this theme?</p>		spokespers on
7.35- 7.45pm	<p>Sharing session (all tables)</p> <p>Table spokespeople asked to stand and give a brief summary of the views of their table on the three themes (2 mins each table).</p>	WR Lead Facilitator	
7.45- 7.55pm	<p>Final observations (all tables)</p> <p>Taking into account all that you have seen and discussed today, what are the highlights or key strengths of the Draft Proposal in your view?</p> <p>What aspects, if any, would you like to see featured more strongly or considered further?</p>	WR Table Facilitators	
7.55- 8.00pm	<p>Summing up, thank you</p> <p>Renate (or Brent) to thank attendees and acknowledge the value of discussions and feedback provided. Encourage attendees to visit the Talking Electricity page to read the fuller version of the Draft Proposal and provide further input. Mention the videos to come, the online quiz and related incentives to get involved. Outline the engagement and consultation to occur during 2019 and further avenues for attendees to inform the preparation of the network's Final Proposal to the AER. Invite attendees to register their interest in attending future engagement events.</p>	Renate Vogt	
8.00pm	<p>CLOSE</p> <p>Woolcott Research Lead Facilitator – thanks and reminder</p>	WR All	End of Session Questionnai

	to fill in end of session questionnaire on tables		re
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Appendix 2: Materials

Appendix 2A: Safe and Dependable Network, CitiPower



Safe and Dependable Network

In its Draft Proposal CitiPower has committed to:

- ☐ A safe environment for its customers and workers

You want a
**safe and
dependable
network**

What we heard from customers	Overview of what CitiPower is proposing	More detail about what is planned
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A safe network is a top priority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use research partnerships to deliver world-class safety initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Swinburne University</i> – testing the strength of pole cross-arms to understand when they may break Working with other research partners to leverage data in managing vegetation around power lines to improve safety outcomes. Termite treatment trials to identify more effective wood pole treatment alternatives <i>ANU</i> – developing ways to forecast impact of solar
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Replace both <i>high priority</i> and <i>moderate priority</i> assets before they fail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use data analytics and evidence to identify these assets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remotely test and replace deteriorated ‘neutral earthing’ at your home and on our network Test and replace service cables connecting your home to our powerlines Continue repairing old underground access pits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Underground select powerlines around traffic black spots 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CitiPower is not proposing to underground lines in traffic black spots 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Due to the high cost of undergrounding, CitiPower will consider lower cost alternatives such as relocating selected powerlines around traffic black spots



Safe and Dependable Network

You want a
safe and
dependable
network

In its Draft Proposal CitiPower has committed to:

- ☐ A reliable supply of electricity

What we heard from customers	Overview of what CitiPower is proposing to do	More detail about what is planned
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Network reliability is very important 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use laser technology, drones and traditional field crew to inspect the network Use data analytics to pinpoint assets 'at risk' that may require replacement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assets are inspected at least every five years For assets in declining condition, more frequent monitoring is scheduled If the condition warrants, assets will be removed, repaired or replaced CitiPower investments are designed to maintain affordability, reliability and the long term health of the network
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customers support better reliability for poorly served customers when the value of doing so exceeds the cost 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CitiPower will continue to invest to maintain reliability for the average customer (with some experiencing better and worse reliability) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CitiPower will not receive funding to invest in improving reliability where the cost of doing so is higher than the benefit to those customers CitiPower will continue to compensate customers who experience long or frequent outages

Appendix 2B: Flexible Network, CitiPower



Flexible Network



CitiPower has committed to making it easier for customers to:

- ☐ Make new connections to the network

What we heard from customers	Overview of what CitiPower is proposing	More details on what is planned
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only a small number of households and small businesses have arranged a new electricity connection All customers want CitiPower to make connections easier 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to reduce connection timeframes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For large customers, CitiPower is committed to completing connection works within 26 weeks For the majority of residential customers, CitiPower is committed to connecting their house within 10 days
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All customers should have access to reliable electricity at an affordable cost 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring sufficient capacity for new customers in population growth areas Utilising demand management where possible to defer building new assets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$14m to decommission Brunswick zone substation and transfer customers to West Brunswick \$13m to decommission Fitzroy zone substation and transfer customers to Collingwood \$17m to decommission Port Melbourne zone substation and transfer customers to Fisherman's Bend Works to support large infrastructure projects, including the Metro Rail and the Westgate tunnel



Flexible Network



CitiPower has committed to making it easier for customers to:

- ☐ Export solar and use batteries

What we heard from customers	Overview of what CitiPower is proposing	More details on what is planned
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There will be more solar power and batteries in the future All customers who invest in solar power should be able to export excess electricity back onto the network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invest \$15 million in network improvements to accommodate more exports Utilise data analytics and smart meters to find 'hotspots' in the network (areas of congestion) 	<p>This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Re-balancing the number of customers connected to each network asset Installing devices to manage voltage rises due to solar export Installing new assets that can accommodate more exports from solar <p>When 'hotspots' are identified CitiPower will determine the lowest cost solution to address them.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customers want fair connection charges for solar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CitiPower is still developing a fair approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CitiPower is seeking feedback on its connection policy, potentially asking only large solar customers to pay more to cover the cost of connecting solar to the network



Flexible Network

You want a
**flexible
network** that
supports your
choices

CitiPower has committed to making it easier for customers to:

- ☐ Use their own energy data to make informed energy choices

What we heard from customers	Overview of what CitiPower is proposing	More detail about what is planned
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customers make a lot of energy decisions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> choosing between retailers, whether to use solar/batteries, when to cut usage to reduce their bill Customers want easy access to their energy data and want to make better use of it Customers want data to be secure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introducing a 'one-stop-shop' online portal Ensuring data security 	<p>The new online 'one-stop-shop' will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consolidate multiple online portals Provide easy access to usage data, allowing customers to monitor their usage patterns Provide updates on customers' connection requests Alert if rooftop solar is under-performing Notify customers about power outages and provide a simple way to report network faults <p>CitiPower will also comply with new regulations to provide usage data every 5 minutes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CitiPower will invest \$8m to ensure data security
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customers want incentives to manage their demand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate demand response options 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CitiPower will trial demand response options on the network, to test customer willingness to participate

Appendix 2C: Affordable Network, CitiPower



Affordable network

You want an
affordable
network

In its Draft Proposal CitiPower has committed to:

- ☐ Maintaining affordability by reducing prices

What we heard from customers	Overview of what CitiPower is proposing	More detail about what is planned
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Affordability was a high priority for most customersThe impact of high energy prices on struggling consumers was viewed as critical	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Reduce average residential network charges by \$25 in 2021Reduce average business network charges by \$94 in 2021No increases until the end of 2025	<p>CitiPower will offer services in the most affordable way possible:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Continuing to negotiate contract prices with large contractors who can offer economies of scaleEngaging in a competitive process for large jobs to ensure only market rates are paidMaintaining cost-efficiencies (CitiPower is the second most cost-effective distributor in Australia)Only investing when needed – not building excess capacity into the network too early



Affordable network

You want an
affordable
network

In its Draft Proposal CitiPower has committed to:


- Setting simple and fair price structures

What we heard from customers	Overview of CitiPower is proposed	More detail about what is planned	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customers believe there should be a number of different tariff options on offer Tariffs should be fair and simple 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CitiPower is still considering three new tariff options and the status quo (a flat rate) 	Price Structure	
		Time of use	The price changes. It is higher at peak times and lower at other times
		Peak usage packages	Your bill would be the same each month based on your level of electricity use at peak times
		Demand	Your monthly charge would be based on your maximum electricity demand at peak times for that month
		Status quo	Most customers are currently charged a fixed daily rate plus a charge for electricity usage that varies

CitiPower believes these new price structures are fair because:

- customers can make savings if they are able to change the time they use electricity (e.g. by setting your dishwasher and washing machine timers to operate outside peak times, or even using a battery to store electricity for later)
- customers who use a lot of electricity at peak times pay for the costs they impose on the network – this is fairer than charging other customers the same amount whose electricity use has less impact on the network
- if tariffs achieve a drop in customers' peak energy use, CitiPower can build in less capacity to the network and lower charges

Appendix 2D: Safe and Dependable Network, Powercor (Ballarat)



Safe and Dependable Network

You want a
**safe and
dependable
network**

In its Draft Proposal Powercor has committed to:

☐ A safe environment for its customers and workers

What we heard from customers	Overview of what Powercor is proposing	More detail about what is planned
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A safe network is a top priority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use research partnerships to deliver world-class safety initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Swinburne University</i> – testing the strength of pole cross-arms to understand when they may break <i>CSIRO</i> – catastrophic bushfire consequence modelling Investigating alternative materials to cover overhead lines and prevent fire starts Testing termite treatment for wood poles <i>ANU</i> – solar forecasting to achieve better network use
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Replace both <i>high priority</i> and <i>moderate priority</i> assets before they fail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use data analytics and evidence to identify these assets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Testing and replacing service cables connecting your home to our powerlines Remote testing for faults using smart meters Inspecting and replacing ‘double-staked’ poles Enclosing assets in protective covers and maintaining safe distances between our assets and the community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Address issues with powerlines around traffic ‘black spots’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Powercor is not proposing to underground or relocate at present 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Powercor will consider lower cost alternatives such as working with the Councils to reorganise traffic rules around black spots



Safe and Dependable Network

You want a
**safe and
dependable
network**

In its Draft Proposal Powercor has committed to:

- ☐ A safe network that mitigates bushfire risks

What we heard from customers	Overview of what Powercor is proposing	More detail about what is planned
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reducing bushfire risk is paramount 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frequent inspections of network assets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In high bushfire risk areas, Powercor will inspect network assets on a two-and-a-half year cycle, rather than a five-year cycle used in other locations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inspection of private lines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In high-risk areas, Powercor will inspect customers' private lines every two-and-a-half years to make sure they're in good operating condition
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Replacing uncovered high voltage switches with enclosed ones 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Powercor will invest \$9m to replace uncovered high voltage switches with enclosed ones (original uncovered switches were installed up to 50 years ago)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase pole inspections in the South-west 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inspect an additional 20,000 wood poles in the South-west (from Warrnambool to Port Campbell and Hamilton), following strong community feedback about their age
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Considering bringing forward undergrounding of SWER lines by 2025 (not in the proposal at the moment) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider undergrounding or covering all single wire earth return (SWER) lines in bushfire areas (250km of SWER lines are underground but 500km remain) This would require \$140m in investment by 2025 and would be an additional cost to customers to what is proposed



Safe and Dependable Network


You want a
safe and
dependable
network

In its Draft Proposal Powercor has committed to:

- ☐ A reliable supply of electricity

What we heard from customers	Overview of what Powercor is proposing	More detail about what is planned
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Network reliability is very important 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use laser technology, drones and traditional field crew to inspect the network Use data analytics to pinpoint assets 'at risk' that may require replacement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This approach is different to just replacing assets when they reach a certain age – it is based on assets' condition and previous experience with failure Powercor investments are designed to maintain affordability, reliability and the long term health of the network.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customers support better reliability for poorly served customers when the value of doing so exceeds the cost 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Powercor will continue to invest to maintain reliability for the average customer (with some experiencing better and worse reliability) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Powercor will not receive funding to invest in improving reliability where the cost of doing so is higher than the benefit to those customers Powercor will continue to compensate customers who experience long or frequent outages

Appendix 2E: Flexible Network, Powercor (Ballarat)



Flexible Network

You want a
flexible
network that
supports your
choices

Powercor has committed to making it easier for customers to:

☐ Make new connections to the network

What we heard from customers	Overview of what Powercor is proposing	More details on what is planned
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only a small number of households and small businesses have arranged a new electricity connection All customers want Powercor to make connections easier 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to reduce connection timeframes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For large customers, Powercor is committed to completing connection works within 26 weeks For the majority of residential customers, Powercor is committed to connecting their house within 10 days
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All customers should have access to reliable electricity at an affordable cost 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring sufficient capacity for new customers in population growth areas Utilising demand management where possible to defer building new assets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$121m connecting wind farms in the south and solar farms in the north \$17m to build a new zone substation in Torquay \$27m to upgrade lines in our western growth areas \$25m to build a new zone substation in Tarneit Demand management to defer \$16m in line and transformer upgrades around Ballarat and Bacchus Marsh



Flexible Network

You want a
**flexible
network** that
supports your
choices

Powercor has committed to making it easier for customers to:

- ☐ Export solar and use batteries

What we heard from customers	Overview of what Powercor is proposing	More details on what is planned
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There will be more solar power and batteries in the future All customers who invest in solar power should be able to export excess electricity back onto the network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invest \$35 million in 'flexible grid' technology Invest \$90 million in network improvements to accommodate more exports 	<p>'Flexible grid' will enable Powercor to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor and control the network in real time and defer further investment in network assets Divert exported electricity away from points where the network is overloaded Better manage voltage variations that occur as a result of solar and battery use <p>Network improvements are also necessary to accommodate more exports. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Re-balancing the number of customers connected to each network asset Installing devices to manage voltage rises New local transformers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customers want fair connection charges for solar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Powercor is still developing a fair approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Powercor is seeking feedback on its connection policy, potentially asking only large solar customers to pay more to cover the cost of solar connections



Flexible Network


You want a
flexible
network that
supports your
choices

Powercor has committed to making it easier for customers to:

- ☐ Use their own energy data to make informed energy choices

What we heard from customers	Overview of what Powercor is proposing	More detail about what is planned
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customers make a lot of energy decisions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> choosing between retailers, whether to use solar/batteries, when to cut usage to reduce their bill Customers want easy access to their energy data and want to make better use of it Customer want data to be secure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introducing a 'one-stop-shop' online portal Ensuring data security 	<p>The new online 'one-stop-shop' will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consolidate multiple online portals Provide easy access to usage data, allowing customers to monitor their usage patterns Provide updates on customers' connection requests Alert if rooftop solar is under-performing Notify customers about power outages and provide a simple way to report network faults <p>Powercor will also comply with new regulations to provide usage data every 5 minutes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Powercor will invest \$18m to ensure data security
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customers want incentives to manage their demand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate demand response options 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Powercor will implement demand response options on the network where efficient, to deter capital investment

Appendix 2F: Affordable Network, Powercor (Ballarat)



Affordable network

You want an
affordable
network

In its Draft Proposal Powercor has committed to:

- ☐ Maintaining affordability by reducing prices

What we heard from customers	Overview of what Powercor is proposing	More detail about what is planned
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affordability was a high priority for most customers The impact of high energy prices on struggling customers was viewed as critical 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce average residential network charges by \$24 in 2021 Reduce average business network charges by \$90 in 2021 No increases until the end of 2025 	<p>Powercor will offer services in the most affordable way possible:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing to negotiate contract prices with large contractors who can offer economies of scale Engaging in a competitive process for large jobs to ensure only market rates are paid Maintaining cost-efficiencies Only investing when needed - not building excess capacity into the network too early Continuing to operate the network close to its full capacity, with the utilisation rate of 73% – the highest in the country



Affordable network

You want an
**affordable
network**

In its Draft Proposal Powercor has committed to:


- Setting simple and fair price structures

What we heard from customers	Overview of what Powercor is proposed	More detail about what is planned	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customers believe there should be a number of different tariff options on offer Tariffs should be fair and simple 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Powercor is still considering three new tariff options and the status quo (a flat rate) 	Price Structure	
		Time of use	The price changes. It is higher at peak times and lower at other times
		Peak usage packages	Your bill would be the same each month based on your level of electricity use at peak times
		Demand	Your monthly charge would be based on your maximum electricity demand at peak times for that month
		Status quo	Most customers are currently charged a fixed daily rate plus a charge for electricity usage that varies

Powercor believes these new price structures are fair because:

- customers can make savings if they are able to change the time they use electricity (e.g. by setting your dishwasher and washing machine timers to operate outside peak times, or even using a battery to store electricity for later)
- customers who use a lot of electricity at peak times pay for the costs they impose on the network – this is fairer than charging other customers the same amount whose electricity use has less impact on the network
- if tariffs achieve a drop in customers' peak energy use, Powercor can build in less capacity to the network and lower charges

Appendix 2G: Safe and Dependable Network, Powercor (Warrnambool)



Safe and Dependable Network

You want a
safe and
dependable
network

In its Draft Proposal Powercor has committed to:

- ☐ A safe environment for its customers and workers

What we heard from customers	Overview of what Powercor is proposing	More detail about what is planned
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A safe network is a top priority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use research partnerships to deliver world-class safety initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Swinburne University</i> – testing the strength of power pole cross-arms to understand when they may break <i>CSIRO</i> – catastrophic bushfire consequence modelling Investigating alternative materials to cover overhead lines and prevent fires starting Testing termite treatment for wood poles <i>ANU</i> – solar forecasting to achieve better network use
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Replace both <i>high priority</i> and <i>moderate priority</i> assets before they fail (rather than just high priority) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use data analytics and evidence to identify these assets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Testing and replacing service cables connecting your home to our powerlines Remote testing for faults using smart meters Inspecting and replacing ‘double-staked’ poles Enclosing assets in protective covers and maintaining safe distances between our assets and the community



Safe and Dependable Network

You want a
safe and
dependable
network

In its Draft Proposal Powercor has committed to:

- ☐ A safe network that mitigates bushfire risks

What we heard from customers	Overview of what Powercor is proposing	More detail about what is planned
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reducing bushfire risk is paramount 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frequent inspections of network Inspection of private lines Replacing uncovered high voltage switches with enclosed ones 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In high bushfire risk areas, Powercor will inspect network assets on a two-and-a-half year cycle, rather than a five-year cycle used in other locations In high-risk areas, Powercor will inspect customers' private power lines every two-and-a-half years to make sure they're in good operating condition Powercor will invest \$9m to replace uncovered high voltage switches with enclosed ones (original uncovered switches were installed up to 50 years ago)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community concerned about the age of wood power poles and their appearance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase pole replacements in the South-west Considering undergrounding of power lines in bushfire areas by 2025 (not in the proposal at the moment) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Powercor proposes to replace an additional 5,000 poles during 2021-2025 at the cost of about \$50m, bringing forward replacements that would be medium priority for replacement (rather than high priority) Powercor is considering undergrounding or covering all lines in bushfire areas (250km of lines are underground but 450km remain) This would require \$140m in investment by 2025 and would be an additional cost to customers to what is proposed (around \$7.40 per year per customer)



Safe and Dependable Network


You want a
safe and
dependable
network

In its Draft Proposal Powercor has committed to:

- ☐ A reliable supply of electricity

What we heard from customers	Overview of what Powercor is proposing	More detail about what is planned
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Network reliability is very important 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use laser technology, drones and traditional field crew to inspect the network Use data analytics to pinpoint assets 'at risk' that may require replacement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This approach is different to just replacing assets when they reach a certain age – it is based on assets' condition and previous experience with failure Powercor investments are designed to maintain affordability, reliability and the long term health of the network.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customers support better reliability for poorly served customers when the value of doing so exceeds the cost 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Powercor will continue to invest to maintain reliability for the average customer (with some experiencing better and worse reliability) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Powercor will not receive funding to invest in improving reliability where the benefit does not outweigh the cost So instead, Powercor will continue to compensate customers who experience long or frequent outages

Appendix 2H: Flexible Network, Powercor (Warrnambool)




Flexible Network

You want a
**flexible
network** that
supports your
choices

Powercor has committed to making it easier for customers to:

☐ Make new connections to the network

What we heard from customers	Overview of what Powercor is proposing	More details on what is planned
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New customers want easier connections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing to reduce connection timeframes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For large customers, Powercor is committed to connecting them within 26 weeks (these connections are complex) For residential customers, Powercor is committed to connecting their house within 10 days
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All customers should have access to reliable electricity at an affordable cost 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring sufficient capacity for new customers in population growth areas Using the network more efficiently 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$121m connecting wind farms in the south and solar farms in the north \$17m to build a new zone substation in Torquay \$27m to upgrade lines in western growth areas \$25m to build a new zone substation in Tarnet Encouraging customers to use power in off peak times to defer \$16m in line and transformer upgrades around Ballarat and Bacchus Marsh
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dairy farmers and regional businesses cannot expand their operations because of a lack of capacity on the network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Considering various options for increasing capacity of power lines in regional areas (not in the proposal at the moment) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Options include either: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A customer-side investment like a generator or a battery, Investment in network capacity that is either paid for by those who need the extra capacity or by all customers



Flexible Network

You want a
**flexible
network** that
supports your
choices

Powercor has committed to making it easier for customers to:

☐ Export solar and use batteries

What we heard from customers	Overview of what Powercor is proposing	More details on what is planned
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There will be more solar power and batteries in the future All customers who invest in solar power should be able to export excess electricity back onto the network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invest \$35 million in 'flexible grid' technology Invest \$90 million in network improvements to allow more exports 	<p>'Flexible grid' will help Powercor to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor and control the load on the network Divert exported electricity away from points where the network is overloaded Better manage voltage variations that occur as a result of solar and battery use <p>Network improvements are also necessary to allow more exports. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Re-balancing the number of customers connected to each network asset Installing devices to manage voltage rises New local transformers



Flexible Network


You want a
**flexible
network** that
supports your
choices

Powercor has committed to making it easier for customers to:


- Use their own energy data to make informed energy choices

What we heard from customers	Overview of what Powercor is proposing	More detail about what is planned
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customers make a lot of energy decisions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> choosing between retailers, whether to use solar/batteries, when to cut usage to reduce their bill Customers want easy access to their energy data and want to make better use of it Customers want data to be secure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introducing a 'one-stop-shop' online portal Ensuring data security 	<p>The new online 'one-stop-shop' will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stop the need for multiple online portals Provide easy access to usage data, allowing customers to monitor their usage patterns Provide updates on customers' connection requests Alert if rooftop solar is under-performing Notify customers about power outages and provide a simple way to report network faults <p>Powercor will also comply with new regulations to provide usage data every 5 minutes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Powercor will invest \$18m to ensure data security
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customers want incentives to move their usage from peak times 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate options for this 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Powercor will incentivise customers to spread their usage, so less investment will be required in infrastructure

Appendix 2I: Affordable Network, Powercor (Warrnambool)



Affordable network



In its Draft Proposal Powercor has committed to:

- ☐ Maintaining affordability by reducing prices

What we heard from customers	Overview of what Powercor is proposing	More detail about what is planned
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Affordability was a high priority for most customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Reduce average residential network charges by \$24 in 2021Reduce average business network charges by \$90 in 2021No increases until the end of 2025	<p>Powercor will offer services in the most affordable way possible:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Continuing to negotiate contract prices with large contractors who can offer economies of scaleEngaging in a competitive process for large jobs to ensure only market rates are paidMaintaining cost-efficienciesOnly investing when needed - not building excess capacity into the network too earlyContinuing to operate the network close to its full capacity, with the utilisation rate of 73% – the highest in the country



Affordable network

You want an
affordable
network

In its Draft Proposal Powercor has committed to:

- Setting simple and fair price structures

What we heard from customers	Overview of what Powercor is proposed	More detail about what is planned	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customers believe there should be a number of different pricing options Pricing should be fair and simple 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Powercor is still considering three new pricing options and the status quo (a flat rate) 	Price Structure	
		Time of use	The price changes. It is higher at peak times and lower at other times
		Peak usage packages	Your bill would be the same each month based on your level of electricity use at peak times
		Demand	Your monthly charge would be based on your maximum electricity demand at peak times for that month
		Status quo	Most customers are currently charged a fixed daily rate plus a charge for electricity usage that varies

Powercor believes these new price structures are fair because:

- customers can make savings if they are able to change the time they use electricity (e.g. by setting your dishwasher and washing machine timers to operate outside peak times, or even using a battery to store electricity for later)
- customers who use a lot of electricity at peak times pay for the costs they impose on the network – this is fairer than charging other customers the same amount whose electricity use has less impact on the network
- if customers' energy use declines at peak times, Powercor does not have to build more infrastructure and can lower charges



You want an
affordable
network

Peak usage bands

Fixed monthly charge based on Small, Medium or Large bands
consumption between 3pm to 9pm
e.g. fixed charge per month + top up fee (if applicable)

Small

\$15/mth

Medium

\$20/mth

Large

\$25/mth

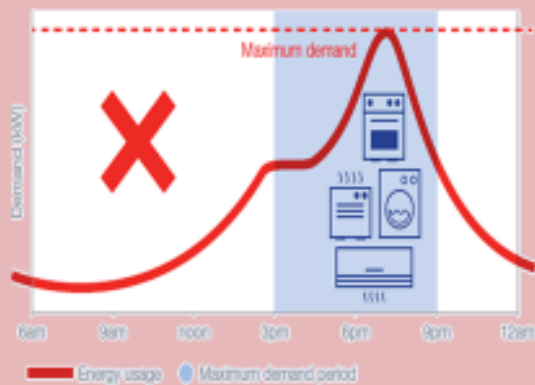


Demand pricing

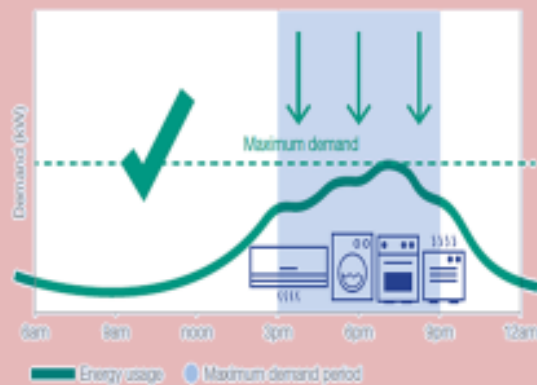
You want an
affordable
network

Daily total = daily fixed price + price for usage + charge based on maximum demand

Typical energy use during peak period



Spreading energy use during peak periods



Appendix 2J: Safe and Dependable Network, United Energy



Safe and Dependable Network

You want a
**safe and
dependable
network**

In its Draft Proposal United Energy has committed to:

- ☐ A safe environment for its customers and workers

What we heard from customers	Overview of what United Energy is proposing to do	More detail about what is planned
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A safe network is a top priority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use cutting edge technologies and research partnerships to deliver world-class safety initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Swinburne University</i> – testing the strength of pole cross-arms to understand when they may break <i>Victoria University</i> – remotely identifying broken lines <i>RMIT</i> – research into early fault detection <i>University of Queensland</i> – identifying ways to better manage the lifecycle of power transformers <i>Monash University</i> – researching net zero emissions <i>Deakin University</i> – demand management projects <i>ANU</i> – solar forecasting to achieve better network use
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Replace both <i>high priority</i> and <i>moderate priority</i> assets before they fail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use data analytics and evidence to identify assets at high and moderate risk of failure and replace them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A program to test and replace the service cables that connect your home to our powerlines ('dog bones') Remote testing for faults using smart meters Conducting a targeted inspection and replacement of 'double-staked' poles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Underground select powerlines around traffic black spots 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> United Energy is not proposing to underground lines in traffic black spots 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Due to the high cost of undergrounding, United Energy will consider lower cost alternatives such as working with the Councils to reorganise traffic rules around black spots



Safe and Dependable Network

You want a
**safe and
dependable
network**

In its Draft Proposal United Energy has committed to:

- ☐ A safe network that mitigates bushfire risks

What we heard from customers	Overview of what UE is proposing to do	More detail about what is planned
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reducing bushfire risk was a high priority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frequent inspections of the safety of network assets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In high bushfire risk areas, United Energy will inspect network assets more often – on a three-year cycle, rather than a five-year cycle used in other locations. It will also inspect the clearances between vegetation and power lines every year before the fire season
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inspection of private lines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In high-risk areas, United Energy will inspect customers' private lines every three years to make sure they're in good operating condition
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Replacing uncovered high voltage switches with enclosed ones 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> United Energy will invest to replace uncovered high voltage switches with enclosed ones. The original, uncovered switches, were installed up to 50 years ago and United Energy will target these assets
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support for more REFCLs where safety benefits outweigh the costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No further REFCL installations at this stage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> United Energy has two REFCLs on its network, with work underway on a third. Once completed, these REFCLs will cover almost 60% of the network's risk area. Recent estimates suggest that further REFCLs would not see customer benefits that exceed the costs



Safe and Dependable Network




In its Draft Proposal United Energy has committed to:

- ☐ A reliable supply of electricity

What we heard from customers	Overview of what United Energy is proposing to do	More detail about what is planned
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Network reliability is very important 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use laser technology and traditional field crew inspections to inspect the network Continue a risk based approach to asset replacement, boosting the use of data analytics to pinpoint assets to be replaced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This approach is different to just replacing assets when they reach a certain age – it is based on assets condition and previous experience with failure United Energy investments are designed to maintain affordability, reliability and the long term health of the network. Factors such as the weather will still drive some variances in reliability each year
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customers support better reliability for poorly served customers when the value of doing so exceeds the cost 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> United Energy will continue to invest to maintain reliability for the average customer (with some experiencing better and worse reliability) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> United Energy will not receive funding to invest in improving reliability where the cost of doing so is higher than the benefit to those customers United Energy will continue to compensate customers who experience long or frequent outages

Appendix 2K: Flexible Network, United Energy



Flexible Network

United Energy has committed to making it easier for customers to:

- ☐ Make new connections to the network

You want a **flexible network** that supports your choices

What we heard from customers	Overview of what United Energy is proposing	More details on what is planned
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only a small number of households and small businesses have arranged a new electricity connection All customers want United Energy to make connections easier 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New eConnect platform that digitises the connection process 	<p>E-Connect will enable United Energy to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> better track customers' connection requests provide accurate cost estimates and save time and money for customers and their electricians
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All customers should have access to reliable electricity at an affordable cost 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring sufficient capacity for new customers in population growth areas Utilising demand management where possible to defer building new assets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$6m to increase Doncaster zone substation capacity and nearby lines \$8m to increase Mornington zone substation capacity and nearby lines \$7m to increase Keysborough zone substation capacity and nearby lines \$7m to upgrade feeders connected to the East Malvern zone substation Demand management to defer \$30m in asset investment between Hastings and Rosebud



Flexible Network



United Energy has committed to making it easier for customers to:

- ☐ Export solar and use batteries

What we heard from customers	Overview of what United Energy is proposing	More details on what is planned
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There will be more solar power and batteries in the future For most customers, the ability to store and export excess solar power is a high priority All customers who invest in solar power should be able to export onto the network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invest \$20 million in flexible grid technology Invest \$15 million in network improvements 	<p>Flexible grid will enable United Energy to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> monitor and control the network in real time and defer further investment in network assets divert exported electricity away from points where the network is overloaded better manage voltage variations that occur as a result of solar and battery use <p>Network improvements are also necessary to accommodate more exports. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> re-balancing the number of customers connected to each network asset installing devices to manage voltage rises new local transformers.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customers want fair connection charges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> United Energy is still developing a fair approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> United Energy is seeking feedback on its connection policy, potentially asking only large solar customers to pay more to cover the cost of solar connections



Flexible Network



United Energy has committed to making it easier for customers to:

- ☐ Use their own energy data to make informed energy choices

What we heard from customers	Overview of what United Energy is proposing	More detail about what is planned
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customers make a lot of energy decisions: choosing between retail offers, whether to use solar and batteries, and when to cut usage to reduce their bill Customers want access to their energy data and would like to make better use of this data Customers want easily accessible information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introducing a 'one-stop-shop' online portal for all information relevant to customers 	<p>The new online 'one-stop-shop' will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consolidate multiple online portals Provide easy access to usage data, allowing customers to monitor various usage patterns Provide easy access to what is happening with customers' connection requests Alert if rooftop solar is under-performing Notify customers about power outages and provide a simple way to report network faults <p>United Energy will also comply with new regulations to provide usage data every 5 minutes so data on the portal will be in 5 minute intervals</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customers want incentives to manage their demand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to provide incentives for reducing peak demand, which defers capital investment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> United Energy will increase demand response opportunities e.g. the Summer Saver program that incentivises 1,000 customers each year to manage their usage in congested areas of the network

Appendix 2L: Affordable Network, United Energy



Affordable network

You want an
affordable
network

In its Draft Proposal United Energy has committed to:

- ☐ Maintaining affordability by reducing prices

What we heard from customers	Overview of what United Energy is proposing	More detail about what is planned
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Most customers say their electricity bills are expensiveAffordability was a high priority for most customersThe impact of high energy prices on struggling consumers was viewed as critical	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Reduce average residential network charges by \$44 and average business network charges by \$117 in 2021, with no increases until the end of 2025	<p>United Energy will offer the services customers want and need in the most affordable way possible:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Continuing to negotiate contract prices with large contractors who can offer services with the benefit of scaleEngaging in a competitive process for large jobs to ensure only market rates are paidMaintaining cost-efficiencies and only investing when needed. United Energy will not build excess capacity into the network too earlyContinuing to operate the network close to its full capacity, with the utilisation rate of 62% – second highest in the country



Affordable network

You want an
**affordable
network**

In its Draft Proposal United Energy has committed to:

- ☐ Setting simple and fair price structures

What UE has heard from customers	Overview of United Energy is proposed	More detail about what is planned	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customers believe there should be a number of different tariff options on offer Tariffs should be fair and simple 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> United Energy is still considering three new tariff options and the status quo (a flat rate) 	Price Structure	
		Time of use	The price changes. It is higher at peak times and lower at other times
		Peak usage packages	Your bill would be the same each month based on your level of electricity use at peak times
		Demand	Your monthly charge would be based on your maximum electricity demand at peak times for that month
		Status quo	Most customers are currently charged a fixed daily rate plus a charge for electricity usage that varies

United Energy believes these new price structures are fair because:

- customer can make savings if they are able to change the time you use electricity (e.g. by setting your dishwasher and washing machine timers to operate outside peak times, or even using a battery to store electricity for later)
- customers who use a lot of electricity at peak times pay for the costs they impose on the network – this is fairer than charging other customers the same amount whose electricity use has less impact on the network
- if tariffs achieve a drop in customers' peak energy use, United Energy can build in less capacity to the network and lower charges

Appendix 3: Table Feedback

Appendix 3A: Participant Feedback Sheet



Feedback sheet

Please rate your level of support for the proposals for each theme in the Draft Proposal. Please only complete once you have been through the information on tables.

Theme	Support strongly	Support slightly	Don't really support	Do not support at all	Don't know
You want a safe and dependable network	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Please provide the reason(s) for your answer:					

Theme	Support strongly	Support slightly	Don't really support	Do not support at all	Don't know
You want a flexible network that supports your choices	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Please provide the reason(s) for your answer:					

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Theme	Support strongly	Support slightly	Don't really support	Do not support at all	Don't know
You want an affordable network	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Please provide the reason(s) for your answer:					

Appendix 3B: Group Feedback Sheet



GROUP FEEDBACK SHEET

Group number: _____

 <p>You want a safe and dependable network</p>	<p><i>Tally of support: ____ out of ____ supported these proposals.</i></p> <p>A summary of this group's main views on the proposals for safe and dependable network:</p>
 <p>You want a flexible network that supports your choices</p>	<p><i>Tally of support: ____ out of ____ supported these proposals.</i></p> <p>A summary of this group's main views on the proposals for flexible network:</p>
 <p>You want an affordable network</p>	<p><i>Tally of support: ____ out of ____ supported these proposals.</i></p> <p>A summary of this group's main views on the proposals for affordable network:</p>

Appendix 4: Open responses from feedback sheets

Appendix 4A: Individual responses from Feedback Sheet (CitiPower)

Below are a list of reasons given by participants for their level of support for the theme.

Table 16: Open-ended responses from CitiPower's Draft Proposal Forum on 'safe and dependable network'

Reasons for Strongly Supporting Proposals for a Safe and Dependable Network N=29
I want to be able to rely on safe power.
In general they are improvements to the current status.
Use of technology. Maintenance schedule.
Reliable is good. Poles in the air. Seems very old school.
Frequency of inspections + visibility of data.
Support reliability and an effective maintenance schedule. I would not want to be a customer experiencing worse reliability!
Support use of data analytics to monitor & plan for safety & reliability.
Seems reasonable
Research partnerships with Universities & Government are great initiatives.
All entitled to safe and dependable supply. All pay same fee, all entitled to same supply.
Common sense approach to safety & budgeting. Smart use of funds.
Happy with overall proposal, safety comes first for all of us.
A realistic view on safety and dependable, common sense approach.
Support smart measures to improve &/or maintain safety.
Wouldn't want it any other way!
Most proposals well-described - but still more detail required.
Why the continued use of wood poles needing termite treatment? Should use metal/concrete poles. If not a problem with lightning.

Health and safety is the most important priority and CitiPower seems to be extremely aware of this and is being diligent in previous resolutions.
I liked research being sought to help improve the network, and I support safety being a priority.
Long term health of the network. Testing & replacing cables connecting to the consumer's home address.
We need a safe-reliable network to supply power to the community otherwise society suffers.
Strongly support research, new technology. Understand underground expense. Support better reliability for poorly served customers.
Emphasis on safety & efficiency. Use of modern technology to measure service, assess what is needed.
They will keep asking towards improving the management through research and uni partnership. Strongly agree with the test + replacement system.
I particularly appreciate use of lasers & drones to inspect, protect wires. Can the public be encouraged to inform CitiPower of potential trouble spots.
They are common sense responses to the customer's feedback on the issue of safety.
Many initiatives proposed. They are proactive in their approach to provide a safe and dependable network.
Use of universities is affective. Drone laser maintenance is es ...?
Lifesaving or preventive measures good. Research in conjunction with other partners good ideas. High cost of undergrounding a pity. Alternatives should be looked at from time to time instead of being forgotten.
Reasons for Slightly Supporting Proposals for a Safe and Dependable Network N=4
I accept certain problems cannot be fixed in the near future due to funding issues.
Sensible, unobjectible proposals.
Why can't they replace wooden poles with steel or concrete? 5 years a long time to inspect. Good that open to research of lasers. Disappointed re lack of underground power. Can they inconvenience developers to partly find underground power. Help provide Uniden batteries for solar.
1. No commitments to do anything about underground blank spots 2. Should be consulting with various about blankspots. 3. Why are you treating wooden poles? Why aren't they being replaced by concrete or metal poles? 4. No description of underground alternatives.

Q2. Please provide the reason(s) for your answer (You want a safe and dependable network):
Base: Respondents attending CitiPower's Draft Proposal Forum (n=33)

Table 17: Open-ended responses from CitiPower's Draft Proposal Forum on 'flexible network that supports your choices'

Reasons for Strongly Supporting Proposals for a Flexible and Supportive Network N=27
Flexibility is the key to supporting my choices. Everyone's choices can be satisfied by flexibility.
They are all improvements to the existing position.
Improvement is required, money has to be spent. More control.
Puts power lack with the consumer to decide how much they are willing to invest in \$; and 'management' of sheer power usage. Flexibility is the key coupled with safe oversight practices.
Moving to a smarter, more flexible network will enable more use of solar & batteries, reduce costs & give customers the data to manage electricity consumption & costs.
Like particularly that CitiPower is planning significant upgrades/consolidation of assets such as substation to plan ahead for population/ building growth & major Govt. Infrastructure projects.
Safe reliable supply with modern infrastructure people may want to choose how they pay when they pay.
All common sense developments
I like the direction CitiPower has taken with what customers have said. Particularly the \$15mil investment to accommodate solar export.
I feel the proposal outlined will give me as a consumer a better level of choice for my needs. Our previous meetings discussions input have been listened to and addressed with this proposal.
Seems responsive to customers need.
I feel that our previous meetings our questions & answers have been address being able to have a choice. One stop shop you have listened, and use our feedback.
CitiPower has listened to the feedback & formed a reasonable, measured response.
Much more preferable to have a flexible network; needs + requirements can change month to month. e.g. hours worked (schedule) etc.
Most of these steps are essential to 'future-proof' the network.
Benefits all customers in all locations.
We would all like to have as many options as possible whether we are residential customers or business customers. The one stop shop is a great boon as it will provide information that we can base our decision upon.
I would like to know more where funds will be going in regard to data security. I question whether charging large solar customers more would be compatible with the overall renewable energy goals, as it might be a put off.
Works supporting large infrastructure projects, including Metro-Rail, Westgate tunnels. One stop shop.
I like what is proposed. CitiPower seems to be listening to customers/consumers.
Solar will increase - keep ahead of ability to handle export of excess. One stop shop must be user-friendly - must serve all.

Why does it take 26 weeks for large customers to be connected? Like encouraging personal responsibility - for energy use listening to customers. Increasing ability to export solar power. Greater efficiency.
The one stop shop will help customers a lot, most vested time on punctuation, better feel towards the company. Encourage people to be very responsible on energy usage, makes it live, monitoring.
Encouraging customers to modify their demand to suit the season & their budget & the ability to export power to the network is very important.
Sounds good
Listening to what customers want increasing acceptance of export electricity. More than \$15 million should be invested in this.
Reasons for Slightly Supporting Proposals for a Flexible and Supportive Network N=5
Proposals are good in direction but light on detail. Allowing demand management. Providing environmental options.
Commitments around managing increasing uptake of solar are somewhat lacking. Glad it's in there though! Demand management could be coupled with time varying fit, to encourage solar export when needed. Voltage management should be simple. What's the budget? Could offer support to add batteries to many export.
Good in principle but depends on the details. Generally, the proposal still seems to reflect a traditional view of the customer; rather than exploring opportunities for partnership.
1. I don't care about portals or read time data. Why you wanting resources doing this? 2. No details about demand response options.
Better incentives to encourage usage. Decommissioning old substations. More money should be invested to ensure a better job of making improvements.
Reasons for Not Supporting Proposals for a Flexible and Supportive Network N=1
When you use solar power it has to be when it's daytime + the sun is shining. I will be penalised. Ok for other people. Long time to connect 10 days & 26 weeks. Good to know if solar underperforming? Provide Uniden batteries to export their solar.

Q6. Please provide the reason(s) for your answer (You want a flexible network that supports your choices):

Base: Respondents attending Citipower's Draft Proposal Forum (n=33)

Table 18: Open-ended responses from CitiPower's Draft Proposal Forum on 'affordable network'

Reasons for Strongly Supporting Proposals for an Affordable Network N=14
Affordability is very important to me.
Peak/demand pricing signals need to include options to manage this demand. Investment should include some redundancy.
Depends on the details of the Tariff structure statement. Is growth of peak the main cost driver? Would the new tariffs be opt-in, opt-out, mandatory reassignment for new connections? The devil is in the detail of the tariff reform proposal. Will the tariff be passed on to the retailer & left to the retailer whether to pass it on?
Good focus on affordability issues. Also good mix of focus between business & residential customers, as so often around energy issue focus is entirely residential focus.
Keep it simple.
Encourage as much as possible the use of off-peak power.
Affordable network should include time of use which will cover all customers working variable hours.
In principle I agree and would course aim like to have this option of choosing to source from all four of the price structures.
Affordability allows for more Australians to have access to energy. It would be great to see examples so that uses can see what would best suit them.
More info on each package & examples. Simple to understand - each package. Choices - provide the consumer the choice of package.
I want an affordable network to the consumer. Which means, I want a pricing structure that gives me the best/economical costing.
Need more data - say, hypothetical examples of costs for various usages - for the different price structures in order to decide.
Like to see a low usage rewarded with a lower rate. A stepped pricing option - those that use less get a reward. Overall I'd like pricing options that encourage responsible of efficient use of power. Schools - hospital - large build complexes - why isn't more being done to encourage solar panels on their roofs, can CitiPower have an impact?
If customers could have a stepped rate with the cost increasing on each level of usage.
Reasons for Slightly Supporting Proposals for an Affordable Network N=13
Depends on how fair the final choice of network tariff is. Aim is cost reflective network tariff.
Reduction in price is good but it's not significant. Not clear how much savings are.
Better value for money is supported as in demand pricing unsure of which Tariff option would be the best. Have no control over the pricing structures offered by the retailers.
Good to see attempt to address peak demand, but needs to consider that some customers (e.g. households with families) are constrained in their ability to shift time of consumption. Hence, the need for continued offer of status quo.

Different pricing structures may be beneficial for certain people but majority would likely stick with status quo.
Currently happy with status quo. Would need to see the different tariffs.
I would go with status quo.
\$25 PA is a small fee reductions in real terms but is better than an increase. But also not if restricts network works.
More detail required on price structures.
Usage banding should be considered as an alternative. Disadvantage people that are forced to use electricity at peak hours because of work.
1. CitiPower is not proposing reductions in residential charges as they have no control over retail pricing to stop telling me my bill will fall. 2. I can't change time of use as I am @ work 3. Stepped charges (like gas) should be considered.
Taking responsibility for one's usage. Peak usage not suitable for everyone. Step charges could be the way to go. Usage monitor should work out best price structure package to use. Times to use dishwashers + washing machines.
Reasons for Not Really Supporting Proposals for an Affordable Network N=4
It would be great to have flexibility a fixed charges - depending on usage patterns. Large users offered to lower rates. What about households struggling to pay? Can CitiPower offer wholesale probes to support people in energy debt? Distributors can become advocates for consumers to retailers.
Not enough information to make a useful judgement.
I do not like the price structure choices. Dianna had a better price structure, stepped costs i.e. more electricity usage you pay a higher rate. This would encourage all people to conserve electricity usage.
Peak times usage are not fair for all. Some people not home during off peak times to use washing machines, dishwasher. Only investing when needed. Prices may be higher in 10 years and harder to improve systems. Better to do it properly the first time.
Reasons for Not Supporting Proposals for an Affordable Network N=1
If you have solar + no battery you need to use washing machine during the day. If you sick, old or children must use air-conditioning etc. If you work can't use non peak time. If you go away for month still charged peak. Because the debate on solar power from 33 to 11 & the prices gone up a lot we cannot return any power to grid. And our electricity if in the price of power has gone up a lot. Those who can export excess power is having it sold at a very higher price. But still pay large rates. I do try not to use excess power but for above reasons do not support it. Assumes people have washing machines + dishwashers that can be set to after hours. I have not got them. Why have prices gone up for that? Is it CitiPower or the retailer's costs. I think it great that you are having focus groups. Wind power - to utilise this, lobby the government to raise solar rebates to encourage more solar panels.
Reasons for 'Don't know' whether support proposals for an Affordable Network N=1

\$25 is nothing - pointless. Price structure - you haven't chosen an option so nothing to comment on.

Q6. Please provide the reason(s) for your answer (You want an affordable network):
Base: Respondents attending Citipower's Draft Proposal Forum (n=33)

Appendix 4B: Individual responses from Feedback Sheet (Powercor - Ballarat)

Table 19: Open-ended responses from Powercor's Ballarat Draft Proposal Forum on 'safe and dependable network'

Reasons for Strongly Supporting Proposals for a Safe and Dependable Network N=28
Why does it take 2 hits of a pole to change position? Is there a collection of data for those at risk?
Is there a reason for not using concrete poles as against timber
No brainer - safety first!
Particularly to ensure that smart meters are safe and do not emit radiation...
Ticks general boxes. Look to have taken unnecessary costs into account to achieve the affordability themes
Electricity can be a very dangerous commodity. Its safe use is obviously paramount in any network. People have to be able to trust the system, particularly in extremes of weather
Speeding up fixing old power poles that have been marked for over 20 years and no replaced and making some customers top priority in blackouts, sick, old
Safety is paramount. Very important to be proactive rather than reactive
All else follows from this. Essential for medical devices
The undergrounding funding needs to be addressed to underground as much as possible. Everything else seems to be on target
Important to make use of newer technology to identify problem areas and remediate
Preventative research implementation - catch a potential problem before it happens
Agree with researching improved preventive measures
Using technological improvements to improve the safety and reliability of the network is great. Particularly, if it allows for gains to be made without incurring unnecessary costs that would be passed on to consumers
Technology developments now allow for a more safe and reliable network which is very important as the network expands. It also prevents accidents.
Bushfire safety! Collaborating with universities and CSIRO
Monitoring of assets to prevent. Partnerships for research
Excellent use of new technologies to improve safety and reliability. Bush fire safety is given priority - very good. Glad to see collaboration with CSIRO and universities
The use of new technology to improve safety - innovation drives efficiency. Bringing forward safety improvements would be better than \$24 saving to me
When you need electricity for medical conditions - you need electricity always
Don't want outages
I notice many poles in Ballarat East have been condemned with X and steel supports for many years

I needs for
Reasons for Slightly Supporting Proposals for a Safe and Dependable Network N=8
Some good strategies. Still would like more underground lines. Cable replacement/pole replacement/vegetation all would require management and have cost. ?Future planning - for underground. Like drones idea
If there is an electrical cause - death, fires then should be resolved
There needs to be more education of the public to be more responsibility
Working with University. Prioritise the underground proposal before 2025. Always a cost to the customer, use some of the power going back into the grid to pay for new lines underground
Don't like the idea of the council in your area "reorganise traffic rules around black spots"? Council might take a long time to "fix" the problem in the long term. Also an invasion of privacy with drone technology.
Replacing wood poles great idea. Bush fire measures are great too, also tree cutting is expensive and ugly too so underground is better - should put SWER lines underground - but if too expensive get solar for these customers. Climate change - how is PowerCor preparing for this? - Safety issue

Q2. Please provide the reason(s) for your answer (You want a safe and dependable network):

Base: Respondents attending Powercor's Ballarat Draft Proposal Forum (n=36)

Table 20: Open-ended responses from Powercor's Ballarat Draft Proposal Forum on 'flexible network that supports your choices'

Reasons to Strongly Support Proposals for a Flexible and Supportive Network N=18
All common sense
The initiatives to improve solar exporting is great. Along with incentives to customers. Easier access to data usage will help greatly
A network needs to be flexible to enable an all-round efficient system that pleases every consumer
All in response to other forum sentiment. I'm sceptical of the management re an online portal but accept people wanted that when asked to come up with ideas
The need for flexibility in the power business is very important given the increase in different forms of generation (e.g. solar/battery/wind) in the present and future
With the choice to export solar back will PowerCor also give customers more than 7c for it. Fair play service
A flexible network will provide a much fairer service, particularly for people who have invested in solar/batteries
The planned expenditure seems to be reasonable. Flexi Grid should be a positive thing
To ensure the uptake of future solar options make it appealing to the customer to make the change over. "One Stop" Shop is a great idea - make it easy for the customer so they will utilise the service
With exception of connection time for large customers of 26 weeks - should be much shorter
At least PowerCor is listening from customers, whether it's a business or residential. With population growth, the demand for solar and wind farms for renewable energy, different options. One stop shop for people. Flexible grid seems safer. Investing in data security
Flexible grid plan sounds efficient. Should reduce outages - safer 10 day connection for residential properties is reasonable. One-stop-shop is common sense and much more efficient and user-friendly
Depending on medical necessities. Need shorter connection time
Yes this would assist high users multiple providers plans confuse amateurs on pricing. Maybe borrow billions \$ off China and massively upgrade generation and distribution network. For future
More adaptive in extreme situations
Reasons to Slightly Support Proposals for a Flexible and Supportive Network N=18
I like options. More interested in solar. Not sure about rebates on using air-conditioned on hot days
Support the principle strongly but can't see personal application as an elderly man
Knowledge allows you to make valid choices

One-stop-shop. Possibly congestion if lots of users? Deferral of management Ballarat
Commitment to having power connected quickly
Demand - set to growth areas not necessarily equal to all customers. \$ investment in use of solar - ability to export
Competent usage/distribution - aim for optimum efficiency
Not strong enough on changing/trends in renewable/other generation/storage technology whereby technology that has been developed will all for 'Virtual Power Plants' to be developed
Concern around the use of demand management to defer line and transformer upgrades in Ballarat. Ballarat has strong population growth and is experiencing unprecedented growth in industrial zones such as the Ballarat West Employment Zone. It is extremely important to Ballarat businesses and residents have the reliability of supply and the infrastructure to support that.
Good to be able to control overload and export demand. Wind farm location has "fairness issues" with the landholders. 26 weeks for connection to a larger customer is a long time! One stop online portal is efficient
Incentives to not use high demand appliances??? Should I buy a cheap air con and not use it, just so I get a cash rebate? Seeing your smart metre reading online gives incentive to be smarter in your usage. Perhaps the availability of this data should be advertised
Not sure what "defer capital investment" is?
I like the idea of demand management. Data security is a real positive
10 days seems like a good time for residential but 26 weeks seems too long for large customers. Like solar power and batteries initiatives. Data security is important.
People with medical conditions will not benefit due to continuous power usage. Some capital investment will be unavoidable meaning demand management won't help. Otherwise I strongly support
Having the portal would make you more knowledgeable of what your using and paying for

Q6. Please provide the reason(s) for your answer (You want a flexible network that supports your choices):

Base: Respondents attending Powercor's Ballarat Draft Proposal Forum (n=36)

Table 21: Open-ended responses from Powercor's Ballarat Draft Proposal Forum on 'affordable network'

Reasons for Strongly Supporting Proposals for an Affordable Network N=15
Time of use would benefit our home
A network that does not make a network affordable for the rich and technically minded but expensive for the poor and disadvantaged
Who wouldn't be strongly supportive of an affordable network?
Put's it back in the resident's hands as to when they use the electricity. Time of use is my preferred options. Peak usage is not my preferred as I want more control
Time of use is a good idea but should be able to opt out if it is not favourable
Appear to be getting average prices down. Incentivises use in off peak periods to ease pressure on system
Affordability is critical. If it is not affordable it won't happen
A choice to op into on and off peak times
Support strongly but with options of payment needed
Prefer alternative that leaves choice with consumer, i.e. turn up heat or put on jumper
I like time of user. 2 options would be ideal - some people have no control over the appliances they have to use (medical etc.) Need to keep options simple. Don't like demand or pear use
Time of Use would be the preferred option - Clear education will be needed to ensure you are aware of what choice you make. Need to make new tariff structures clear to customers to avoid potential bill shock
Affordable power for average households. No change peak time. Trial flexible
Low incomers need this. Efficiency of network is important
Reasons for Slightly Supporting Proposals for an Affordable Network N=15
Just have to see what happens
Keeping the status quo or going with time of use preferred
Need access to your data over a period of time, to make informed decisions!
Disappointing it is only a saving of \$24 per year
Still want some uniform, simple, understandable, easily computable pricing - 45% elec, 36% gas but off what? Pay for what you use seems fairer. Times of use (peak) can be controlled by better pricing. Educate for off peak use so elderly, disadvantages, don't get 'bill shock'. Government intervention - more uniformity amongst distributors/retailers with pricing. A basic price - then give their %'s I don't want 100% discount off nothing? Utilities Grant helps pensioners
Time of Use would be the preferred option - Clear education will be needed to ensure you are aware of what choice you make. Need to make new tariff structures clear to customers to avoid potential bill shock

Flat charge
Time of use fairest method. Opt in if choice of structures provided. Needs strong communication about impacts in costs from structure change
Support \$ rewards for shifting usage to non-peak times. There will need to be considerable communication to customers to ensure that can adjust consumption to take advantage of changed pricing structures.
\$24.00 is not a lot for all the things PowerCor are proposing to improve efficiency. Greater consumer education would be required to ensure off peak use grows. The overall effort to improve affordability is not strong
Depending on costing and what is going to be implemented with the price structure of time of use
Negotiating contract prices? - Would contractors and their workforce be squeezed, either financially or level of workforce. Unsure about price structure - I can't see the "peak" time moving.
Not sure of the peak times. They could move to a different time.
I like time of use price structure because it encourages people to think about how much power they use at peak times - maybe people will change their habits. The other pricing structures will be too confusing for some people
Needing more options for different needs
Reasons for Not Really Supporting Proposals for an Affordable Network N=2
Not clear re: price structure. Like time of use and status quo. Want more than one option. Time of use most simple/popular. More data to explore option/evaluation
I just want reliable electricity
Reasons for Not Knowing whether Support an Affordable Network N=4
Some restrictions. NEED CHOICE of pricing structure - more options and to try out different systems, e.g. change over may be needed. Different needs for different households/businesses
Cannot support as no decision has been made
I am in favour of a change dependent on its suitability for my situation
I like "Time of Use" in principle, but worry about low income families who may be worse off - MUST feed kids, have baths etc. in the peak time. Can't tell if I would be any better off even if I used washing machines etc. in off peak - hard to judge

Q6. Please provide the reason(s) for your answer (You want a flexible network that supports your choices):

Base: Respondents attending Powercor's Ballarat Draft Proposal Forum (n=36)

Appendix 4C: Individual responses from Feedback Sheet (Powercor - Warrnambool)

Below are a list of reasons given by participants for their level of support for the theme.

Table 22: Open-ended responses from Powercor's Warrnambool Draft Proposal Forum for wanting a 'safe and dependable network'

Reasons for Strongly Supporting a Safe and Dependable Network N=21
We don't want fires or long power outages.
Safety of everyone should be priority.
Having had a pole fall on our farm on Saint Patricks Day nearly caused a fire.
I think it is good that they are working with other people in order to be proactive. I would be happy to pay the extra \$7.40. I think the underground lines are very important especially in Rural areas. I like that they will be checking the poles more regularly.
It's good that Powercor is trying to be proactive than reactive when inspecting their assets. I support the extra \$7.40 to upgrade services as long as the money is used in the right areas. Replace poles before disrepair.
Being proactive regarding bush fire safety is the best. I would like to see poles replaced before "double staking". I am happy to support \$7.40 cost.
Using technologies available & more efficient means of improving the safety & maintenance of assets & ensure issues such as recent bush fires are awarded. Proactive maintenance is important.
Essential to protect Powercor's assets, and make safety in farming areas a major priority. Protect situations to test with different outcomes if faulty - country/city.
Agree with proposal, however, budget is not large enough to cover a considerable amount of the network. Seems more band aid then preventative maintenance.
Living in a rural area, having all poles inspected and tested to prevent grass and bushfires is always priority.
Any money spent will be a bonus.
I have a disability which means I rely on electricity supply - if the power is disrupted for more than 4-5 hours it can be life threatening for me. My condition and equipment is NOT deemed as life support equipment by my power supplier.
If Powercor are able to meet all requirements that they have listed in proposal, then it's a great idea going forward, but I also feel things need to improve. Feel they need to gain trust and improve. Some of their high risk processors.
The recent Saint Patrick's Day fire, the woeful state of the poles on various properties. At the time of the fires and the seeming reluctance or slow progress of replacing faulty poles.
Communities deserve what we pay for. Pole testing processes. Trees around power poles. What is being said really happens.
Also ensure that all allocated budget for maintenance is spent on maintenance. If comes in under budget, then use extra to do further maintenance.

Safety is the key to running an efficient network. As long as areas prone to fires are regularly checked and followed through with it.
If the proposal were to go ahead and all the proposals are met, then I believe the outcome will be very positive.
Plans are great but do we trust them to follow diligently? More checks & balances.
Does the cost of going underground outweigh the maintenance of overhead? Surely not! Safety first. So long as what is promised is delivered. It is dependable in town, has been perfect for me, solution of battery is great idea, but how do we get one of those?
Reasons for Slightly Supporting a Safe and Dependable Network N=7
Would change to strongly if I knew more about the failure rates are of poles, uncovered earth wires etc. Are poles the biggest issue Powercor have?
Needs to be proactive rather than reactive. Sounds like it may be more long term than what's proposed and at the customers' expense. New technology to increase the safety and dependability of the network is great but there needs to be more transparency from Powercor.
I agree with efforts for safety but question wooden poles proposed. Plans vs. Budget??
Needs to include environmental concerns & consequences too, and include this is in consultation.
Reasons for Not Really Supporting a Safe and Dependable Network N=2
Not looking at alternative materials for poles. Termites not rot. Reports/Not actions in the proposal.
Nothing stated about responsibility & plans for compensation of bushfire victims or other victims. New non-combustible material are a priority. Plans don't match the budget.

Q2. Please provide the reason(s) for your answer (You want a safe and dependable network):

Base: Respondents attending Powercor's Warrnambool Draft Proposal Forum (n=30)

Table 23: Open-ended responses from Powercor's Warrnambool Draft Proposal Forum for wanting a 'flexible network that supports your choices'

Reasons to Strongly Support a Flexible and Supportive Network N=17
If I were to pay thousands of dollars for solar panels, I'd want to be able to export my excess power to the grid.
Seems the way of the future.
I think it's good that Powercor will be giving people the option of going online. Ensuring data security is also very important.
Good education. Make sure the customer details stay confidential. Better pricing for customers when they purchase solar or battery power. How long does solar panel batteries last?
Dairy farmers & regional businesses to expand should fit the bill but also be subsidised. To reach and benefit all consumers there would need to be more education for consumers regarding the 'one-stop-shop'.
Important to make choices more informed with as much detail as possible. Capacity for solar &

batteries to be looked into & improved before higher consumption. Importance of flexible options for varying needs.
Education's programme needed. Distinct difference between Rural & Urban catering of needs. Do they implement different cost for supply?
More flexibility involving the providing of excess solar to the grid. System security is extremely important as the 'one-stop-shop' puts customers' information "out there" to be hacked. Also some for Powercor's systems - are they being reviewed and security updated regularly. Real time data can help to control power consumption in individual homes.
Strongly agree. A flexible network, being able to upgrade the network to supply a more reliable and effective power supply, giving customers an incentive to spread usage around is a great idea. I feel that supporting the dairy industry is a must and, in a network capacity, would work the best.
I would like to be able to use solar more, but there seems to be no reliable method to incorporate said use. Thus, a "flexible network" needs to be a secure "reliable network", I'd like to install batteries, but I really feel at a loss to see reliability and worth from the solar panels that I had installed eight years ago. Warrant this next step.
Flexible is good if it is reliable. Low power during off peak periods. Solar needs to be utilised through off peak power mid days.
Important to me to always be able to have my excess solar generation exported and paid for - or used in some way. Other idea - instead of shutting down inverters direct the extra power by turning on some controlled load hot water circuits in middle of day.
Not all people are using energy at the same time & if peak periods need to be utilised better and non-peak better system.
I like the idea of being able to access your usage data every 5 minutes. In the past I have had issues with high power, having a way to monitor it in real time could be very helpful.
It has to suit all users. Work with all sectors & individuals.
The network needs to look out for consumers & provide enough information for the consumer to go with the right retailer.
Reasons to Slightly Support a Flexible and Supportive Network N=13
Looking to the future for more economical advantages is important. A consumerist and tech-dependant society forces a balance.
Exporting energy should be a given right to customers who have paid for solar. Need better options for Dairy and Regional businesses in expansion.
Off peak won't suit all people.
Items not in proposal, should not be in. Most investment in growth in Metro. Possibly limit power in lines to allow input.
Knowing multiple routes to access information for those less tech savvy. Continual investment in digital data protection long term. Battery subsidiaries for regional customers. Set incentives for local residents.
Customers with solar that area generating more than they can use should have the option to export when convenient.

Less tech savvy people will struggle apparently.

'Flexible grid' technology. Customer energy decisions.

Monopolised wires + poles so somewhat not comparable.

Q6. Please provide the reason(s) for your answer (You want a flexible network that supports your choices):
Base: Respondents attending Powercor's Warrnambool Draft Proposal Forum (n=30)

Table 24: Open-ended responses from Powercor's Warrnambool Draft Proposal Forum for wanting an 'affordable network'

Reasons for Strongly Supporting an Affordable Network N=15
A lot of variation - making the correct choice can really effect how much you pay. Peak time base is not flexible enough, 3-9 needs for flexibility (not all options supported).
Only if it doesn't compromise safety.
As a single parent, affordability is a very high priority.
I would like the choice and the ability to change plans as needed.
Affordable network would be handy to have an option to select a different pricing option with the different changes that can happen in your household.
Jeff Kennett went against the wishes of 64% of Victorians polled and privatised electricity, saying the result would lead to "more affordable and more reliable" electricity. It hasn't. There are too many suppliers, too many confusing plans and rates are exorbitant, and probably will continue in this state (manner). A more affordable, fairer system would lead to a more secure society, lowering the anxiety levels caused by high electricity bills. An affordable, flexible, reliable network. A dream or a reality?
The option seem flexible for degree with different lifestyles. Easy switching of plans should be an option.
What is best for me may not be best for the grid... Pick best option for the grid, but one that doesn't drastically impact on the 'Twin Peakers'. As a Twin Peaker myself, I selfishly prefer the status quo, but if changing to another option is better for the grid perhaps that is better.
Should be able to opt in and use one-stop-shop to change plan if need be.
Agree with the choice of pricing options. Combined with the one-stop-shop, customers should be able to choose which option might suit them best. It should be easy to change when needed.
Should be able to choose & change with informed choice.
We want choice of plans & easy to change between plans.
I definitely support an affordable network. I would like the choice of which peak times and plan I'd like. I would also like to be better informed on which retailer to go with. I want that information from a trusted service - Powercor.
Reasons for Slightly Supporting an Affordable Network N=10

It's fair that people pay for what they use but for different people groups locked into a lifestyle (single, work availability) the current system has a balanced benefit.
I like the idea of flexibility but find some components a bit unfair (people that work have no choice but to pay peak prices). Also, how will they group the consumers? Can you change from small - medium - large with no fees? Is it contracted or completely flexible? I am happy with the \$24 decrease in bills.
Is the price going to be frozen for the years stated? Can you through the 3 pricing options if you wish to compare bills, change from one option to another without cost? More education on options.
Needs transparency & flexibility. Assessing usage patterns over a year. 'Twin peaks' consumers disadvantaged.
Different needs require a variety in rates. It's important to know what costs & timelines would change. Can be difficult for paying bills if fixed income and unable to choose peak times. Positive to reduce bills.
Too many unanswered questions.
Only option is status quo. No saving (24) if other options chosen. Fairer to stay with status quo.
Peak pricing causes confusion. Base level reduction is good, and should be unconditional. However, families should not be penalised. Should be flexible.
Pay for while you use. More info around how you can save money! Times of day to use etc.
Reasons for Not Really Supporting an Affordable Network N=5
I want an affordable network but I'm not sure if a different price structure would help me to I want to use power when I need to want to.
Don't like demand pricing as month it's based you may use more at peak time. Unfair to charge more for peak times. Too many unanswered questions.
Affordability a priority; be careful not to punish the people who need it the most - disabled people, families, retirees and pensioners. Creation of contracts creates a way to charge default fees.
Too confusing. I am not a particular category with power usage ... except for a C.D.A.P medical machine which runs all night. However this is subsidized by the Government.

Q6. Please provide the reason(s) for your answer (You want a flexible network that supports your choices):

Base: Respondents attending Powercor's Warrnambool Draft Proposal Forum (n=30)

Appendix 4D: Individual responses from Feedback Sheet (United Energy)

Table 25: Open-ended responses from United Energy's Draft Proposal Forum on 'safe and dependable network'

Reasons for Strongly Supporting Proposals for a Safe and Dependable Network N=29
Appropriate to consider Tariff options for time of use.
Involvement with university.
Safety & maintenance a high priority.
Safety is a top priority, reducing bush fire risk, frequent.
Great that research is being sourced from uni's in the future.
For persons using medical appliances e.g. CPAP.
I support any proposal that will make the network safer and more dependable for customers & workers. It seems you are on the right track to better the current system. Minimise/avoid change. Replacement power when outage.
Very happy with network.
Because safe environment gives you confidence, reliability & trust.
UE has provided a range of practical safety options.
I have not had any problems.
Communication regarding outages.
All good initiatives but need more left-field solutions to deal with bargaining demand in the future. Communication with customers is key during outage periods.
Electricity can be dangerous, underground wires don't support.
United energy should run an evacuation program for each customer and have a recommendation.
Seem to have all research of levels of attention covered on a broad scheme (different universities & departments)
I feel that all concerns are well covered regarding safety and dependable.
People should have the option to choose however the proposal needs to be simplified.
Appears to cover all areas previously discussed (i.e. have taken on board feedback).
Particularly support using cutting edge technologies and research partnerships. More funding for low reliability problems.
Reliability is essential. Using technology like Uni research & analytics keeps the network up-to-date.
Is good support for all the proposal - cost effective
Safety like anywhere else must be a priority. Reliability is also a critical item for businesses and for instance elderly residents.

We have many more outages in recent years to the past.
Important to provide a safe working environment for employees. In addition, just as important to ensure risks to populations and residents are minimised - e.g. electrocution, fire hazards.
Safety must go hand in hand with. Any initiative under OH&S regs, employers are made responsible to provide a safe workplace.
Reasons for Slightly Supporting Proposals for a Safe and Dependable Network N=7
Limiting REFCL's to only 60% by ceasing further connections - also cease to undergrounding lines.
We understood the cost and the benefits of the safe & dependable.
We want tower available when we need it or want to use it.
I think there is still consideration regarding underground. Against overhead. Especially high accident areas. And continue with research partners. i.e. RMIT, MONACH
Remote testing via smart meters & cutting edge technology is very positive. The \$44 saving could be given up to enable more poles moved or cables put underground.
The only issue I have with this proposal is not undergrounding of powerlines in traffic hot spots.
Reason for Not Really Supporting Proposals for a Safe and Dependable Network N=1
I am personally confident that my network is currently already safe & dependable. No need to spend money where it's not needed - UE will not receive funding to invest in improving reliability.

Q2. Please provide the reason(s) for your answer (You want a safe and dependable network):

Base: Respondents attending United Energy's Draft Proposal Forum (n=36)

Table 26: Open-ended responses from United Energy's Draft Proposal Forum on 'flexible network that supports your choices'

Reasons for Strongly Supporting Proposals for a Flexible and Supportive Network N=26
New technologies have proved improvements will follow.
Future ... forces the ...
Cost effective method of ensuring network is capable of supplying demand.
Cuts down on multiple audience's involvement.
The idea of a flexible grid, increase money in zones is a good idea, support incentives for reduction in peak demand.
E-connect is a good initiative.
For the reasons set out in your handout.
The flexible grid allows for closer to the real time monitoring and response to allow tweaking the network. eConnect will be good for new installs, will not affect general customers switching retailers.
The ability to choose, use of existing infrastructure, ease of information, cost saving.
flexi grid (tick), eConnect (tick)
Moving in the right direction. eConnect with app to come is great.
eConnect is a great idea, movement towards solar energy.
eConnect (tick), one-stop shop (tick), load management (tick)
Any info we can get on our consumption is extremely valuable. We can then help to contribute to load management. Load management is a very high priority.
Choice of structure maintained
Consider impact of solar panel installation (quality, inventors, socialability) on the network safety.
United seem to be working hard to make the grid function well.
Excellent to ensure sufficient capacity/one stop shop/ flexible - more ability to store + export solar
Very much like one-stop-shop & new features.
One-stop-shop online is good to get information.
Solar customers to pay more to cover the cost of solar connections.
Flexible & smart grid that can support distributed energy generation, shortage & demand response pws "load" response is essential.
Customers should not be locked into a plan. The one stop shop is great concept.
Reasons for Slightly Supporting Proposals for a Flexible and Supportive Network N=9

Gives the customers to access a reliable energy flexibility. Right direction.
All sources great.
Good use for new technology.
Sounds good.
One stop shop is a great idea, summer save program is great initiative.
More advertising/info on incentives e.g. summer saver. Better batteries to store power from solar panels.
Love the 'one-stop shop' for seeing all relevant information - as long as we can make sense of it.
A flexible network is desirable meanwhile it should not be important the number of customers investing in solar & batteries to ensure the integrity of the network.

Q4. Please provide the reason(s) for your answer (You want a flexible network that supports your choices):

Base: Respondents attending United Energy's Draft Proposal Forum (n=36)

Table 27: Open-ended responses from United Energy's Draft Proposal Forum on 'affordable network'

Reasons for Strongly Supporting Proposals for an Affordable Network N=16
Time of use is good.
Different prices for different times, Have a choice on price structure (2 options).
Demand requires a more affordable handout.
Saving money, while upgrading the system.
Good options available.
\$44 per year is poor.
Could propose the off peak Tariff be i.e. 11:00pm - 7:00am and make it easily understandable especially for retirees and pensioners.
Thought out ways for customers to take advantage on saving, tailor your bill to suit your lifestyle.
United energy seem to be listening to their customers and having choice is what many people want.
As I'm aware of many people who struggle to pay high electricity bills. Need to have system affordable for all. However, I do not want any reliance on fossil fuels which might be cheaper. Important to move to renewables which will soon be the cheapest and best for our planet.
Incentive to use off peak power.
Not too many tariff options. The "user pay" principle is a good way forward. A peak + non-peak two triggered structure is simple & fair. Better to scrap the price reductions + lock in "no increases" for longer.
Reasons for Slightly Supporting Proposals for an Affordable Network N=16
Affordable but must be able to pay for new technology.
New Tariff decision is unknown.
Status quo.
Leaving the consumer to go in or out as they please.
Increased flexibility across the board means the flexibility of Tariff options. Opt in and opt out is
Flat-rate is the way to go.
Education on the options is needed. Assistance to help choose the best option. Good for people to have the power of choice.
I like the idea of time of use. Also the idea would be good with a set price bill per month. No bill shock and easier to plan.
As long as you make it easy to understand. A "recommendation" system where people could answer simple Q's. i.e. usage to assist decide which structure is best for them.
Needs firming up

The price of different Tariff option is not clear.

Demand based pricing would send clearest signal. High demand users would be encouraged to modify their demand on the grid.

Reasons for Not Really Supporting Proposals for an Affordable Network
N=3

Agree with maintaining affordability through proposed cost control initiatives. Don't agree with multiple pricing structure options.

I support a flat rate. Options use money and confuse customers.

Price should be based on usage. Not on a max demand in a peak period which could of occurred only one day a month.

Q6. Please provide the reason(s) for your answer (You want a flexible network that supports your choices):

Base: Respondents attending United Energy's Draft Proposal Forum (n=36)

Appendix 5: CALD and vulnerable discussion group guide

Discussion Guide: CitiPower Powercor and United Energy Customer Groups (VULNERABLE and CALD Group discussions)

INTRODUCTION

Introduce yourself; thank everyone for attending; explain the project and process:

- We work for an independent research company called Woolcott Research and Engagement
- We are doing this project on behalf of an electricity distribution company
- The purpose of the discussion is to gain insight into your priorities and views on electricity issues
- Don't worry – you are not expected to know anything about electricity supply before the discussion starts

Our role is to report back on your feedback, however your responses are completely confidential and anonymous. We report in an overall basis only and do not mention any specific names or personal details.

Explain the process of a group discussion:

- A casual discussion
- Please try to contribute, it's important to hear from everyone
- Check that it is OK to record the discussion – for our purposes only

WARM UP (5 MINS)

Ask participants to introduce themselves (first name only) and tell us a little about themselves – where they live, how many in the household.

1. INTRODUCTION TO CPPCUE (10MINS)

- Explain that [CitiPower/Powercor/United Energy] is the 'poles and wires' electricity business and that it is a monopoly. As a monopoly, every five years it has to propose to the regulator what it would like to do and how much money it would like to recover from customers. In order to make those plans it would like to hear what you think....
- So [CitiPower/Powercor/United Energy] is running an extensive customer research program as part of the preparation of the 2021-2025 Regulatory Proposal.

GIVE OUT HANDOUT 1A ON THE ROLE OF CITIPOWER/ POWERCOR/ UNITED ENERGY AND TALK THROUGH

GIVE OUT HANDOUT 1B ON THE BILL COMPONENTS AND TALK THROUGH

2. CUSTOMER RESEARCH AND DRAFT PROPOSAL OVERVIEW (10MINS)

Tonight we would like to share with you what is in (CitiPower/Powercor/United Energy's) Draft Proposal released in February; and hear what you think of it and any further suggestions.

This group tonight is part of a much wider engagement and research program. I just want to share with you a summary of what we have heard so far – GIVE OUT HANDOUT 2 AND TALK THROUGH.

- Anything that stands out?
- Anything you think is missing?

Based on this feedback the distributor has developed a draft proposal. The main components of the draft proposal are provided in this handout.

GIVE OUT HANDOUT 3 AND TALK THROUGH.

- Reactions to this summary?
- What are your thoughts on the initiatives? Is it only price that is important to you?

3. SAFE AND DEPENDABLE NETWORK (15MINS)

We are now going to take each of the three themes and talk through the proposals in a bit more detail then I would like to know how much you support them.

GIVE OUT HANDOUT 4 AND TALK THROUGH.

GIVE OUT PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK SHEET AND ASK PARTICIPANTS TO FILL IN THEIR LEVEL OF SUPPORT FOR THIS THEME

- Overall, do you support the proposals put forward for this theme? Ask for a show of hands for support.
- What do you like most? Why?
- Are there any specific proposals you do not support? Why?

4. FLEXIBLE NETWORK (15MINS)

GIVE OUT HANDOUT 5 AND TALK THROUGH.

ASK PARTICIPANTS TO FILL IN THEIR LEVEL OF SUPPORT FOR THIS THEME ON THEIR FEEDBACK SHEETS

- Overall, do you support the proposals put forward for this theme? Ask for a show of hands for support.
- What do you like most? Why?
- Are there any specific proposals you do not support? Why?

- Specifically, what are your views on flexible grid investment and the new data services? How important are these?
- When it comes to incentives to manage demand, is this something that you think you could (or would) participate in? SHOW SUMMER PROG SUMMARY AS AN EG

5. AFFORDABLE NETWORK (20MINS)

GIVE OUT HANDOUT 6A

- Which pricing option would you prefer? – Single rate (status quo) or TOU?
- In your view, which of the pricing options best balances affordability, fairness and simplicity?
- What do you think about your distributor encouraging customers to spread their use out and use less at peak times in order to delay the need for investment in the network?
- If your distributor were to charge your household based on the times you use your electricity (e.g. time of use) how willing would you be to change the times you use electricity if you could save money in doing so? Would an incentive motivate you?
- And would you be able to change the times you use electricity? Do you already do things to keep down pricing?
- Are you on a TOU?

GIVE OUT HANDOUT 6B

ASK PARTICIPANTS TO FILL IN THEIR LEVEL OF SUPPORT FOR THIS THEME ON THEIR FEEDBACK SHEETS (i.e THE DISTRIBUTOR CONSIDERING THESE DIFFERENT PRICING OPTIONS)

- Are you willing to support a price system where everyone is (on average) better off in the long run, but in the short term there may be some higher bills to a proportion of customers (i.e. greater good vs individual bill impact)
- If you think TOU should come in, should all customers be put on TOU by default (unless they 'opt out') or should there be a slower transition - people are put on TOU when they move into a new property or connect to the network? Why?
- Would you be *more* willing to change the times you use electricity if there was an incentive payment for doing so?

CLOSE (5 MINS)

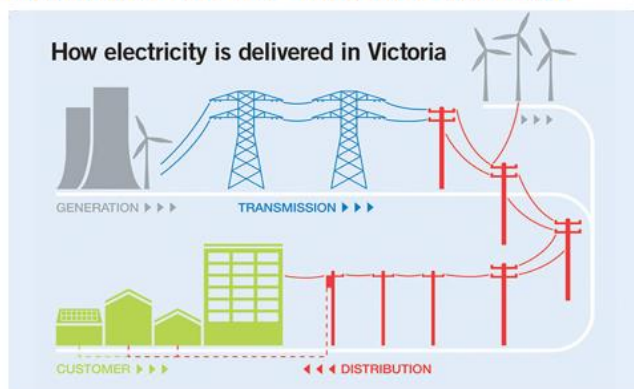
- Is there any further information you would like from CitiPower/Powercor/United Energy?
- How would you like them to provide this to you?
- Any final comments?

Thank everybody for attending today; give incentive.

Appendix 6: CALD and vulnerable discussion group materials

Appendix 6A: CitiPower introductory handouts

Handout 1a: The role of CitiPower



- The Australian Energy Regulator (AER) is the Government body responsible for setting allowed revenues for the electricity distribution networks
- CitiPower proposes the revenue it requires to operate the network for a five year period – the next period is 2021–2025
- It engages with customers and other stakeholders about the proposal



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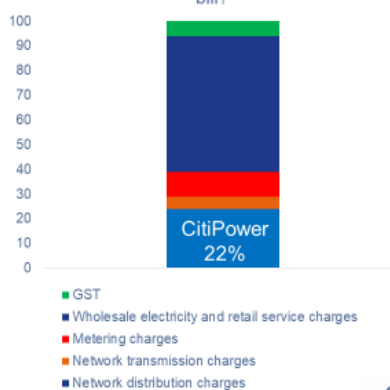
Handout 1b: Your electricity bill

What's included in your bill?

Electricity bills are made up of several components, including:

- GST
- Wholesale electricity and retail service charges
- Metering charges
- Network transmission charges
- Network distribution charges

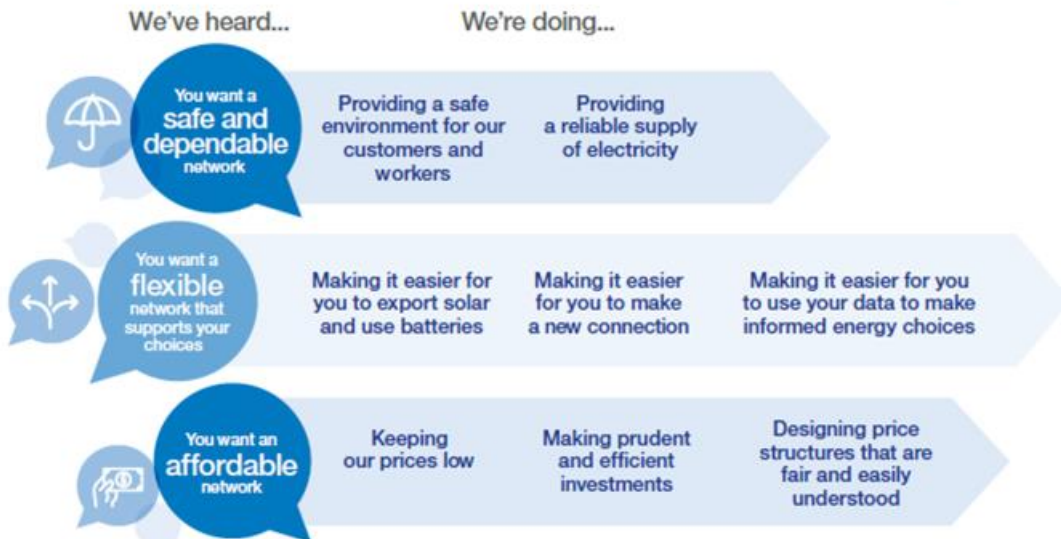
What charges are included in an average electricity bill?



Handout 2: Customers have told us what they want and need



Handout 2: What CitiPower have heard and what they're doing



HANDOUT 3 - SUMMARY OF DRAFT PROPOSAL: Maintaining affordability by reducing prices

An initial large reduction in 2021 and no change until 2025

Average **residential**
network charge

2020
\$364

-\$25

2021
\$339

Average **business**
network charge

2020
\$1,470

-\$94

2021
\$1,376



HANDOUT 3 - SUMMARY OF DRAFT PROPOSAL: Delivering services you want and need

Modernising our network in the
Brunswick and Port Melbourne
areas

Replacing or reinforcing poles
and lines at the **highest risk of
failure**

Facilitating **30,500 new rooftop
solar** installations and **1,630 new
batteries** on the grid

Repairing old underground pits
that provide access to electrical
assets in Melbourne's CBD

Investing in **smarter technology**
to enable **new ways for
customers to use, store and
sell electricity**

Enhancing the **security of critical
IT systems** in response to a
heightened threat environment

Supporting major infrastructure
projects including **Metro Rail**, the
West Gate tunnel and the
Victoria Market redevelopment

Introducing a **one stop shop** for
customers to **access electricity
usage data** and connection
requests

Providing more data to electricity
market participants, in line with
**new obligations for 5 minute
and global settlement**



Appendix 6B: Safe and Dependable Network, CitiPower groups



Safe and Dependable Network



In its Draft Proposal CitiPower has committed to:

- A safe environment for its customers and workers

What we heard from customers	Overview of what CitiPower is proposing	More detail about what is planned
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A safe network is a top priority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use research partnerships to deliver world-class safety initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Swinburne University</i> – testing the strength of pole cross-arms to understand when they may break Working with other research partners to leverage data in managing vegetation around power lines to improve safety outcomes. Termite treatment trials to identify more effective wood pole treatment alternatives <i>ANU</i> – developing ways to forecast impact of solar
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Replace both <i>high priority</i> and <i>moderate priority</i> assets before they fail (rather than just high priority) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use data analytics and evidence to identify these assets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remotely test and replace deteriorated 'neutral earthing' at your home and on our network Test and replace service cables connecting your home to our powerlines Continue repairing old underground access pits



Safe and Dependable Network



In its Draft Proposal CitiPower has committed to:

- A reliable supply of electricity

What we heard from customers	Overview of what CitiPower is proposing to do	More detail about what is planned
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Network reliability is very important 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use laser technology, drones and traditional field crew to inspect the network Use data analytics to pinpoint assets 'at risk' that may require replacement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assets are inspected at least every five years For assets in declining condition, more frequent monitoring is scheduled If the condition warrants, assets will be removed, repaired or replaced CitiPower investments are designed to maintain affordability, reliability and the long term health of the network
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customers support better reliability for poorly served customers when the value of doing so exceeds the cost 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CitiPower will continue to invest to maintain reliability for the average customer (with some experiencing better and worse reliability) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CitiPower will not receive funding to invest in improving reliability where the cost of doing so is higher than the benefit to those customers CitiPower will continue to compensate customers who experience long or frequent outages

Appendix 6C: Flexible Network, CitiPower groups



Flexible Network

You want a
**flexible
network** that
supports your
choices

CitiPower has committed to making it easier for customers to:

- ☐ Make new connections to the network

What we heard from customers	Overview of what CitiPower is proposing	More details on what is planned
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New customers want to connect to the network more easily 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing to reduce the time it takes to connect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For large customers, CitiPower is committed to completing connection works within 26 weeks For the majority of residential customers, CitiPower is committed to connecting their house within 10 days
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All customers should have reliable electricity at an affordable cost 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring sufficient capacity for new customers in population growth areas Utilising demand management where possible to delay building new assets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$14m to decommission Brunswick zone substation and transfer customers to West Brunswick \$13m to decommission Fitzroy zone substation and transfer customers to Collingwood \$17m to decommission Port Melbourne zone substation and transfer customers to Fisherman's Bend Works to support large infrastructure projects, including the Metro Rail and the Westgate tunnel



Flexible Network

You want a
**flexible
network** that
supports your
choices

CitiPower has committed to making it easier for customers to:

- ☐ Use their own energy data to make informed energy choices

What we heard from customers	Overview of what CitiPower is proposing	More detail about what is planned
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customers make a lot of energy decisions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> choosing between retailers, whether to use solar/batteries, when to cut usage to reduce their bill Customers want easy access to their energy data and want to make better use of it Customers want data to be secure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introducing a 'one-stop-shop' online portal Ensuring data security 	<p>The new online 'one-stop-shop' will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stop the need for multiple online portals Provide easy access to usage data, allowing customers to monitor their usage patterns Provide updates on customers' connection requests Alert if rooftop solar is under-performing Notify customers about power outages and provide a simple way to report network faults <p>CitiPower will also comply with new regulations to provide usage data every 5 minutes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CitiPower will invest \$8m to ensure data security
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customers want incentives to manage their demand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate demand response options 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CitiPower will trial demand response options on the network, to test customer willingness to participate



Flexible Network



CitiPower has committed to making it easier for customers to:

- ☐ Export solar and use batteries

What we heard from customers	Overview of what CitiPower is proposing	More details on what is planned
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There will be more solar power and batteries in the future All customers who buy solar panels should be able to sell excess electricity back onto the network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invest \$15 million in network improvements to allow more exports Utilise data analytics and smart meters to find 'hotspots' in the network (areas of congestion) 	<p>This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Re-balancing the number of customers connected to each network asset Installing devices to manage voltage rises due to solar export Installing new assets that can accommodate more exports from solar <p>When 'hotspots' are identified CitiPower will determine the lowest cost solution to address them.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customers want fair connection charges for solar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CitiPower is still developing a fair approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CitiPower is seeking feedback on its connection policy, potentially asking only large solar customers to pay more to cover the cost of connecting solar to the network

Appendix 6D: Affordable Network, CitiPower groups

Handout 6a: Pricing Options

Currently your distributor will need to further invest in the electricity network to ensure that the electricity needs of new and existing customers are met in population growth areas. This investment would increase all customers' bills slightly.

They can delay the need for investment by trying to encourage customers to spread their usage out across the day/night rather than using most of their electricity in the peak hours. A Time of Use pricing structure would help encourage this:

Name	Details
Status Quo (flat rate)	You are charged a fixed usage charge no matter when you use electricity
Time of Use	You would be charged more per Kwh at peak times (between 3-9 pm) and less at non-peak times

Time of Use charging would mean that customers pay for how they use the network (they pay more to use electricity at times when the network is being used a lot). It aims to encourage customers to spread their electricity use out and use less at peak times. This benefits everyone:

- customers can make savings if they are able to change the time they use electricity (e.g. by setting your dishwasher and washing machine timers to operate outside peak times)
- customers who use a lot of electricity at peak times pay for the costs they impose on the network – this is fairer than charging other customers the same amount whose electricity use has less impact on the network
- if customers' energy use declines at peak times, the distributor does not have to build more infrastructure and can lower charges



Handout 6b: Impact of Time of Use pricing

There could be impacts to the average bill of some customers, but in the long term the increase of solar and batteries on the network could bring down prices.

We looked at the bills for 2,000 Victorians based on Time of Use pricing. The average bill change to different customer groups is shown to the right.

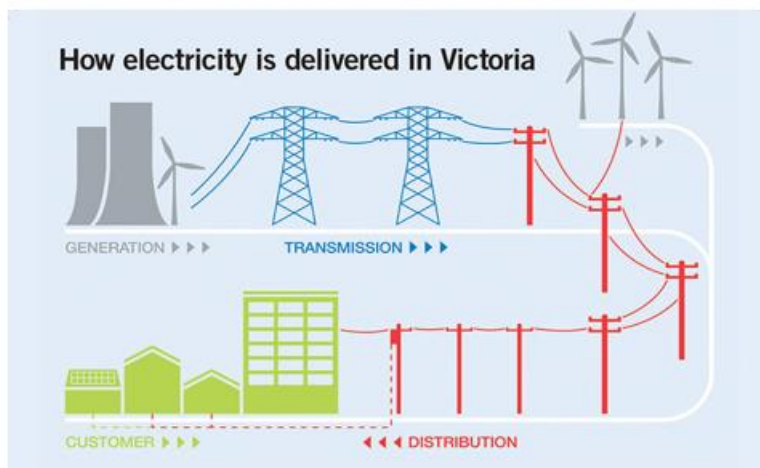
However, it must be noted that the average bill could still go up for some people, even if *on average* they would go down.

	MOST VULNERABLE	LESS VULNERABLE
	<\$52,000	>\$52,000
INCOME	-\$1.11 (765)	\$1.17 (1186)
	Nobody in house works full time	At least one full time worker
FT WORK	-\$1.41 (1016)	\$2.11 (935)
	Single parent family	Not a single parent family
SINGLE PARENT	-\$9.51 (89)	\$0.75 (1862)
	Children	No children
CHILDREN IN THE HOME	-\$0.45 (533)	\$0.21 (1418)
	Retired	Not retired
RETIRED/ RETIREMENT INCOME	-\$0.46 (597)	\$0.20 (1354)
	No gas	Has gas
MAINS GAS	-\$13.86 (328)	\$3.14 (1623)
	Rental	Owned/ mortgage
HOUSEHOLD TENANCY STATUS	-\$4.98 (466)	\$1.93 (1485)
	Concession	No Concession
ELIGIBLE FOR CONCESSION	-\$1.59 (737)	\$1.41 (1214)



Appendix 6E: Powercor introductory handouts

Handout 1a: The role of Powercor



- The Australian Energy Regulator (AER) is the Government body responsible for setting allowed revenues for the electricity distribution networks
- Powercor proposes the revenue it requires to operate the network for a five year period – the next period is 2021–2025
- It engages with customers and other stakeholders about the proposal



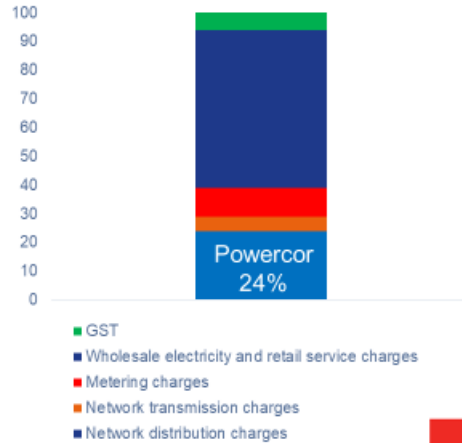
Handout 1b: Your electricity bill

What's included in your bill?

Electricity bills are made up of several components, including:

- GST
- Wholesale electricity and retail service charges
- Metering charges
- Network transmission charges
- Network distribution charges

What charges are included in an average electricity bill?



HANDOUT 2: Customers have told us what they want and need



HANDOUT 2: What Powercor have heard and what they're doing



HANDOUT 3 - SUMMARY OF DRAFT PROPOSAL: Maintaining affordability by reducing prices

An initial large reduction in 2021 and no change in the years after

Average **residential** network charge

2020
\$436

-\$24

2021
\$412

Average **business** network charge

2020
\$1,672

-\$90

2021
\$1,582



HANDOUT 3: SUMMARY OF DRAFT PROPOSAL: Delivering services you want and need

Connecting more than 110,000 new customers across rural and Western Victoria	Replacing or reinforcing poles and lines at the highest risk of failure	Facilitating 180,000 new rooftop solar installations and 4,000 new batteries on the network
Investing \$150m across our network to help manage bushfire risk	Investing in smarter technology to enable new ways for customers to use, store and sell electricity	Enhance the security of critical IT systems in response to a heightened threat environment
Adding capacity in Tarneit, Torquay and Western Melbourne to support residential development	Supporting the Victorian Government's 40% renewable electricity target by connecting solar and wind farms in southern and northern Victoria	Introducing a one stop shop for customers to access electricity usage data and connection requests



Appendix 6F: Safe and Dependable Network, Powercor groups



Safe and Dependable Network



In its Draft Proposal Powercor has committed to:

- ☐ A safe environment for its customers and workers

What we heard from customers	Overview of what Powercor is proposing	More detail about what is planned
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A safe network is a top priority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use partnerships with experts to deliver world-class safety initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Swinburne University</i> – testing the strength of power pole cross-arms to understand when they may break <i>CSIRO</i> – catastrophic bushfire consequence modelling Investigating alternative materials to cover overhead lines and prevent fires starting Testing termite treatment for wood poles <i>ANU</i> – solar forecasting to achieve better network use
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Replace both <i>high priority</i> and <i>moderate priority</i> assets before they fail (rather than just high priority) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use data analytics and evidence to identify these assets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Testing and replacing service cables connecting your home to our powerlines Remote testing for faults using smart meters Inspecting and replacing 'double-staked' poles Enclosing assets in protective covers and maintaining safe distances between our assets and the community



Safe and Dependable Network

You want a
safe and
dependable
network

In its Draft Proposal Powercor has committed to:

- A safe network that mitigates bushfire risks

What we heard from customers	Overview of what Powercor is proposing	More detail about what is planned
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reducing bushfire risk is paramount 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frequent inspections of network Inspection of private lines Replacing uncovered high voltage switches with enclosed ones 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In high bushfire risk areas, Powercor will inspect network assets on a two-and-a-half year cycle, rather than a five-year cycle used in other locations In high-risk areas, Powercor will inspect customers' private power lines every two-and-a-half years to make sure they're in good operating condition Powercor will invest \$9m to replace uncovered high voltage switches with enclosed ones (original uncovered switches were installed up to 50 years ago)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community concerned about the age of wood power poles and their appearance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase pole replacements in the South-west Considering undergrounding of power lines in bushfire areas by 2025 (not in the proposal at the moment) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Powercor proposes to replace an additional 5,000 poles during 2021-2025 at the cost of about \$50m, bringing forward replacements that would be medium priority for replacement (rather than high priority) Powercor is considering undergrounding or covering all lines in bushfire areas (250km of lines are underground but 450km remain) This would require \$140m in investment by 2025 and would be an additional cost to customers to what is proposed (around \$7.40 per year per customer)



Safe and Dependable Network

You want a
safe and
dependable
network

In its Draft Proposal Powercor has committed to:

- A reliable supply of electricity

What we heard from customers	Overview of what Powercor is proposing	More detail about what is planned
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Network reliability is very important 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use laser technology, drones and traditional field crew to inspect the network Use data analytics to pinpoint assets 'at risk' that may require replacement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This approach is different to just replacing assets when they reach a certain age – it is based on assets' condition and previous experience with failure Powercor investments are designed to maintain affordability, reliability and the long term health of the network.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customers support better reliability for poorly served customers when the value of doing so exceeds the cost 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Powercor will continue to invest to maintain reliability for the average customer (with some experiencing better and worse reliability) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Powercor will not receive funding to invest in improving reliability where the benefit does not outweigh the cost So instead, Powercor will continue to compensate customers who experience long or frequent outages

Appendix 6G: Flexible Network, Powercor groups



Flexible Network

You want a
**flexible
network** that
supports your
choices

Powercor has committed to making it easier for customers to:

- ☐ Make new connections to the network

What we heard from customers	Overview of what Powercor is proposing	More details on what is planned
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New customers want to connect to the network more easily 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing to reduce the time it takes to connect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For residential customers, Powercor is committed to connecting their house within 10 days
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All customers should have reliable electricity at an affordable cost 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring sufficient capacity for new customers in population growth areas Using the network more efficiently 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$121m connecting wind farms in the south and solar farms in the north \$17m to build a new zone substation in Torquay \$27m to upgrade lines in western growth areas \$25m to build a new zone substation in Tarneit Encouraging customers to use power in off peak times to delay \$16m in line and transformer upgrades around Ballarat and Bacchus Marsh
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dairy farmers and regional businesses cannot expand their businesses because of a lack of capacity on the network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Considering options for increasing capacity of power lines in regional areas (not in the proposal at the moment) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Options include either: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Farmers and businesses getting a generator or a battery, Investment in network capacity that is either paid for by farmers and businesses who need it or by all customers



Flexible Network

You want a
**flexible
network** that
supports your
choices

Powercor has committed to making it easier for customers to:

- ☐ Export solar and use batteries

What we heard from customers	Overview of what Powercor is proposing	More details on what is planned
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There will be more solar power and batteries in the future All customers who buy solar panels should be able to sell excess electricity back onto the network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invest \$35 million in 'flexible grid' technology Invest \$90 million in network improvements to allow more exports 	<p>'Flexible grid' will help Powercor to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor and control the power load on the network Divert excess electricity away from points where the network is overloaded Better manage voltage variations that occur as a result of solar and battery use <p>Network improvements are also necessary to allow more exports. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Re-balancing the number of customers connected to each part of the network Installing devices to manage voltage rises New local transformers



Flexible Network



Powercor has committed to making it easier for customers to:

- ☐ Use their own energy data to make informed energy choices

What we heard from customers	Overview of what Powercor is proposing	More detail about what is planned
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customers make a lot of energy decisions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> choosing between retailers, whether to use solar/batteries, when to cut usage to reduce their bill Customers want easy access to their energy data and want to make better use of it Customers want data to be secure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introducing a 'one-stop-shop' online portal Ensuring data security 	<p>The new online 'one-stop-shop' will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stop the need for multiple online portals Provide easy access to usage data, allowing customers to monitor their usage patterns Provide updates on customers' connection requests Alert if rooftop solar is under-performing Notify customers about power outages and provide a simple way to report network faults <p>Powercor will also comply with new regulations to provide usage data every 5 minutes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Powercor will invest \$18m to ensure data security
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customers want incentives to move their usage from peak times 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate options for this 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Powercor will incentivise customers to spread their usage, so less investment will be required in infrastructure

Appendix 6H: Affordable Network, Powercor groups

HANDOUT 6A: PRICING OPTIONS

Currently your distributor will need to further invest in the electricity network to ensure that the electricity needs of new and existing customers are met in population growth areas. This investment would increase all customers' bills slightly.

They can delay the need for investment by trying to encourage customers to spread their usage out across the day/night rather than using most of their electricity in the peak hours. A Time of Use pricing structure would help encourage this:

Name	Details
Status Quo (flat rate)	You are charged a fixed usage charge no matter when you use electricity
Time of Use	You would be charged more per Kw at peak times (between 4-8 pm) and less at non-peak times

Time of Use charging would mean that customers pay for how they use the network (they pay more to use electricity at times when the network is being used a lot). It aims to encourage customers to spread their electricity use out and use less at peak times. This benefits everyone:

- customers can make savings if they are able to change the time they use electricity (e.g. by setting your dishwasher and washing machine timers to operate outside peak times)
- customers who use a lot of electricity at peak times pay for the costs they impose on the network – this is fairer than charging other customers the same amount whose electricity use has less impact on the network
- if customers' energy use declines at peak times, the distributor does not have to build more infrastructure and can lower charges



HANDOUT 6B: IMPACTS OF TIME OF USE

There could be impacts to the average bill of some customer, but in the long term the increase of solar and batteries on the network could bring down prices.

The average bill change to different groups is shown to the right.

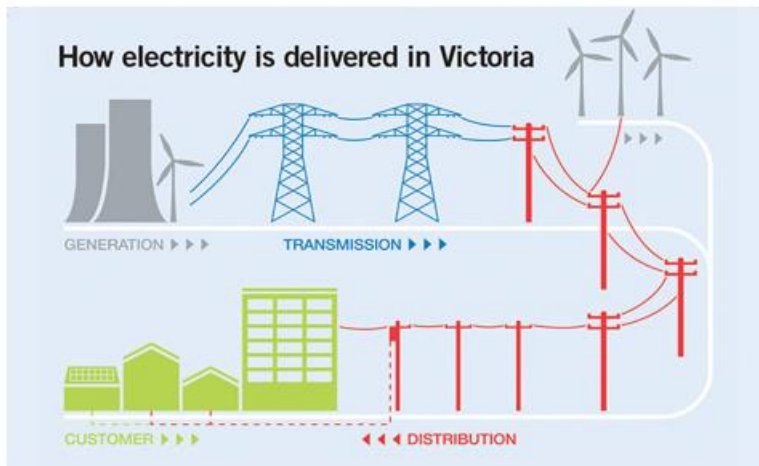
However, it must be noted that bills could still go up for some vulnerable people, even if *on average* they would go down.

	MOST VULNERABLE	LESS VULNERABLE
	<\$52,000	>\$52,000
INCOME	-\$1.11 (765)	\$1.17 (1186)
	Nobody in house works full time	At least one full time worker
FT WORK	-\$1.41 (1016)	\$2.11 (935)
	Single parent family	Not a single parent family
SINGLE PARENT	-\$9.51 (89)	\$0.75 (1862)
	Children	No children
CHILDREN IN THE HOME	-\$0.45 (533)	\$0.21 (1418)
	Retired	Not retired
RETIRED/ RETIREMENT INCOME	-\$0.46 (597)	\$0.20 (1354)
	No gas	Has gas
MAINS GAS	-\$13.86 (328)	\$3.14 (1623)
	Rental	Owned/ mortgage
HOUSEHOLD TENANCY STATUS	-\$4.98 (466)	\$1.93 (1485)
	Concession	No Concession
ELIGIBLE FOR CONCESSION	-\$1.59 (737)	\$1.41 (1214)



Appendix 6I: United Energy introductory handouts

Handout 1a: The role of United Energy



- The Australian Energy Regulator (AER) is the Government body responsible for setting allowed revenues for the electricity distribution networks
- United Energy proposes the revenue it requires to operate the network for a five year period – the next period is 2021–2025
- It engages with customers and other stakeholders about the proposal

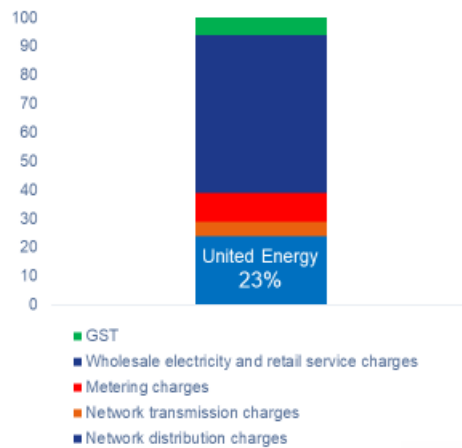
Handout 1b: Your electricity bill

What's included in your bill?

Electricity bills are made up of several components, including:

- GST
- Wholesale electricity and retail service charges
- Metering charges
- Network transmission charges
- Network distribution charges

What charges are included in an average electricity bill?

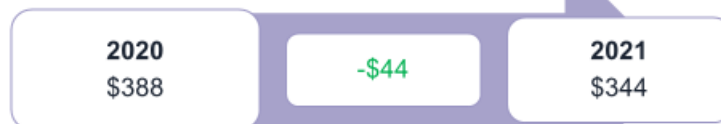


united energy 

HANDOUT 3 - SUMMARY OF DRAFT PROPOSAL: Maintaining affordability by reducing prices

An initial large reduction in 2021 and no change until 2025

Average **residential** network charge



Average **business** network charge



united energy 

HANDOUT 3: SUMMARY OF DRAFT PROPOSAL

Delivering services you want and need

Connecting more than 75,000 new customers across south east Melbourne and the Mornington Peninsula	Replacing or reinforcing poles and lines at the highest risk of failure	Facilitating 50,720 new rooftop solar installations and 2,040 new batteries on the network
Upgrades at East Malvern, Mornington, Doncaster and Keysborough zone substations for new customers and to reduce supply risk	Investing in smarter technology to enable new ways for customers to use, store and sell electricity	Enhancing the security of critical IT systems in response to a heightened threat environment
Supporting major infrastructure projects that will help the Victorian economy such as North East link	Introducing an online eConnect portal for new connections to make connection easier for you and your electrician	Providing more data to electricity market participants, in line with new obligations for 5 minute and global settlement



Appendix 6J: Safe and Dependable Network, United Energy groups



Safe and Dependable Network



In its Draft Proposal United Energy has committed to:

- ☐ A safe environment for its customers and workers

What we heard from customers	Overview of what United Energy is proposing to do	More detail about what is planned
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A safe network is a top priority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use partnerships with experts to deliver world-class safety initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Swinburne University</i> – testing the strength of pole cross-arms to understand when they may break <i>Victoria University</i> – remotely identifying broken lines <i>RMIT</i> – research into early fault detection <i>University of Queensland</i> – identifying ways to better manage the lifecycle of power transformers <i>Monash University</i> – researching net zero emissions <i>Deakin University</i> – demand management projects <i>ANU</i> – solar forecasting to achieve better network use
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Replace both <i>high priority</i> and <i>moderate priority</i> assets before they fail (rather than just high priority) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use data analytics and evidence to identify these assets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A program to test and replace the service cables that connect your home to our powerlines Remote testing for faults using smart meters Inspecting and replacing 'double-staked' poles



Safe and Dependable Network



In its Draft Proposal United Energy has committed to:

- ☐ A safe network that mitigates bushfire risks

What we heard from customers	Overview of what UE is proposing to do	More detail about what is planned
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reducing bushfire risk was a high priority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frequent inspections of the network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In high bushfire risk areas, United Energy will inspect network assets on a three year cycle, rather than a five-year cycle used in other locations. It will also inspect the clearances between vegetation and power lines every year before the fire season
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inspection of private lines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In high-risk areas, United Energy will inspect customers' private lines every three years to make sure they're in good operating condition
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Replacing uncovered high voltage switches with enclosed ones 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> United Energy will invest \$9m to replace uncovered high voltage switches with enclosed ones (original uncovered switches were installed up to 50 years ago)



Safe and Dependable Network



In its Draft Proposal United Energy has committed to:

- ☐ A reliable supply of electricity

What we heard from customers	Overview of what United Energy is proposing to do	More detail about what is planned
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Network reliability is very important 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use laser technology and traditional field crew inspections to inspect the network Continue a risk based approach to asset replacement, boosting the use of data analytics to pinpoint assets to be replaced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This approach is different to just replacing assets when they reach a certain age – it is based on assets condition and previous experience with failure United Energy investments are designed to maintain affordability, reliability and the long term health of the network. Factors such as the weather will still drive some variances in reliability each year
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customers support better reliability for poorly served customers when the value of doing so exceeds the cost 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> United Energy will continue to invest to maintain reliability for the average customer (with some experiencing better and worse reliability) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> United Energy will not receive funding to invest in improving reliability where the cost of doing so is higher than the benefit to those customers United Energy will continue to compensate customers who experience long or frequent outages

Appendix 6K: Flexible Network, United Energy groups



Flexible Network



United Energy has committed to making it easier for customers to:

- Make new connections to the network

What we heard from customers	Overview of what United Energy is proposing	More details on what is planned
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New customers want to connect to the network more easily 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New eConnect platform that digitises the connection process 	<p>E-Connect will enable United Energy to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> better track customers' connection requests provide accurate cost estimates and save time and money for customers and their electricians
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All customers should have reliable electricity at an affordable cost 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring sufficient capacity for new customers in population growth areas Utilising demand management where possible to delay building new assets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$6m to increase Doncaster zone substation capacity and nearby lines \$8m to increase Mornington zone substation capacity and nearby lines \$7m to increase Keysborough zone substation capacity and nearby lines \$7m to upgrade feeders connected to the East Malvern zone substation Demand management to defer \$30m in asset investment between Hastings and Rosebud



Flexible Network



United Energy has committed to making it easier for customers to:

- Export solar and use batteries

What we heard from customers	Overview of what United Energy is proposing	More details on what is planned
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There will be more solar power and batteries in the future All customers who buy solar panels should be able to sell excess electricity back onto the network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invest \$20 million in flexible grid technology Invest \$15 million in network improvements 	<p>Flexible grid will enable United Energy to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor and control the power load on the network divert exported electricity away from points where the network is overloaded better manage voltage variations that occur as a result of solar and battery use <p>Network improvements are also necessary to accommodate more exports. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> re-balancing the number of customers connected to each part of the network installing devices to manage voltage rises new local transformers.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customers want fair connection charges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> United Energy is still developing a fair approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> United Energy is seeking feedback on its connection policy, potentially asking only large solar customers to pay more to cover the cost of solar connections



Flexible Network



United Energy has committed to making it easier for customers to:

- Use their own energy data to make informed energy choices

What we heard from customers	Overview of what United Energy is proposing	More detail about what is planned
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customers make a lot of energy decisions: choosing between retail offers, whether to use solar and batteries, and when to cut usage to reduce their bill Customers want access to their energy data and would like to make better use of this data Customers want easily accessible information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introducing a 'one-stop-shop' online portal for all information relevant to customers 	<p>The new online 'one-stop-shop' will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stop the need for multiple online portals Provide easy access to usage data, allowing customers to monitor various usage patterns Provide easy access to what is happening with customers' connection requests Alert if rooftop solar is under-performing Notify customers about power outages and provide a simple way to report network faults <p>United Energy will also comply with new regulations to provide usage data every 5 minutes so data on the portal will be in 5 minute intervals</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customers want incentives to manage their demand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to provide incentives for reducing peak demand, which defers capital investment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> United Energy will increase demand response opportunities e.g. the Summer Saver program that incentivises 1,000 customers each year to manage their usage in congested areas of the network

Appendix 6L: Affordable Network, United Energy groups

Handout 6a: Pricing Options

Currently your distributor will need to further invest in the electricity network to ensure that the electricity needs of new and existing customers are met in population growth areas. This investment would increase all customers' bills slightly.

They can delay the need for investment by trying to encourage customers to spread their usage out across the day/night rather than using most of their electricity in the peak hours. A Time of Use pricing structure would help encourage this:

Name	Details
Status Quo (flat rate)	You are charged a fixed usage charge no matter when you use electricity
Time of Use	You would be charged more per Kw at peak times (between 4-8 pm) and less at non-peak times

Time of Use charging would mean that customers pay for how they use the network (they pay more to use electricity at times when the network is being used a lot). It aims to encourage customers to spread their electricity use out and use less at peak times. This benefits everyone:

- customers can make savings if they are able to change the time they use electricity (e.g. by setting your dishwasher and washing machine timers to operate outside peak times)
- customers who use a lot of electricity at peak times pay for the costs they impose on the network – this is fairer than charging other customers the same amount whose electricity use has less impact on the network
- if customers' energy use declines at peak times, the distributor does not have to build more infrastructure and can lower charges



Handout 6b: Impacts of Time of Use

There could be impacts to the average bill of some customer, but in the long term the increase of solar and batteries on the network could bring down prices.

The average bill change to different groups is shown to the right.

However, it must be noted that bills could still go up for some vulnerable people, even if *on average* they would go down.

	MOST VULNERABLE	LESS VULNERABLE
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