

WE Collaborate MOU

1. Introduction

WE (water and energy) play a vital role in everyone's lives. As sectors, WE share the same customers and communities. Reputationally, our sectors are linked. Customer research in 2019 showed that trust in a customer's water utility is strongly related to how they feel about their energy utility.¹

It is important that WE collectively meet their needs now and into the future. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced that there are many areas of "better practice" that WE can share and operationalise across both sectors by working #bettertogether.

With such a strong relationship in the customer's mind, it makes sense for us to work together. In addition, our customers are benchmarking us against each other. If their water utility provides them with support when they struggle to pay, they expect the same from their energy utility. If their energy company proactively contacts them about potential service interruptions, they wonder why their water utility doesn't do the same.

2. WE Collaborate MoU

The purpose of this WE Collaborate MoU is to create a high-level commitment to collaborate for #bettertogether customer outcomes between [The Energy Charter](#) and [Water Services Association of Australia](#) (WSAA). The MoU will deliver better outcomes to our customers through collaboration and organisational efficiencies. It will also improve trust of both our sectors.

The WE Collaborate MoU is a high-level commitment to:

1. Put customers at the centre of our businesses and our sectors
2. Improve affordability outcomes for our customers and communities
3. Provide our services safely, sustainably and reliably
4. Improve the customer experience
5. Support our customers facing vulnerable circumstances

¹ QMR, 2019



The WE Collaborate MoU aims to:

1. **Build trust** between our sectors and with our customers and communities
2. **Drive operational efficiencies** through sharing data and research and collaborate on customer outcome focused initiatives with tangible outcomes
3. **Leverage innovation** opportunities, particularly regarding sustainability and the circular economy
4. **Foster a culture of listening and learning** from each other and our customers.

3. Accountability and transparency

This WE Collaborate MoU will be communicated authentically and transparently to all relevant stakeholders, including consumer representatives, regulators, government and industry. A high-level updated Strategic Roadmap will be presented to the WSAA Board and Energy Charter CEO Council on a yearly basis, with appropriate and regular reporting on progress and outcomes for customers and communities.

4. Other partnerships

The use of alliances and collaboration has been used to drive efficient and successful outcomes between individual organisations in water and in energy. WE would like to extend these benefits across the two sectors more broadly. For example, a number of WSAA members and Energy Charter signatories are [Thriving Communities Partnership](#) (TCP) members. The TCP to supports customers experiencing vulnerability through a collaborative network across multiple industry sectors (including telecommunications, finance, insurance), regulators and community. The WE Collaborate MOU does not seek to replicate the good work of the TCP but rather align with it through specific water – energy initiatives and build on it in new areas such as innovation and the circular economy.

