

Energy Charter Consultation: Feedback Report

January 2019

The final version of the *Energy Charter* and *The Energy Charter in Operation* incorporates feedback on the Consultation Draft from the End-User Consultation Group (EUCG), the energy industry, an extensive range of stakeholders and further input from Industry Working Group (IWG) members.

We thank all of those stakeholders that were involved in the Energy Charter consultation for your frank and constructive feedback.

Public consultation took place between 20 September and 17 October 2018. We received 21 public submissions, which are available on the Energy Charter website. Further, approximately 200 individuals also provided feedback through:

- Webinars and targeted teleconferences with support from Energy Consumers Australia (ECA)
- Stakeholder forums and engagement with IWG customer panels and councils
- One-on-one briefings with the AEMC, AER, ACCC, AEMO, ARENA, Ministers/Departments and state regulators.
- Media, with articles appearing in the Australian Financial Review, Energy Source and Distribution Magazine, and Energy Magazine.

Feedback from the public consultation indicated that stakeholders were supportive of the intent and direction of the Energy Charter.

The purpose of this report is to consolidate the feedback and demonstrate how it has been taken into account. Key items of feedback and our response has been summarised below and outlined in more detail in Appendix One.

YOUR FEEDBACK	OUR RESPONSE
Stressed the need for clear, measurable, outcomes	Agreed and identified as a key part of the 2019 workplan.
Sustainability – be more explicit about emissions reduction and the move to a cleaner future	Principle Three has been substantially revised to reflect this feedback. Further engagement with expert stakeholders was undertaken to inform these changes and to ensure that the revisions met with stakeholder expectations.
Articulate the values that underpin the Charter	The IWG developed a set of values to underpin signatories' approach to embedding the Energy Charter. This is now included in the final version.
Articulate the vision for the future/be more future focused	The Introduction and Principle Three have been updated to reflect this.
Principle 5: Make it clear this applies to business customers as well as residential	This has been clarified but we note that large commercial customers will have different customer and contractual relationships with energy businesses.
Emphasis on the need for broad signatory base	Further engagement with potential signatories has commenced, with positive indications as to a broader signatory base.
Governance: Retention of a EUCG	This is confirmed in Energy Charter complementary document, <i>Energy Charter in Operation</i> .
Maturity: Positive feedback regarding the development of a maturity model but suggestion that the self-assessment be done after the first Panel report rather than on sign up	Development of the maturity model is included in the 2019 work plan and the updated timing is reflected in the Energy Charter in Operation.
Accountability: Independent panel is essential: evaluations should have robust processes and be transparent about how it makes its assessments	Agreed and reinforced in the Energy Charter in Operation.



APPENDIX ONE: Feedback Table

The following table identifies key items of the detailed feedback and how it has been reflected in the final Energy Charter documents as at 14 December 2018.

YOUR FEEDBACK	OUR RESPONSE
GENERAL	
Give some thought to a set of values that will underpin the charter	<p>The Industry Working Group developed a set of values to underpin signatories' approach to embedding the Energy Charter, now included in the final version as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be invested, make a difference • Be open, learn, improve • Think big, be bold
Alignment with regulatory regime	The language in the Energy Charter was reviewed to ensure it is clear that it is intended to complement the current regulatory regime by going over and above.
Need to ensure going above and beyond regulated requirements	It is intended that the Energy Charter goes above and beyond the regulatory regime. It further recognises that the Energy Charter may need to evolve to accommodate the changing regulatory environment.
Name confusion with Energy Charter Treaty.... Australia is a Member of the Energy Charter Treaty. The importance of the Energy Charter Treaty has grown considerably within the sector in recent years, particularly in the context of resolving international investment disputes.	This is noted. On balance it was felt that this is a low risk and it has not been identified as an issue by other stakeholders. We will continue to monitor this concern.
May be too broad	The participating businesses believe that it is an important feature of the Energy Charter that the energy sector works broadly across the supply chain to deliver outcomes for customers.
It is too long at 40 pages.	The final Energy Charter is a shorter more succinct document. It has also been summarised in a simple two-page document.
Challenge will be to ensure that the Principles remain relevant in evolving environment - aspect of this will be the timely revision of the Principles to ensure that they reflect customer feedback and concerns, regulatory amendments and any structural changes in the energy market.	The Energy Charter will need to evolve over time. The Energy Charter in Operation specifically identifies that reviews of the Energy Charter at appropriate intervals will be necessary.
The diversity of these businesses makes the document difficult to navigate in its current form as the principles do not apply evenly or clearly across the different business types.	Each participating business has reviewed the Energy Charter Principles and Principles in Action to ensure that they can be applied across the different parts of the supply chain. Reviews of the Energy Charter will be informed by reporting and should this be an issue, it can be addressed.
Charter would be more credible if it reflected on the ACCC reports conclusions	The development of the Energy Charter considered the ACCC report and other reports and reviews of the energy sector in detail. Rather than specifically



YOUR FEEDBACK	OUR RESPONSE
	referring to any particular report, the Energy Charter notes that the energy landscape is evolving but the intent is to go over and above regulation.
Page 30 in the figure of the supply chain, I see there is no mention of storage. Should there be now that it is growing.	This is reflected in the final Energy Charter.
FUTURE FOCUS	
Discussion around whether principles 1 & 4 could be combined to make way for an additional principle which focuses on leadership in developing future energy models for the benefit of consumers. This principle in action can be seen by energy companies that work in partnership across the supply chain. The intent of an additional principle was to reflect an outward focus looking at future networks, future energy mixes, future city design.	This is addressed within Principle Three through a number of Principles in Action, including, a new <i>Principle in Action. 3.4: Work with government, other energy businesses, the community and industry bodies to develop a planned transition to a cleaner energy system.</i>
The opportunity for the charter to identify a vision for the future, not just today, and for the industry to be leaders on that.	The Energy Charter commentary was updated to better reflect a focus on the future, noting also that the Vision is future focused i.e. "better Australia".
Sustainability – be more explicit about emissions reduction and move to a cleaner future.	The Working Group acknowledged the need to better articulate how sustainability, emissions reduction and a cleaner energy transition was treated in the document, specifically within Principle Three. This principle and the introduction were revised in that context, with advice from expert stakeholders.
PRINCIPLE 1	
Welcome focus on responsibility for embedding culture on board and management, critical that boards hold management accountable for improvement and culture change	Your feedback is appreciated.
We consider that this principle could be more specific about the impact of misaligned incentives. Under current market arrangements, energy providers can be rewarded by not putting customers at the centre of their business and energy system. While this principle references remuneration structures, it might be more helpful if the charter said something about tackling or disrupting incentives that promote poor outcomes for consumers. We note the wording of principle in action 1.3 includes reference to employee rewards, but this could be clearer.	The commentary and Principle in Action 1.3 have specifically been updated to reflect this feedback and improve clarity.
PRINCIPLE 2	
Prosumers need to be provided with strong social and economic incentives, to motivate them to stay connected throughout the transition to a more distributed energy	This is intended to be covered by Principles in Action 2.2 and 2.4.



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system. We need to manage the energy transition in a way which addresses the structural issues causing grid defection.	
Will be long time for customers to see perceived impacts regarding affordability.	We recognise that embedding the Energy Charter Principles is a long-term project and that some principles will realise benefits in a shorter timeframe than others. We also note that the Energy Charter is complementary to a range of measures across the sector.
Hard to correlate investments and impact on bills.	Capital investment is an important contributor to final energy bills. Therefore, it is important that these investments are efficient and demonstrably benefit customers.
It would be clearer for this principle to state “we will seek to reduce prices for customers”. The principles in action could also say something about rejecting excessive differences in prices. We refer to this commitment from the Association of British Insurers as an example which could be replicated.	This has been reviewed and considered by the Working Group. As price is only one aspect of energy affordability, the Principle has retained a focus on affordability and this focus has been reflected throughout the entire Energy Charter.
PRINCIPLE 3	
We support this principle, however we consider that it could be improved by more explicitly stating that industry will not over-invest at the expense of consumers.	We have updated the commentary to reflect this sentiment with the statement “Investment decisions should demonstrate broad community benefit and reflect the interest and needs of customers now and into the future. Investment or innovative approaches to solving supply, reliability and power quality issues should be determined by working together with the community, and across the supply chain.” Principle in Action 2.1 and 3.2 also addresses this point.
Any attempt to manage challenges by imposing blanket limits on grid exports, or restricting applications for the installation of rooftop solar at certain locations should be resolutely discouraged by energy businesses. Instead, we should consider how new technologies can be utilised to facilitate engagement with customers and deliver innovative energy solutions.	This this is intended to be covered in Principle in Action 3.2.
There is insufficient mention of quality of products and services - it is not the same as reliability. Maybe it can be included in principle 3?	The Energy Charter was revised to acknowledge the importance of power quality. Service quality is a specific feature of Principle Four.
3.4 in particular needs more beefing up.	As identified earlier, Principle Three of the Energy Charter has been substantially revised to reflect this feedback. Further engagement with expert stakeholders was undertaken to inform these changes.
Can't do 3.3 without tracking and measuring this – MUST appear in this document.	Engagement with customers and the need for robust processes, is also identified in Principle in Action 1.4.



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	The Energy Charter also identifies the process for developing measures and metrics for the Energy Charter.
Safety is an assumption and a regulatory requirement	Safety is critical to the energy sector and its customers. Therefore it is important to specifically refer to it, particularly because investment decisions are often made on the basis of safety decisions.
Could be useful to make distinction between BAU and above and beyond. Safety for customer is reliability based e.g. storms, maintenance – direct impact on end-use customer.	It is acknowledged that there is a community safety element that also goes beyond reliability.
Word “efficiently” missing from principle 3: smarter response to critical needs and greater use of intelligent systems, more recognition of automation.	Automation and efficiency are made clearer in Principles 3 and 4.
PRINCIPLE 4	
Standout initiative included in the draft Charter under Principle Four that customers should not have to engage with the market to experience the full benefits of competition.	Noted.
The need to redefine the customer experience, remembering that consumers are the ones the energy transition is happening for, not the other way around.	The commentary in the Energy Charter has been updated to reflect better the customer experience.
Principle Four proposes that customers should be rewarded if they choose to engage. That would seem to reinforce the idea of a “customer loyalty tax”. That interpretation may misrepresent the intent, but it could be worded better.	This is not the intent of Principle Four. Rather the commentary recognises that some customers will want to more proactively engage in the market (not necessarily the retail market) and will benefit from that. The commentary is updated to ensure that this is clearer.
How would you measure Principle in Action 4.3?	Participating businesses will need to demonstrate that they have engaged with customers to identify their performance under Principle in Action 4.3.
Principle in Action 4.4 is easy to track, good principle to have BUT isn't that already in legislation? 4.2c good to see	Principle in Action 4.4 also extends to dispute resolution across the supply chain so that customers are not referred to multiple companies to solve their problems.
Maybe include a reference to vulnerable business customers here.	This has been reviewed based on feedback, however has been addressed in Principle Five.
Thinking on how 4.2 plays out? What role (or not) of comparator websites, especially on engagement from consumers (which isn't always possible or fair)?	Comparator websites, as participants in the energy sector, will also be encouraged to engage on the Energy Charter.
We would urge reconsideration of the term “customer experience”. This term is largely corporate jargon and lacks clarity in meaning. As an alternative, we would encourage this to be redrafted as “We will improve customer service”.	While the Energy Charter retains the reference to customer experience, as it is an important reflection of the range of interactions a customer will have with the businesses, we have updated Principle 4 and its commentary to ensure that the importance of customer service is reinforced.



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PRINCIPLE 5	
<p>There are a number of good international examples of assisting vulnerable customers that we could learn from including the Stakeholder Engagement and Consumer Vulnerability (SECV) incentive in the UK, UKPN & the Red Cross, Do not disconnect register. These show good examples of partnerships to assisting vulnerable customers</p>	<p>International examples of how energy companies assist vulnerable customers have the potential to inform participating businesses' activities over time. It is expected that they will also be an important feature of sharing learnings through the Energy Charter and communities of practice.</p>
<p>Principle in Action 5.3 Why provide flexible solutions once customer already in hardship?</p>	<p>The commentary to Principle 5 recognises that not all experiences of vulnerability are the same and for some cohorts of customers flexibility will be required and, in some customers, is indeed requested. We have also amended Principle Five to "We will support customers FACING vulnerable circumstances" rather than IN to be more proactive.</p>
<p>Particularly noting the areas of 'grey' for farming enterprises, where the home and business are often a single entity...greater articulation of these types of enterprises in Principle 5.</p>	<p>Principle Five is updated to reflect treatment of businesses beyond residential customers</p>
<p>Review definition of vulnerable customer to potentially expand to include business.</p>	<p>Principle Five has been amended to reflect this.</p>
<p>Is this sufficiently above and beyond?</p>	<p>We acknowledge this is an evolving space of interest to advocates, energy business and regulators. Ongoing consideration will be given to gaining additional advice on how this can evolve to above and beyond including international experiences.</p>
<p>We support this principle. We consider that this principle to cover not only choice and access, but also bill payment and debt, as well as energy consumption. We would encourage the energy charter to look more closely at other initiatives that respond to customer vulnerability such as the proposed International Standard on Vulnerable Customers, or the consumer vulnerability strategy produced by the UK energy regulator, Ofgem.</p>	<p>We have updated the commentary of Principle Five to reflect this feedback and also note the ability for energy businesses to look to international experiences to improve their performance.</p>
SUGGESTED NEW PIA	
<p>Provide services to all customers to improve energy efficiency/productivity and unnecessary consumption, and actively promote demand management to reduce average prices.</p>	<p>These concepts are intended to be covered by Principles in Action 2.2 and 2.4.</p>
<p>Develop, offer and promote more cost reflective energy and network pricing and other incentives to encourage customer demand response.</p>	<p>These concepts are intended to be covered by Principles in Action 2.1, 2.2 and 2.4.</p>



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Invest in (joint energy industry) establishing an energy productivity centre in each state to demonstrate and promote international best practice energy using technologies and practices.	These collaborative projects were intended to be covered by Principle in Action 1.5. A project such as this could be disclosed as evidence of achieving the principle.
ACCOUNTABILITY/REPORTING/MEASURES/METRICS	
Clarity required on who will appoint the Energy Charter Accountability Panel	<p>The Accountability Panel Terms of Reference specifically identify the administrative hosting agreement between participating businesses and the Accountability Panel Host.</p> <p>The Accountability Panel Host is appointed by the Council of CEOs and will provide secretariat and organisational resourcing and support to the Panel, with costs fully covered by Energy Charter signatory businesses. Energy Consumers Australia (ECA) has been appointed as the Host for 2019.</p> <p>The Panel will be jointly appointed by ECA and the Energy Charter Industry Working Group. It will have an independent Chair of high-standing.</p>
Potential for reporting at a customer segment	This may be considered by participating businesses in their own reporting and in the process to collate existing measures and metrics in 2019. Further, the Accountability Panel may also consider this approach.
Ability for stakeholder to provide input on metrics being included	We welcome this input from stakeholders through the Accountability Panel and the End-User Consultative Group.
Suggest value in state-by-state metric on performance and how businesses are working together to deliver outcomes	This may occur on a voluntary basis in the first year and evolve with the Energy Charter based on learnings from the 2019 reporting
Give thought to accept qualitative input from consumers (i.e. website to accept submissions)	This is accommodated for in the Accountability Panel Terms of Reference which will enable the Accountability Panel to accept such input.
Ensure that evaluation actively identify businesses that take a leading role in improving approaches to affordability, reliability and sustainability, the customer experience and financial hardship and vulnerability.	<p>The Accountability Panel is designed to add value to customers and energy businesses by identifying good performance and providing guidance on opportunities for improvement, rather than focus on 'box ticking' compliance. There may also be opportunities for the IWG to meet in "communities of practice" to share good practice.</p> <p>The approach for Accountability Panel members is guided by three (3) principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous improvement of the Energy Charter signatories in achieving customer outcomes aligned with the Energy Charter • Be transparent, open and customer-outcomes focused • Provide opportunities for exchanges of key learnings with signatories that draws on the various skills and areas of knowledge of different members



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<p>Independent verification of performance and objective and meaningful quantification of progress by businesses to embed the principles will be key to the Charter's success.</p>	<p>The work of the independent Accountability Panel with public evaluation reports is designed to achieve this.</p>
<p>Encourage consideration of how performance metrics can be independently verified separately from the independent panel's evaluation.</p>	<p>Individual company Energy Charter disclosures are signed off at a Board or CEO level to ensure the highest standard of businesses' reporting. The expectation is that some will also apply internal verification processes much like they do for annual reports and other ASX disclosures.</p> <p>In addition, given reporting may be based on data collected for regulatory processes it is expected that this will ensure the highest standard for disclosure data.</p> <p>The transparency that underpins the Energy Charter process and the ability for stakeholders to provide submission will also support the quality of disclosures.</p> <p>Finally, the Accountability Panel has the power to further consider the need for verification of disclosures.</p> <p>Future reviews of the Energy Charter are likely to identify if this model is insufficient.</p>
<p>Important to ensure the evaluation measures are quantified and benchmarked. This will ensure that principles in action which may be open to subjective interpretation (for example 1.3, which refers to 'robust processes') are quantified and comparable across participating businesses.</p>	<p>This is a feature of the maturity model and work to be undertaken in 2019.</p>
<p>Encouraged to consider and consult with other experts and customer groups about how results can be best publicly presented to both broad groups of consumers and more directly to individual consumers when shopping around.</p>	<p>The Terms of Reference for the Accountability Panel enable it to seek the input of experts and stakeholders on its evaluation report.</p> <p>A best practice approach to the Accountability Panel's Report will be encouraged, and the Accountability Panel will be responsible for how the Report is presented. The Accountability Panel may also make recommendations on the measures and metrics that add value and insight for end-users and the community.</p>
<p>Independent panel is key to the success of the Energy Charter.</p>	<p>We agree and the Accountability Framework recognises this feedback from stakeholders and participating businesses over the course of Energy Charter development.</p>
<p>Confirm ability to provide confidential information.</p>	<p>This is expressly identified in the Accountability Panel Terms of Reference and the Energy Charter in Operation.</p>
<p>Clarity on public reporting and review process, ability of panel to make "enforceable recommendations"</p>	<p>The Accountability Panel Terms of Reference indicates that "The Energy Charter Panel is a collaborative forum and the Independent Chair will encourage consensus about preferred course of</p>



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	action however, it has no directive authority over signatories". The Panel will have power to publicly identify where suggested actions have not been taken up.
Needs to complement rather than replicate existing reporting and regulatory frameworks	We agree and have sought to use existing measures and metrics in the early years of the Energy Charter – with any gaps being identified over time. Intention is to consult with agencies who already collect and collate data to ensure complementarity.
For whom is the annual report written?	The Accountability Panel Report will be publicly available to all interested parties via the Energy Charter Website It is designed to be accessible to all stakeholders, including customers, advocates and representative bodies, energy institutions and decision makers.
Who would receive the Panel report?	The Accountability Panel Report will be publicly available to all interested parties via the Energy Charter Website
Is the report a collation of feedback or observations across the industry or specific to company performance?	The Panel Report is from the independent Accountability Panel and will be a combination of both industry and company specific performance measures, focused on identifying good performance and encouraging continuous improvement.
How will the panel benchmark acceptable standards given the different roles of companies?	<p>There is a range of information already reported by businesses and the value of the Energy Charter will be consolidating this in a central place in an accessible format.</p> <p>Opportunities for commonality either across the supply chain or within a supply chain level, are being considered to enhance the comparability of individual businesses' reports.</p> <p>The Accountability Panel will have the ability to call out certain disclosures and benchmark what it considers to be good and where it encourages continuous improvement.</p>
Interested in how the reporting measures and metrics are devised and how they will evolve over time, including what detail will be required in the disclosure templates being developed.	<p>Supporting businesses are currently collating the measures and metrics they already adopt, to determine how they can be used to report against each Principle in Action in 2019. These should demonstrate how individual business performance is contributing to better energy sector performance and customer outcomes as a whole.</p> <p>Opportunities for commonality either across the supply chain or within a supply chain level, are being considered to enhance comparability of reports.</p> <p>The first year of reporting will be important to inform the ongoing progress and implementation of the Energy Charter. The quality and nature of reports will naturally evolve over time. Measures and metrics for the 2020 reporting period will be informed by learnings, evaluations and recommendations coming out of 2019 reporting experience. Templates for 2019</p>



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	will be informed by the measures and metrics collated by Foundation supporters of the Energy Charter.
Consider the relationship with regulators and the role for Ombudsman schemes	It is expected that feedback from Ombudsman and regulators will be sought in identifying the appropriate measures and metrics. We would also expect that they will have the ability to engage with the Independent Panel as appropriate.
Evaluations should have robust processes and ability for stakeholders to contribute views to the evaluation process and communicate its expectations in advance of each reporting period.	The Accountability Panel Terms of Reference identify the process that the Accountability Panel is expected to undertake. The Accountability Panel can consider feedback from stakeholders. It is expected that Accountability Panel members will also have views on the approach to consultation and that the End-User Consultative Group will be an important means of seeking end-user feedback prior to undertaking the evaluation.
Terms of reference should outline an expectation for the Panel to challenge businesses who are not achieving the expected standards and that standards will also evolve over time.	<p>The Accountability Panel will be independent with a Chair of high standing. Its Terms of Reference specifically identifies a principle-based approach to assessment, that is intended to be constructive and focussed on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous improvement of the Energy Charter signatories • Be transparent, open and outcomes focused • Provide opportunities for exchanges of key learnings amongst signatories that draws on the various skills and areas of knowledge of different members <p>We expect that overtime, the development of a maturity model will enable businesses to baseline the status quo of each business relative to their peers, and then incentivise them to improve their standards overtime.</p>
Appropriate that Panel accept truth of disclosure but distinction between accepting reports of fact and accepting characterisations of those facts.	The Accountability Panel will be encouraged to be robust in its evaluations and reporting.
Support flexibility on the metrics and measures to be reported - this flexibility should be used to ensure that the reporting structure is subject to continuous improvement.	It is recognised in the Energy Charter in Operation that the measures and metrics that are reported will evolve over time as experience with the Energy Charter develops and as the context in which the Energy Charter operates evolves. Flexibility is a key feature of this approach.
Support signatories having the flexibility to determine appropriate reporting metrics and process to collate measures and metrics already collected and reported on by businesses that could also be used to report against the Charter principles and principles in action.	There will be an ongoing role for an End-User Consultative group to engage on these key issues.



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<p>Consistency with year on year reporting (vertical consistency) and consistency between signatories (horizontal consistency) where possible, both within and across the supply chain.</p>	<p>We agree and this is intended in the development of the Energy Charter reporting processes, noting that there will be differences in the metrics used based on where in the supply chain a business is. The intent is to develop as much consistency in reporting as is possible.</p>
<p>Further information is required on the composition, role and powers of the Panel to clarify who monitors performance against the Charter.</p>	<p>Further clarity is now provided in the Energy Charter in Operation and in the Accountability Panel Terms of Reference.</p>
<p>Governance framework primarily focuses on self-reporting but involves a panel that can assess those reports and evaluate performance. We urge that the charter be clear that the panel has a duty to call out and name poor performers, rather for this be hidden. It is only with this sort of transparency will there be incentives on energy industry participants to improve.</p>	<p>The Accountability Panel will be independent with a Chair of high standing and its Terms of Reference to identify its scope. The Accountability Panel has a mandate to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consider what actions have been taken by signatories over the prior reporting period • identify opportunities for signatories to improve, including by reference to feedback from customers (either directly or indirectly) • recognise appropriate industry 'best practice • be forward-focused. <p>These activities should take account of the priorities and objectives the signatories have identified as part of its own Energy Charter Principles maturity assessment.</p> <p>The key activities to meet this mandate include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • evaluating the annual disclosures by signatories • publishing an annual report about how signatories are individually performing against Energy Charter principles and observations at an overall industry level about consumer outcomes • contribute to sharing experiences and learnings to encourage continuous improvement by signatories. <p>The approach for Energy Charter Panel members is guided by three (3) principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous improvement of the Energy Charter signatories in achieving customer outcomes aligned with the Energy Charter • Be transparent, open and customer-outcomes focused • Provide opportunities for exchanges of key learnings with signatories that draws on the various skills and areas of knowledge of different members
MATURITY	
<p>Positive feedback regarding the development of maturity model</p>	<p>There has been strong support for proposal to develop a maturity model for the Energy Charter. Participating businesses recognise the value and the importance of developing a meaningful model, informed by transparent information and the advice of the Accountability Panel.</p>



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	<p>In considering the development of the maturity model, it has been identified that there is clear value in getting the insights from the Accountability Panel from the first evaluations in 2019. This also recognises that participating businesses will have had the experience of collating their disclosure information and the measures and metrics against which they can more accurately self-assess. For these reasons, it is proposed that participating businesses will self-evaluate against a maturity model within three months of the first Report of the Accountability Panel. This will include indicating where on the maturity scale they intend to progress, over what period and how.</p>
GOVERNANCE	
Retention of a EUCG	<p>The valuable advice from the EUCG has been an important feature of the Energy Charter's development. The EUCG will be retained to continue to guide the Charter and its signatories as set out in the Energy Charter in Operation.</p>
<p>Creating additional bureaucracy should be kept to a minimum and should be outweighed by clear customer benefits, as these costs will ultimately be borne by consumers.</p>	<p>The Energy Charter is focused on minimising any processes that increase costs for the energy sector which might be passed on to customers. The establishment of the Accountability Panel and the Energy Charter support mechanisms will be mindful to maintain efficiencies and minimise cost to participating businesses.</p>
Importance of establishing governance arrangements and terms of reference soon.	<p>These processes are identified in the Energy Charter in Operation.</p>
May need technical specialists	<p>Technical specialists may be called upon on an as needs basis and will be accounted for in budgeting.</p>
CLARITY	
<p>Our key concern is to make it clear that any references to customers includes small businesses. We therefore recommend that the word 'customers' is replaced with 'customers and small businesses'.</p>	<p>The Energy Charter is designed to cover all customers, including small business. The Energy Charter was reviewed to ensure that the term "customer" incorporates both residential and business customers. Adjustments have been made throughout the Energy Charter to reinforce this.</p>
Recognition of the different customer service roles played by companies in the energy sector.	<p>The Energy Charter was updated to ensure that this is clearer, specifically in the introductory sections.</p>
<p>For some specific issues, it was not always obvious how the high-level language related to that issue (i.e. P2P or energy efficiency)</p>	<p>The Energy Charter was reviewed to ensure that this is clearer, in particular:</p> <p><i>"How the principles are applied by each business will vary depending on the nature of the business, its customers and its areas of focus as it progresses a customer-centric culture. Flexibility in application, while providing clarity of expectation, is a critical feature of the Energy Charter". (page 5)</i></p> <p><i>"The Energy Charter has been drafted to allow for flexible application across the energy supply chain.</i></p>



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	<p><i>The principle-based approach recognises the many ways in which customers engage with the energy system and the different responsibilities individual energy business have depending on where they are positioned in the supply chain. It allows for flexibility in implementing relevant customer solutions rather than prescribing specific initiatives a business must take.” (page 11).</i></p>
<p>Was not always clear that Charter would not initiate projects but could facilitate relationships, or a way to motivate new initiatives</p>	<p>The Energy Charter was reviewed to ensure that this is clearer, as stated above.</p>
<p>Need greater clarity around who is the customer throughout and recognition of different needs</p>	<p>The Energy Charter was reviewed to ensure that this is clearer – specifically on page 5.</p>
<p>Need greater clarity around scope – what is energy (solar, LPG, etc)</p>	<p>The scope of the Energy Charter is broad and is intended to apply to all businesses across the supply chain including solar, LPG and other energy sources.</p>
<p>Clarity as to who the energy charter for?</p>	<p>The Energy Charter was reviewed to ensure that this is clearer in both the Energy Charter and Energy Charter in Operation.</p>
CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT	
<p>Charter could consider adopting the UK Ofgem Challenge Panel approach which explores how retailers are embedding standards of conduct into their businesses. A publicly available report from the Challenge Panel process shares emerging themes, and highlights examples of good practice and areas for improvement</p>	<p>It is expected that international approaches, including the UK OFGEM Challenge Panel approach, will inform the Accountability Panel in its review of disclosures and reporting.</p>
<p>Ensure conversations with other initiatives to explore opportunities for collaboration (i.e. thriving communities)</p>	<p>At a high level this is acknowledged in the Guiding Values of the Energy Charter. The commentary under Principle One reflects that collaboration with other initiatives such as Thriving Communities, is intended to be an example of meeting this Principle.</p>
<p>Good feedback to concept of sharing experience – i.e. community of practice</p>	<p>It is expected that the Energy Charter will also provide for opportunities for signatories to share experience and good practice and to create communities of practice.</p>
OUTCOMES	
<p>We look forward to sharing our case handling experience with the energy industry to assist in operationalising the principles contained in the Energy Charter.</p>	<p>We welcome ongoing engagement based on practical experience.</p>
<p>Need to convey what will be different and demonstrate outcomes and improvements in the sector as a whole, in clear, measurable ways and ensure continual improvement.</p>	<p>We have received strong feedback on the need for measurable outcomes over time. We believe that this is an important feature of the development of the Energy Charter in 2019. Work will be undertaken in 2019, informed by the first Accountability Panel Report and stakeholder feedback to support the identification of clear, measurable customer outcomes, at both an industry and company level.</p>



YOUR FEEDBACK	OUR RESPONSE
	This will be aligned with the Energy Charter vision and values, supported by the Principles.
Outcomes may necessarily be company or subsector specific.	The appropriate specificity of the outcomes will be reflected in the Accountability Panel's Report.
PARTICIPATING BUSINESSES	
Important all organisations are given adequate time to appropriately consider the commitment they are undertaking should they agree to sign up to the Charter, especially those who have not been involved in its development.	Energy businesses are encouraged to commit to the Energy Charter at any time. Further engagement across the energy sector is now taking place with the support of a number of stakeholders.
Must have a broad base of signatories	As above.