

# Energy Charter

## Disclosure Guidance 2023





We are the Energy Charter: a unique coalition of like-minded energy organisations with a shared purpose and passion for customers and communities.

Energy customers rely on *all* of us. We all use energy every day. It lights our homes and powers businesses. We're all part of the same ecosystem, so working #BetterTogether is vital now and into the future.

Our purpose is to empower one another across the energy supply chain to deliver better energy outcomes for customers and communities. Our vision is that together, we can create a better energy future for all Australians.

For us, the opportunity is to keep humans at the centre of the design and delivery of energy solutions; to navigate the changing needs of customers and communities as we transform to a cleaner energy future.

There really is no other collaboration like us; and the work we do, together, has never been more important than it is today.

We are #BetterTogether.

Our strengths are our CEO-led guidance and our diverse representation across industry, customer and community groups. But what gives us power, is our ability to take a whole-of-sector view; to collaborate, innovate and strive for better. To share knowledge and connections from all sides and, importantly, to proactively co-design customer-led solutions.

Transitioning to a low-emissions future needs collaboration. Our role is to encourage the difficult conversations and to amplify the customer's needs. To bridge the gap between 'hard-to-do' and 'can-do'; to go beyond what any one of us could achieve alone.

**Together, we are the Energy Charter.**

**Empowering one another**

**to deliver better energy outcomes for all.**



## Introduction

As part of their commitment to the Energy Charter, Signatory CEOs agree to publicly disclose how they are delivering against the Energy Charter Principles through public Energy Charter Disclosures and engagement with customer and community representatives highlighted in Feedback Summaries. This includes a Maturity Self-Assessment against the five Energy Charter Principles with Signatories outlining how they are meeting or making progress towards their customer and community commitments.

While the purpose of the Energy Charter Disclosures is to publicly report against the Energy Charter Principles – each Disclosure sits within the broader decentralised Accountability Process that is about much more than performance reporting. The Accountability Process is designed to enable customer-centric-culture change, build capability, foster collaboration and provide a platform for genuine engagement and self-reflection as part of a CEO-led commitment to continual improvement for customers and communities.

Annual Disclosures provide an opportunity within a Signatory to discuss customer and community outcomes across all parts of the business; to come together to have authentic discussions about driving customer and community outcomes and share insights about what different areas of the business are achieving. The outcome is a transparent catalogue of customer-centred outcomes, future commitments and aspirations.

The Accountability Process provides a platform for authentic discussion with and feedback from, customer and community representatives about what the business has achieved and where it can improve moving forward.

**Signatories are encouraged to fully embrace the Accountability Process and leverage the opportunities it offers for delivering better customer and community outcomes.**

## About this Guidance

The purpose of this Disclosure Guidance is to provide support to Signatories in the preparation of their 2023 Disclosure and supporting Feedback Summary.

This Disclosure Guidance includes:

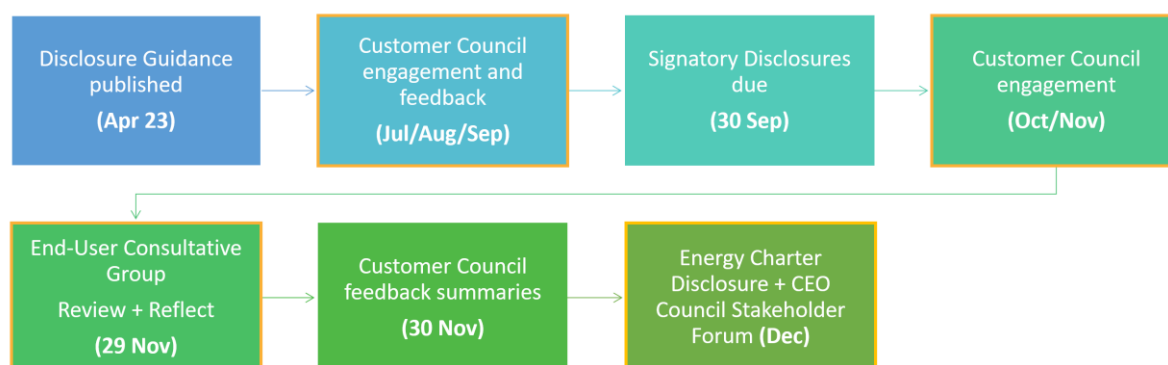
- An overview of the Accountability Process 2023
- Disclosure guidance
- Engagement guidance
- Feedback Summary guidance
- An overview of the Energy Charter Disclosure

This was co-developed with the Energy Charter Measures, Metrics and Maturity (MMM) Working Group and incorporates all recommendations made through the Independent Review of the 2022 Decentralised Accountability Process by former Independent Accountability Panel Chair, Clare Petre.



The MMM Working Group meet monthly in the lead up to the Accountability Process. To support consistent interpretation of the Disclosure Guidance, all Signatories are encouraged to participate in the MMM Working Group throughout the year and share this Disclosure Guidance with all internal and external stakeholders involved in the Accountability Process.

## 2023 Accountability Process



*\*EnergyAustralia reports to the calendar year. The Annual Disclosure is to be submitted by 31 March 2024 and the Feedback Summary 31 May 2023 in line with the enclosed Guidance.*

## Disclosure Guidance

The primary purpose of the Energy Charter Disclosures is to publicly report against the Energy Charter Principles, with Signatories outlining how they are meeting or making progress towards their customer and community commitments.



## The Energy Charter Principles



[The Energy Charter](#) sets out Principles in Action for each Principle. These describe how the Principles can be translated into a practical action capable of measurement by each part of the supply chain. They represent the initiatives that have a material and positive impact on the delivery or progression of that Principle. The commentary that accompanies each Principle also provides important context and sets out the spirit and intent for each.

**Signatories are encouraged to review each Principle and Principle in Action with the accompanying commentary as a core part of preparing their Disclosure.**

### Key expectations for 2023 Disclosures

- All Disclosures report to previous financial year (2022/23).
- All Disclosures are to be submitted by close of business on 30 September 2023 to [director@theenergycharter.com.au](mailto:director@theenergycharter.com.au). Any exceptional circumstances are communicated formally to the Energy Charter Executive Director and customer and community representatives ahead of time to ensure full transparency around how Disclosure commitments will be met.
- Part of the strength of the Energy Charter is voluntary commitment at CEO level – all Disclosures are formally endorsed by CEOs and/or Boards.
- All Disclosures are supported by engagement with customer and community representatives as part the move to decentralised Accountability Process introduced in 2022.
- All Disclosures refer to [Energy Charter Maturity Model](#) and include a maturity assessment against each Principle. It is important that maturity self-assessments are evidenced by appropriate metrics and measures and that these are validated through engagement.
- Disclosures are shared with participating customer and community representatives directly and publicly accessible.



- All Disclosures will be published the [Energy Charter website](#) and Signatory websites shortly after submission in October 2023.

## Content of Disclosures

To support consistency and comparability, all Disclosures follow the same basic format as follows.

Item	Content guidance
<b>Introduction by Chair and/or CEO (up to 1 page)</b>	A brief introductory statement that contextualises content from a Signatory perspective. This may include an overview of broader business strategy, priorities to improve customer and community outcomes and how this relates to maturity aspirations, key customer and community achievements and future commitments enclosed.
<b>“Our customers and our communities” (up to 1 page)</b>	A profile of Signatory customer base and/or communities, including relevant socio-economic and environmental factors that influence their needs, priorities, relationship with energy and the Signatory.
<b>Customer and community highlights (up to 3 pages)</b>	Top 3-5 customer and community outcomes that are <b>above and beyond</b> business as usual. These may be presented as case studies and focus on the customer and community outcomes achieved. All highlights include evidence via appropriate outcome measures.
<b>Reporting against Principles 1-5 (up to 5 pages)</b>	<p>For each Principle include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A maturity assessment using the <a href="#">Maturity Model</a></li> <li>• Performance against previous commitments and supporting evidence (including metrics and measures)</li> <li>• Future commitments and maturity aspirations</li> </ul> <p>Signatories can decide the appropriate level of content against each Principle, which may not necessarily be 1 page for each.</p>
<b>Appendix (up to 5 pages)</b>	<p>May be used for supplementary information/additional links to support understanding around key inclusions.</p> <p>Signatories are encouraged to use the Appendix to provide supplementary evidence of progress against the Better Practice Guidelines (or other #BetterTogether initiatives) they have contributed, beyond the collective measures captured in the Energy Charter Disclosure.</p>



## Metrics and measures

**Maturity self-assessments are evidenced by appropriate metrics and measures, validated through engagement. The MMM Working Group has created a Menu of Possible Evidence (Attachment A) to enable a greater level of consistency across Signatories.**

While measures and metrics may inevitably change over time, Signatories aim to maintain a degree of consistency year on year, with measures and metrics to be generally consistent with the previous years' Disclosures to allow for tracking over time. Where measures change, appropriate commentary is included to explain why this has occurred.

### BETTER PRACTICE TIP

**The measures and metrics included in Disclosures evidence customer and community outcomes – rather than business activity and outputs. If these customer-centric measures are unclear, or yet to be developed, please work with customer/community representatives to further develop them.**

## Maturity Model

All Disclosures refer to [Energy Charter Maturity Model](#) and include a maturity assessment against each Principle, validated by engagement.

The Maturity Model recognises that Signatories are at different stages of maturity in relation to the Energy Charter Principles and helps each assess their maturity against by reference to articulated criteria, as well as indicating where on the maturity scale they intend to progress to, over what period and how they plan to achieve this progress.

The Maturity Model allows constructive comparison of improvement in performance over time, understanding that each signatory has different capabilities and priorities. **Importantly, the Maturity Model is not a compliance tool, it is a tool to assess and encourage continuous improvement internally within a Signatory business.**

## Formatting and style

- Provide as a PDF, up to 10 pages (excl. title page and appendices).
- All acronyms are spelt out in the first instance and business specific terms defined.
- Minimum 10-point font in Arial or other sans serif font.
- Minimum 1.5 spacing, page numbers at bottom right.

## Engagement with customer and community representatives

**All Disclosures are supported by engagement with customer and community representatives. Genuine, effective engagement is a central tenant of the decentralised Accountability Process.**



- All Signatories will look for opportunities to strengthen the role of the CEO in the Disclosure process in 2023 to ensure there is an opportunity for feedback to be heard at the most senior level with the business and to clearly demonstrate the commitment to the Energy Charter through leadership from the top. Signatory CEO and/or Board representatives will meet with the customers and communities (through a Customer Council, Stakeholder Panel or equivalent) and participate in engagement activities around the Disclosure.
- All Signatories have or are actively working towards establishing an ongoing mechanism to engage with customer and community representatives to improve customer and community outcomes. Representatives are directly relevant to the Signatory customer and community base. This may be across all, or parts of, residential, small business and large business customer base and include representation from particular customer and community cohorts, for example First Nations and agricultural communities.

## What to focus on and when

Engagement on Disclosures include two touch points, one before the Disclosures are finalised and one after the Disclosure is published to create an effective ‘feedback loop’.

Before	After
<p><b>Share, validate self-assessments and understand improvement opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create an authentic platform for discussion with customer and community representatives and other stakeholders about what you have achieved for customers and communities.</li> <li>• Share your progress against the Energy Charter Principles, outlining how you are meeting or making progress towards your customer commitments. This includes through a Maturity Self-Assessment against the Energy Charter Principles and supporting measures and metrics.</li> <li>• Get constructive feedback from customer and community representatives and other stakeholders on where you can do better moving forward.</li> <li>• Validate maturity self-assessments, measures and commitments to continuous improvement.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Create a feedback loop and look forward</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share the final Disclosure against the Energy Charter Principles.</li> <li>• Discuss how previous feedback has/is being considered and what actions will/are being progressed as a result.</li> <li>• Explore perspectives and opportunities for the implementation of Disclosure commitments (e.g. what are the key considerations for customer and community representatives? Are there opportunities to work together? What are the best impact measures?)</li> <li>• Explore opportunities for Energy Charter collaboration on future #BetterTogether initiatives.</li> <li>• Collect feedback on the engagement process for continual improvement for better outcomes for customers and communities.</li> </ul>

### BETTER PRACTICE TIP

Signatories can collaborate to set up joint engagement forums as part of the Accountability Process. This could be at a jurisdictional level or across different parts of the supply chain.





## Engagement objectives

The Accountability Process relies on a commitment to genuine, robust and effective engagement with customer and community representatives. The shared engagement objectives for the Accountability Process are set out below and take from the [Better Practice Customer Engagement Toolkit](#) developed as part of the [#BetterTogether Know Your Customers & Communities](#) initiative.

Principles	In Practice
<b>Clear purpose</b>	All are clear on purpose, including whether engagement is to inform, consult, involve, collaborate or empower. At a minimum, engagement around Disclosures is “consultative”.
<b>Genuine</b>	Really listen and respond to the needs of customers and communities.
<b>Clear accurate and timely communication</b>	Provide information that is clear and accurate and with enough time to be read.
<b>Accessible and inclusive</b>	Offer different ways to engage including face-to-face and online forums.
<b>Open and transparent</b>	Be prepared to be questioned and respond to information customers and community representatives are after.
<b>Close the loop</b>	Record feedback, communicate what you heard and how you are responding to it.
<b>Measurable</b>	Collect feedback to find out how well the engagement went and ways to improve. This may include a survey.

Signatories have differing levels of maturity when it comes to engaging with their customers and communities. These engagement principles are provided as a base line to help Signatories focus and measure their engagement performance. Signatories are welcome to build on these objectives, working together with their customer and community representatives.

## Guidance on Feedback Summary

To ensure transparency and support credibility around the Accountability Process, including how feedback is being heard and responded to, Signatories develop a short Feedback Summary to support their Disclosures.



## Key expectations

- All Feedback summaries align directly to the current years’ Disclosure engagement process on how the Energy Charter Principles are being met.
- All Feedback summaries submitted by close of business on 30 November 2023 to [director@theenergycharter.com.au](mailto:director@theenergycharter.com.au). Exceptional circumstances are communicated formally to the Energy Charter Executive Director and customer and community representatives ahead of time to ensure full transparency around how engagement commitments have been met.
- Part of the strength of the Energy Charter is voluntary commitment at CEO level – CEOs and/or Boards are included in the feedback process as fully as possible.
- Feedback summaries are shared with participating customer and community representatives shortly after engagement and be publicly accessible.

### BETTER PRACTICE TIP

Disclosures and Feedback summaries may be of interest to a broader audience than those directly involved in their development. Consider how others could be involved in the process and benefit from the accountability process. For example, some Signatories invite public feedback as part of their engagement process and promote disclosures widely. Meetings with customer and community representatives can also be recorded and made available internally and externally. Disclosures have also been used successfully by some Signatories as an onboarding tool for new starters to highlight their customer centric attitude and ambitions.

## Formatting

- Provide as a PDF, up to 10 pages (excl. title page and appendices).
- All acronyms are spelt out in the first instance and business specific terms defined.
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- Minimum 1.5 spacing, page numbers at bottom right.

## Content

Item	Content Guidance
<b>Who we engaged</b>	This is to give transparency to the diversity of views collected and interests represented through the feedback process. Include details of the organisation and customer groups represented through the engagement.
<b>How we engaged</b>	This is to give transparency to the breadth, depth and focus of Signatory engagement. Provide a summary of the process, including CEO/Board participation and support for capacity building and involvement.



Item	Content Guidance
<b>You said, we heard, we did</b>	<p>This is the core component of the Feedback Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• You said – this is to provide a summary of the feedback received, as understood by Signatory. It may reference both what is going well and where there are opportunities improve. It could include direct quotes, any qualitative information gathered, or key discussion points as recorded in session.</li><li>• We heard – this is a summary of the key take-aways and reflections from the Signatory. It may include detail on how it has considered the feedback and decided on how to respond.</li><li>• We did – this is a summary of the actions taken/or commit to taking in response to the feedback received. This may include changes made with the Disclosure itself (for example a new commitment added or maturity aspiration changes), or supporting actions, for example a commitment collaboration on a customer or community initiative.</li></ul>
<b>Our engagement performance</b>	<p>This section includes feedback and performance against the engagement objectives, along with any continuous improvement commitments.</p>

#### **BETTER PRACTICE TIP**

Considered, informed engagement on complex matters requires an ongoing investment from both customer and community representatives. Signatories are encouraged to consider how they can best support this engagement. Refer to the Energy Charter [#BetterTogether Know your Customers and Community](#) resource, [#BT Supporting Consumer Advocacy and Better Practice Customer Engagement Toolkit](#) noting commitments to capability building and sitting fees for consumer representatives.



## The Energy Charter Disclosure

The Energy Charter publishes an annual #BetterTogether (#BT) Disclosure which sets out how collaboration through the [#BetterTogether initiatives](#) has delivered tangible outcomes for customers and communities, themes of focus for future #BetterTogether initiatives and identifies areas for continuous improvement.

The Energy Charter Disclosure is published on the Energy Charter website at the same time as Signatory Disclosures. As with the Signatories, the #BetterTogether Disclosure is grounded in effective engagement with customer and community representatives.

This includes:

- **Customer/Community Outcome Groups:** The majority of #BTs are co-designed with a Customer/Community Outcomes Groups. These are made up of customer/community representatives with specific knowledge and expertise related to the target customer/community outcome.
- **End User Consultative Group Review + Reflect:** The Energy Charter End User Consultative Group (EUCG) provides an important ‘feedback loop’ for the #BetterTogether initiatives and the Energy Charter overall.

The EUCG Energy Charter Strategic Workshop on 29 November 2023 will focus on:

- Review of the Energy Charter 2022-23 Disclosure
- Sharing update on #BetterTogether initiatives
- Review of the Accountability Process 2023

The Energy Charter Disclosure can be shared across customer and communities through Signatories to highlight their collaboration in #BetterTogether initiatives.

### BETTER PRACTICE TIP

Use the Appendix of the Disclosure to provide supplementary evidence of progress against relevant Energy Charter Better Practice Guidelines. Focus on Signatory implementation and outcomes beyond the collective measures captured in the Energy Charter Disclosure.

## The Energy Charter Report

The Energy Charter publishes an annual Report which reflects maturity observations and key themes across all Disclosures.

The Energy Charter Report can be shared across customer and communities through Signatories to highlight collective improvements and outcomes for customers and communities.