

Energy Charter Disclosure Report

2022–23



About this report

This report covers the Energy Queensland Group's (the Group's) Energy Charter disclosure from July 2022 to June 2023. It reports the contribution of the Distribution Network Service Providers (DSNP), Energex Limited and Ergon Energy Corporation Limited (Ergon Energy Network), as well as the Group's other businesses, Ergon Energy Queensland Pty Ltd and Yurika Pty Ltd.

This Energy Charter Disclosure Report is on our website at www.energyq.com.au/publications. We welcome feedback to help us improve our reporting. Comments can be directed to customeradvocacy@energyq.com.au

Energy Queensland acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we live and work, and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay respect to Elders past and present. We also acknowledge that the lands and waters beneath the poles and wires that stretch across the communities where we live and work, was and always will be traditional First Nations land.

Contents

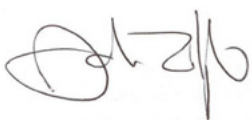
Introduction from Board Chair, CEO and Customer Council messages	3
Our customers and our communities	4
Customer and Community Highlights	4-5
Principle 1 – We will put customers at the centre of our business and the energy system	7
Principle 2 – We will improve energy affordability for customers	8
Principle 3 – We will provide energy safely, sustainably and reliably	9
Principle 4 – We will improve the customer experience	11
Principle 5 – We will support customers facing vulnerable circumstances	13

Referencing guide

EQL	Energy Queensland Limited. The term Energy Queensland and the acronym EQL is used to refer to work across the Group
EEN-EGX	Ergon Energy Network (Ergon Network) and Energex
EER	Ergon Energy Retail (Ergon Retail)
YKA	Yurika

Introduction from Board Chair and Chief Executive Officer

On behalf of the Board and Executive team, we are very pleased to submit our Energy Charter Disclosure Report. Energy Queensland's membership in the Energy Charter allows us to synchronise customer and community outcomes with all parts of the energy supply chain both within Queensland and across Australia. The Queensland Government's Energy and Jobs Plan, which was launched in September 2022, outlines an energy transition pathway and we as a business are working through the Plan to deliver for Queenslanders. We recognise this as a transformative change and what this could mean for our customers and communities. The Board and Executive understand how important these initiatives are and during 2022-23 we have worked with the Energy Queensland Customer and Community Council meeting quarterly to discuss how we can work towards better customer centricity within all companies of Energy Queensland. These have included robust discussions independently with our relevant subsidiary companies about simpler retailer bills, developing a network that can cater to customer choices and lifestyles, and being mindful of those customers who may not be able to realise the energy transition benefits due to differing circumstances or unique needs. We also developed a very productive working relationship with the Reset Reference Group this year, who represents the customer voice in compiling the regulatory proposals for our two network businesses, Energex and Ergon Energy Network. The Group has assisted and challenged us to put together regulatory proposals which reflect the customers and the communities of each of the distribution networks' operating areas and also to ensure that we will meet their energy needs now and into the future. We know that our ability to put the customer at the centre of our business is largely possible through the diligent efforts of our employees. Our employees are often at the forefront of our efforts to ensure our customers are well supported to power their lifestyles. This year we have continued to improve our training of complaints officers, provided cultural awareness programs, and strengthened the tools to assist customers experiencing family and domestic violence. The cost of living has also been prominent in our customer conversations, and as a business, we have listened and are already looking at ways we can further assist in 2023-24. Our Energy Charter journey is one of continuous improvement and we look forward to working with the Energy Queensland Customer and Community Council and other stakeholders and customer advocates to further energise Queensland customers and communities.



Sarah Zeljko
Board Chair



Peter Scott
Chief Executive Officer

Message from our Customer and Community Council

The Customer and Community Council strongly supports Energy Queensland's collaboration and ongoing participation through the Energy Charter. The Council welcomes improvement outcomes articulated in the 2022-23 Energy Charter Disclosure Report, including #BetterTogether initiatives across the energy supply chain in Queensland and nationally. The role of the Council remains to hold Energy Queensland accountable to these commitments, while ensuring the full range of customers are considered in the decision-making process at a time when Queensland's electricity costs are rising sharply. It encourages more tangible commitments across the focus areas led by Energy Queensland leadership, highlighting key metrics of success and outcomes for customers and communities. The Council looks forward to working with Energy Queensland collaboratively and productively on these metrics into the future.

Of particular note for the 2022-23 period was the involvement of the Chief Executive Officer, Chief Financial Officer, Executive General Manager Ergon Retail and the Energy Queensland Chief Customer Officer in discussing key focus areas. Going forward the Council would like this to continue and to encourage greater participation from Yurika executive/s.

Customer and Community Council Members

Rebecca Andrews/ Dean Deighton	Australian Industry (AI) Group
Dale Holliss	Bundaberg Regional Irrigators Group
Cherie Josephson	Business Chamber Queensland
Frank Edwards	Capricorn Enterprise
Robyn Robinson	Council on the Ageing Queensland
Caroline Valente	Energy Consumers Australia
Mark Grenning	Energy Users Association of Australia
Mike Furniss	Local Government Association Queensland
Anthony King/ Matthew Duncan	Master Electricians
Lauren Bicknall	Queensland Council of Social Service
Andrew Barger	Queensland Resources Council
Sharon McIntosh	Queensland Farmers Federation
Deborah Wadsworth	UnitingCare Queensland
Martin Zaltron	Urban Development Institute of Australia

Our customers and our communities

Energy Queensland is Australia's largest, wholly government-owned electricity company.

Our 'poles and wires' businesses, Energex and Ergon Energy Network deliver electricity across Queensland. They energise the lives of more than five million Queenslanders through more than 200,000 kilometres of electricity networks, and 33 isolated systems.

Our retailer, Ergon Energy Retail, sells electricity to its 766,000 customers throughout regional Queensland, with generation, energy trading and retailing capabilities. Its customer numbers make it the fourth largest retailer in the National Electricity Market (NEM).

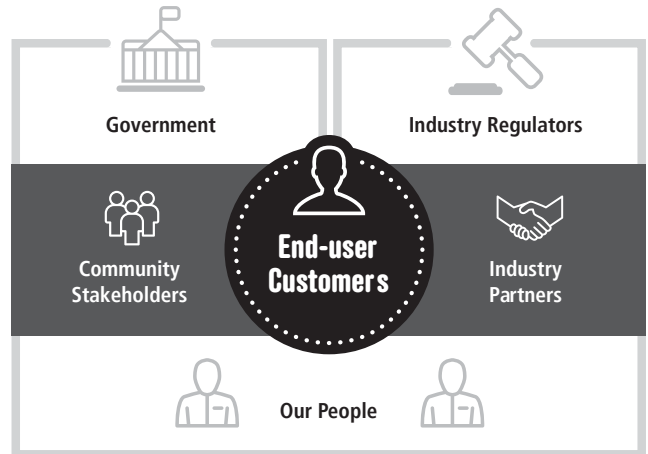
Yurika provides integrated solutions in energy and infrastructure, energy supplies, metering, telecommunications, and digital services to connect its customers to a sustainable energy future.

We energise Queensland communities from Tweed River to Torres Strait and from Brisbane across to Birdsville, and through Yurika's services, to a growing national footprint.

To help Energy Queensland to understand our end-user customers, we have a needs-based segmentation framework that maps our residential and business customers to three macro-needs – connection, control and progression. To meet the needs of our end-user customers (the focus of this report), we work closely with the Queensland Government and industry regulators and invest in building positive relationships with community stakeholders, industry partners and our people (employees).



Our stakeholders



Customer Highlights

Network Tariff trialled to gain user experience insights and understand customer needs

Building on Tariff Reform Working Group's (which consists of members from the Energy Queensland Customer and Community Council) activities to co-design a residential network tariff option, a trial was undertaken. An Expression of Interest process for Retail partners to help trial this new tariff option, resulted in selecting Ergon Energy Retail to implement a residential network tariff trial. The one-year trial commenced in November 2022, and involves five retail tariff options, based around the network tariff, being tested with regional residential customers. The aim of the tariff trial is to evaluate customer impacts, needs and preferences concerning network tariffs that feature variable pricing rates and structures. Trial participants receive a mock bill which helps them identify how their electricity consumption and demand can affect their bill and compares costs to their current bills. The quantitative and qualitative market research program that has been undertaken with the trial group has provided customer insights into customer behaviour concerning electricity consumption, understanding of tariffs and their calculations. It has also been beneficial for customers adapting behaviours to reduce energy costs and the level and extent of education customers will need to understand how to reap the financial benefits of network tariffs that feature demand and/or time of use charging.

What we heard from our customers

- Peak time pricing can be challenging, particularly in areas where air conditioning is considered a necessity in summer, and extending off-peak hours was a consistent theme
- Customers not working at home can find it difficult to shift appliance usage from the peak times to the daytime trough periods
- The simpler the network tariff charges, and the more examples and educational tips offered, the more likely customers will be able to adapt energy usage to the network tariff
- Advice on how to use load control tariffs for major appliances and providing more information on costs for modern appliances like air fryers would be useful
- Participants found Ergon Retail's Energy Analysis Tool (online energy comparison) useful but would prefer real time information via an app or similar. A mid-trial rollout of a home energy monitoring system (Powersensor), with tailored information added to assist customers to understand their energy use during peak and off-peak times was undertaken to evaluate how this type of

device can help customers manage their energy usage.

The network businesses have already looked at ways to update website content and how these findings can improve other tariff trials for customers. The network tariff trial is a continuing journey with the Tariff Reform Working Group evolving to the Network Pricing Working Group. This trial's discoveries concerning customer behaviour and preferences will assist this Working Group to better understand network tariff impacts for a broad range of customers and inform the Energex and Ergon Energy Network 2025-30 Tariff Structure Statements. In 2023-24 the network businesses and Ergon Energy Retail will look at customer journey mapping from this trial and ways they can improve affordability and customer experience.

Community Highlights

Network investment which reflects our communities

During 2022-23, Energex and Ergon Energy Network are engaging broadly on their investment plans for 2025 and beyond, with a reference group, two customer panels and other engagements to guide their planning for the new energy future.

During its quarterly meetings, the Energy Queensland Customer and Community Council considered components of the regulatory proposal project and in late 2022, co-designed the customer and stakeholder engagement strategy with other network business customers. This was to ensure that all feedback gathered from Queensland communities will be reflected fully in the investment plans for 2025-30.

Working with the Council led to Energy Queensland establishing an independent Reset Reference Group (RRG) to help ensure that proposals are developed that appropriately reflect customers' priorities and preferences. This has included the Group assessing revenue and expenditure proposals and tariff structure statements to ensure customer outcomes are considered. The network businesses conducted Perspectives Gathering, an online customer engagement activity that occurred in June with the insights captured to ensure the 'quiet voices' and 'future voices' of our community are heard. More than 130 community members represented the following customer cohorts:

- First Nations/Indigenous
- Multi-cultural groups/English not first language
- People living with a disability
- People renting their home
- People who own an electric vehicle
- People with medical conditions who may rely on life-support systems
- People with solar PV and/or battery storage systems
- Seniors
- Small-medium business owners
- Young people

Energex and Ergon Energy Network's Voice of the Customer Panels commenced in June 2023. Both Panels are independently facilitated and are designed to provide a consultation platform for an in-depth discussion, with approximately 50 Energex and 50 Ergon Energy Network customers representing all regions and demographics across our diverse community. These sessions are citizen juries which will enable Energex and Ergon Energy Network to be provided with recommendations on the network tariffs of the future and customer service, including the Customer Service Incentive Scheme (CSIS) that will incorporate direct customer preferences into each networks' regulatory proposal.

Our scorecard

Our scorecard links our customer and community metrics to the Energy Charter Maturity Assessment Framework. This year, our overall assessment for each of the other principles has not changed: we are advancing in maturity within the **evolved** assessment band for principles 1, 3 and 4

Principle	Key Performance Measures			Energy Charter Maturity Assessment				
		Metric and Target	Result	Elementary	Emerging	Evolved	Empowered	Exemplary
P1: We will put customers at the centre of our business and the energy system	We measure the mindset in our organisational culture, by how enabled employees feel to deliver for our customers.	Energy Queensland Customer Enablement Index ¹ : Target ≥ 60.0	67.5 ▲			●		
	We measure and report quarterly on our community trust via a survey using a random sample of the Queensland population.	Net Trust Score Target 63.0 ² <small>(This is a small decrease (-0.3) from the result achieved at the end of last financial year)</small>	63.6 ▼					
P2: We will improve energy affordability for customers	We track price and affordability perceptions. We discuss tariff trends in our Annual Report .	Household concern about ability to pay the bill ³ : • high concern Ergon Retail price changes July 2022: ⁴ • Residential • Small Business	53% ▲ 28.7% ▲ 26.8% ▲			●		
P3: We will provide energy safely, sustainably and reliably	Safety: We have a suite of community and workplace safety measures detailed in our Annual Report. In 2022-23 we introduced a new Safe Actions Campaign. This campaign effectiveness measures awareness and behaviours.	Community safety incidents involving contact with our DNSPs' networks ⁵ Community safety campaigns ⁶ : Target: ≥ 72.0 <small>(This is reporting decrease (-3.3) against last year's score. During this financial year, as we transitioned from a known, legacy safety campaign which many customers would recognise to new safe action campaigns.)</small>	531 ▲ 73.7			●		
	Sustainability: We're playing an important role in Queensland's transition to a low-carbon energy future. For more see our Annual Report.	New solar connections to our DNSP networks Energy Queensland's combined direct and indirect emissions (2021-22) ⁷	55,245 ▲ 1,810,681 tCO ₂ -e ▲			●		
	Reliability: Our networks' performance across the state for average unplanned and planned outage duration and frequency are detailed in our Annual Report.	Household satisfaction with network reliability ⁸ Energex – unplanned outages: ⁹ • Duration – minutes (SAIDI) • Frequency (SAIFI) Ergon Energy Network – unplanned outages: • Duration – minutes (SAIDI) • Frequency (SAIFI)	73% ▼ 72.2 ▼ 0.66 ▼ 278.5 ▼ 2.15 ▼			●		
P4: We will improve the customer experience	Customer outcomes and communication: We measure and report quarterly on our Customer Satisfaction via a survey which uses a random sample of people, who have identified as customers of one of our brands.	Energy Queensland Customer Satisfaction Score: Target ≥ 69.0 <small>(As we have moved from the previous Customer Index, a trend for this new measure is not available)</small>	72.9			●		
	Complaints: We aim to resolve customer issues and track the number of complaints escalated to the Energy and Water Ombudsman.	Ergon Network and Energex Ergon Retail	206 ▼ 295 ▼			●		
P5: We will support customers facing vulnerable circumstances	Through Ergon Energy Retail, we raise awareness of rebates to eligible customers and support customers through our hardship program.	Customers accessing rebates Customers on hardship program Customers successfully transitioned from hardship	223,038 ▼ 6,186 ▲ 5,134 ▼				●	

¹ Energy Queensland's annual Employee Engagement Survey result. Number based on responses to four questions about enabling customer outcomes.

² Net Trust Score is a mean score of 100 to the question "How much do you trust (INSERT BRAND) to do what is right?".

³ More details at <https://qhes.com.au/>

⁴ Energy prices set by the Queensland Competition Authority.

⁵ This figure increased by 8 % in line with the rate of housing, infrastructure, and civil building across the state.

⁶ Safety Campaign result is a mean score of 100, provided by averaging the scores received between Awareness and Behaviours.

⁷ This figure is largely due to the indirect emissions of energy lost while distributing electricity across the network. The year saw a 2% increase, with an increase attributed to indirect emissions of energy lost while distributing electricity across the network.

⁸ More details at <https://qhes.com.au/>

⁹ Ergon Energy Network and Energex met umbrella targets for network-wide unplanned outage performance, for both System Average Interruption Duration Index (SAIDI) and overall System Average Interruption Frequency Index (SAIFI). Ergon Network's planned outages were again impacted by the scale of the safety-driven works underway on ageing sections of the network.

▲ or ▼ This is compared to 2021/22 results.

Principle 1

We will put customers at the centre of our business and the energy system

This year we remain as **evolved** against Principle 1.

Focus Areas for 2022-23 and what this means for our customers

- **Provide relevant people within our organisation additional training to upskill them in customer service and customer research and engagement techniques – for example, customer journey mapping – to build professional capability, better engagement techniques and capturing of insights from customers so we better understand their needs. [EQL]**
- Energy Queensland's three-year Mental Health Plan focuses on areas from Code of Practice as well as four themes as 1. Leadership 2. Stigma reduction 3. Key psychosocial hazard 4. Governance and assurance. The Mental Health Plan is designed to equip our staff and contractors with a better understanding of mental health for themselves, their work colleagues, and the wider community.
- Energy Queensland's working parties of employee advocates guide our inclusion efforts across the business and the community. The employees in the First Nations working party of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and non-Indigenous allies contributed to drafting Energy Queensland's second Reconciliation Action Plan which will be released in mid-2023. More than 40 network business staff undertook an Indigenous Cultural Awareness program focused on cross-cultural principles and facilitated self-awareness for participants. Ergon Energy Retail had considerable input into the #Better Together First Nation initiative and the Energy Charter released its First Nations Better Practice Community Engagement Toolkit, which seeks to improve engagement practices with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander customers and communities. The Toolkit outlines case studies and practical experiences to show what worked well, what was learned and what outcomes were achieved in engagement activities members have with First Nations customers and communities. This Toolkit will be internally released to ensure all relevant staff can use it to inform their working relationships.
- **Continue to identify customers and customer issues and proactively bring those issues to the Boards attention through improved reporting. At the same time committing to the Board, CEO and Executive having direct contact with customers and stakeholders through a variety of mechanism, such as stakeholder events, site visits to customer premises, attendance at engagement events. [EQL]**
- Quarterly customer issues and complaints reporting to the Risk and Compliance Committee and Monthly Performance Reports highlight emerging and existing customer and complaints issues and improvements to customer experience to the Board Directors.
- Three of the Energy Queensland Customer and Community Council members attended the annual Energy Queensland Board Strategy workshop to ensure a 'customer voice' was incorporated into our strategic direction.
- Senior Leaders Forum featured customer panel discussions in various locations across Queensland to ensure our Executive and Senior leaders understand the lived experience of customers and how that can be different in various parts of Queensland.
- Executive General Manager Customer will provide internal workplace posts around customer issues and opportunities for staff to understand the lived experience of customers.
- **Provide direct access to the Board and Executive for key stakeholders and customer representatives as part of the 2025-30 Regulatory Determination engagement process, with the Reset Reference Group established as part of the customer and stakeholder to attend at a minimum monthly meeting with the RDP2025 Executive Management Committee and quarterly meetings with the Regulatory and Policy Committee of the Board. [EEQ EGX]**
- Board stakeholder events are held monthly at various locations within Queensland with stakeholders and customer advocates invited so Board Directors, Executive and other staff can listen and if necessary, act on customer issues.
- Board Director and Executives attending online customer engagements as part of our RDP 2025 program of activities.

Our Focus Areas for 2023-24

- Implement customer journey mapping for key customer issues
- Increase opportunities for customers and customer advocates to meet with our Board and Executive and to be involved in our strategy and planning to ensure a 'customer voice' is incorporated into business decisions.

Principle 2

We will improve energy affordability for customers

Our assessment remains **evolved** against Principle 2.

Improvement Outcomes

In the 2022-23 financial year, Ergon Energy Retail received \$734 million in funds from the Queensland Government, up from \$647 million to support our customers across regional Queensland with the cost of electricity. This included the Queensland Government's \$175 Cost of Living Rebate, which built on the \$50 asset ownership dividend provided over the recent years. Ergon Energy Retail also conduct extensive social media campaigns and other engagement such as bill messages to ensure their customers are aware of rebate eligibility.

The Queensland Government's \$621 million Community Service Obligation payment this year, under the Uniform Tariff Policy, ensures Queenslanders pay a similar price for electricity no matter where they live. This economic subsidy reduces bills in the regional Queensland eastern zone by around 18%, and in the western zone by around 55%, compared to the cost to supply electricity.

To assist with the energy transition and deliver greater affordability opportunities, Ergon Energy Retail has continued to work with stakeholders to achieve ongoing reform of Queensland's notified tariffs. This has led to the Queensland Competition Authority (QCA) introducing two new retail 'solar soaker' tariffs from July 2023 for small energy users. The 'sunshine hour' rates are significantly cheaper, incentivising customers to use more electricity when rooftop solar is flooding into the network.

The Queensland Household Energy Survey (QHES), conducted annually on behalf of Energex, Ergon Energy Network and Powerlink, tracks customer sentiment on a range of energy-related topics, including electricity affordability. The average quarterly electricity bill size stated by this year's survey participants increased by \$18 to \$356. This is the second consecutive bill increase recorded by the survey since 2016. Additionally, the 2023 survey indicates that electricity bill concern is rising in line with other cost of living pressures, with 53% of customers indicating high bill concern this year.

Focus Areas 2022-23 and what this means for our customers

Fund a second home energy management trial in Carseldine, North Brisbane to assist customers in better understanding their energy use and identify how they can better manage their electricity to reduce their electricity costs [EGX]

- Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 and building supply issues, the trial has been delayed by two years. Baseline data is likely to be available in September 2023 and this will be shared with the Energy Queensland Customer and Community Council.

Go beyond compliance in relation to the AER Better Bills Guideline and ensure customer feedback as part of previous engagement on the future retail bill design is reflected in the design. In addition, implement a customer education and awareness campaign to support understanding of the new bill design so that customers understand how the bill can assist in providing clarity and understanding of their electricity costs [EER]

- A briefing to the Energy Queensland Customer and Community Council in March 2023 provided the opportunity to incorporate feedback to the retail bill design from our Council members. This new retail bill design has received customer feedback through focus groups. The roll out to the Ergon Energy Retail customer base has been delayed until late 2023 due to the regulator providing more time for retailers. Ergon Energy Retail will provide communications and education about these changes to customers.

Our Focus Areas for 2023-24

- Implement a new Network Working Group (which will include Council members) and a network affordability strategy with customer advocates and other stakeholders to assist Queenslanders and, link with the Australian Energy Regulator 'Game Changer' programs.
- Increase rebate awareness campaigns for customers.
- Increase awareness of Ergon Energy Retail 'solar soaker' tariffs for customers.

Principle 3

We will provide energy safely, sustainably and reliably

Safety, sustainability and reliability continue to be at the centre of our business, and we continue to assess ourselves as **evolved** against Principle 3.

Improvement Outcomes

Energex and Ergon Energy Network's PeakSmart air conditioning demand management programs continued to expand. The program offers cash incentives to customers who install a new PeakSmart air conditioner or convert an existing air conditioner to PeakSmart. There are now over 150,000 PeakSmart air conditioners that can be managed during periods of high demand. There were two extreme hot weather events during 2022-23, in February and March, where the PeakSmart capability was called on to provide network support.

Throughout 2022-23 the network businesses have undertaken trials, working with industry and customers, to investigate the demand management capabilities of future technologies, including the Electric Vehicles EV SmartCharge Queensland Project. Through Ergon Energy Retail's residential customers, a trial was conducted to evaluate a proposed future electricity network tariff and recruitment commenced on an alternative time of use tariff option proposed for large business customers connected to the HV network.

Energex and Ergon Energy Networks continue to monitor customer satisfaction with network reliability. Through the QHES 2023, 73% of survey respondents strongly agreed that they receive a reliable energy supply. This has reduced slightly from 2022, with 75% also indicating that they thought the existing balance between cost and reliability is about right.

Focus Areas 2022-23 and what this means for our customers

- **Review existing landowner and social licence policy and processes to align with Energy Charter initiatives for customer safety and network sustainability [EEN EGX]**
 - As a member of the #Better Together Landholder + Community Social Licence working group, we are looking at ways the transmission experience can be translated to our policies and procedures. This review has led to improvements to our customer engagement on our trial inspection program for the privately-owned property poles and with positive feedback around more user-friendly communications from some of the trial participants.
- **Continue the installation of electric vehicle chargers in western Queensland under Stage Three of the Queensland Electric Vehicle Superhighway [YKA]**
 - Decarbonising transportation in regional locations to expand Queensland's electric superhighway by installing EV Chargers at 16 new locations across Western Queensland

this year, with eight more sites to be completed before the end of 2023. The rollout takes the Super Highway up to approximately 5,400km.

- **Expand Local Neighbourhood Battery Plan across Queensland [EEN EGX]**
 - Energy Queensland has also been successful in obtaining funding as part of the Australian Government's Community Batteries for Household Solar Program. To be owned and operated by Energex and Ergon Energy Network, across 12 Queensland sites, the aim is to simplify delivery of community batteries with a scalable partnership model that allows the local community to benefit from local energy storage without the risks, challenges or costs of asset ownership. The greatest benefit is in stacking the value chain, the batteries' ability to help manage the local and upstream network, and the value in sharing their excess capacity with electricity retailers to help reduce the pressure on wholesale prices. This will help lower electricity bills, deliver reliable local renewable energy, cut emissions, ease pressure on the grid, and allow other community benefits to be realised. To continue the energy transition, batteries are needed throughout the electricity supply chain, at the customer premises, as well as distribution and transmission levels. A trial with Origin Energy is underway and is testing a product offering/s that may allow customers to store solar locally, for use locally in the evening.
 - Through our network businesses' Future Grid Roadmap, we are working to better coordinate the use of our electricity networks across the communities we serve by dynamically operating the two-way power flows within the networks' technical limits. Managing the 'two-way flow' of energy in 'real time' with dynamic connections will allow more households and businesses to install rooftop solar and benefit from other energy-related technologies, and to access new and emerging market opportunities, while ensuring the lowest cost, as well as the safe and reliable supply of electricity for all.
 - This year saw the introduction of Queensland's first dynamic customer connections. This milestone has come following substantial effort to introduce new industry standards and the deployment of a world first Distributed Energy Resources (DER) communication server. The server implements a common and secure communication standard, between the Energex and Ergon Energy Networks and customers' DER, to communicate active constraints and opportunities. This is a critical building block in our efforts to support dynamic

connections for the benefit of all customers. The focus is now working with third party manufacturers to ensure their equipment can support this new customer offering.

- We also supported the Queensland Government introduction of the emergency backstop mechanism to ensure we could maintain electricity system strength if too much solar power was being fed into the grid. This enables large systems to be switched off in an energy emergency, as a last resort, for a short time, at the direction of the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO).
- The network business engaged HV network-connected customers (Connection Asset Customers), targeting those with large scale energy storage, to participate in a Time of Use tariff trial. The trial is looking at ways to encourage large battery operators to charge their batteries in a way that benefits the network, with zero network charges for energy 'used' during the daytime trough period and a negative export charge to encourage export during the evening peak.

Our Focus Areas for 2023-24

- Co-designing an inclusive Remote and First Nations Clean Energy Strategy including streetlights program, as part of the pathway to net zero.
- Advancing a roll out of Ergon Energy Network's stand-alone power systems (SAPS) solution.
- Trialling battery technologies to improve future manufacturing capabilities and user experiences for customers.

Principle 4

We will improve the customer experience

We remain as **evolved** against Principle 4.

Improvement Outcomes

The Customer Satisfaction (CSAT) metric approach was implemented with customers surveyed quarterly, via an independent customer panel, asking how satisfied they are with the services received. The CSAT measures customer satisfaction across all our brands, with an indexed score provided for Energy Queensland. This year our CSAT score was 72.92/100, above our target (69.0) and stretch target (70.0).

The CSAT builds on our Voice of the Customer program – that continues to measure customer experience following direct interaction with multiple touchpoints across the business and provides customer insights to help inform customer experience improvement initiatives at the operational level, with over 30,000 customers providing feedback this year through that program.

Focus Areas 2022-23 and what this means for our customers

- **Develop Customer Code for Knock to Stay Connected in conjunction with other Energy Charter signatories and industry partners [EEN-EGX]**
 - Working as part of the #Better Together initiative, the network businesses originally trialed Knock to Stay Connected to improve the customer experience for those customers at risk of disconnection for not being able to pay their electricity bill. In the Ergon Energy Network area, when trialling the Knock to Stay Connected process, data has shown a 44.68% cancellation rate for disconnection for non-payment of debt service orders received by retailers when compared to 29.34% for the rest of regional Queensland for the same period. Evidence has also shown a greater success rate with SMS (56.20%) compared to letter box drop (21.63%). The trial has also permitted the network businesses to provide updated customer service training and will also allow for system enhancements to improve the customer experience once the new system upgrades are complete. The network businesses will implement the trialled process as business as usual in 2023-24 and will look forward to working with the Customer Code Committee where required.
- **Residential network tariff trials with Ergon Energy Retail as a retail partner to understand customer experience around customer behaviour and impacts of these trials – [EEN EGX with EER as retail trial partner]**
 - This residential network tariff trial aims to evaluate customer impacts, needs and preferences concerning network tariffs

that feature variable pricing rates and structures. The accompanying market research program with trial participants has provided user experience insights and feedback on tariffs that will be valuable for network tariff design now and into the future.

- **Continue to meet customer needs through website integrations and an improved customer experience My Account functionality – [YKA]**
 - Improved functionality for customers to access their metering data which enables them to better identify and manage their energy costs.
- **Implement in full the recommendations from the Energy Queensland Complaints Management audit [EQL]**
 - We continue to report customer complaints and trends to the Risk and Compliance Committee and Board, who provided feedback to improve the depth of information they receive. We continue to monitor the complaints escalated to the Energy and Water Ombudsman.

Our Focus Areas for 2023-24

- Examine the customer journey mapping from the residential network tariff trials and implement improvements where possible to enhance the customer experience for network and retail customers.
- Examine the customer insights from the regulatory proposal engagement and implement where possible any that enhance customer and user experience.
- Implement new customer platforms in the network businesses and Ergon Energy Retail to enhance customer experience capability for customers.

Summary of customer enquiries and complaints received in 2022-23

	Network	Retail
Enquiries		
Refer Back	0.06	3.58
Refer Higher Level	0.58	2.19
Complaints (Notice of Investigation)		
Level 1	0.24	0.37
Level 2	0.01	0.25
Level 3	0.00	0.08

All figures in table are per 10,000 customers. The total customer figure used for Ergon Retail was 766,000 and for Ergon Network and Energex 2.4 million.

- Update the Energy Queensland complaints policy to include unreasonable complainant conduct, which ensures our staff and customers are supported and provides clear guidelines on positive ways to resolve complaints.
- All staff in complaints related roles have clear training and development in place that incorporates ways they can engage with customers that provide empathy and understanding.
- Energy Queensland worked with the Thriving Communities partnership to produce the Disaster Response Playbook co-designed with several community members including Townsville to better support energy customers and communities before, during and after a disaster events. The Playbook outlines many of our community engagement procedures for disaster events and was the #Better Together Resilience initiative.

Principle 5

We will support customers facing vulnerable circumstances

We continue to support our vulnerable customers and therefore remain as **empowered** against Principle 5.

Improvement Outcomes

Ergon Energy Retail's Customer Assist program continued to help customers struggling to pay their electricity bill with personalised payment plans, energy advice and guidance around financial assistance. With the cost-of-living pressures community-wide, Ergon Energy Retail experienced an increase in customers requesting payment assistance and referrals to our specialist credit teams, and we expect this to increase further with the July 2023 electricity price rises. Ergon Energy Retail has 9.5% of its residential customers on its hardship program, with an average hardship debt of \$1,050. Ergon Retail reports hardship indicators to the AER on a quarterly basis; including number of different types of customers on the hardship program, details on debt levels, the types of payment plans, payment methods being used, and assistance provided, information on customers entering and exiting the program, and disconnection and reconnection data.

Focus Areas 2022-23 and what this means for our customers

- **Implement policies supporting family violence prevention. [EER]**
 - In 2022-23, Ergon Energy Retail invested in system and process changes, training, and support for employees to make it easy for customers and for employees engaging with customers impacted by family violence. The training, developed in partnership with Uniting Care, increased employees' understanding of the long-term consequences of family violence, and helped implement the system improvements needed to eliminate affected customers having to repeat their story, reducing the need to relive the trauma. Ergon Energy Retail now has a formal Family and Domestic Violence Policy which is on its website, outlining a commitment to supporting customers affected by family violence in a respectful and flexible manner. It covers how they can assist people in need, which may include referral to a hardship program if customers are experiencing financial difficulties, how to identify affected customers and consider their safety, and how to protect personal identity and location information, and how to communicate with customers. Energy Queensland leaders also had the opportunity to hear from domestic and family violence experts from the organisation Workplace Respect in May. This special event provided practical insights on how to support team members, friends and family and other members of

the community experiencing or using violence - as part of Queensland's Domestic and Family Violence month.

- **Maximise the insights from the Uniting Care program to inform business advice and support service planning [EER]**
 - As part of the #BetterTogether – Cost-of-Living Supports initiative, Ergon Energy Retail partnered with Uniting Care's Energy Support Program via a one-on-one advice and assistance program to increase energy literacy and bridge the gap between a customer's capacity to pay and their energy usage. The Customer Assist team worked closely with Uniting Care and referred customers who identified with high usage or usage that exceeds their capacity to pay. The program allowed up to 200 customers to be provided with additional support to look at rebates, energy efficiency tips for their homes to reduce usage and additional support from other emergency relief providers. The program saw five customers successfully graduate from Ergon Energy Retail's hardship program. The Customer Assist team, which has a well-established process and procedures, found that the ability to talk with 'peers' at a community agency was valuable, as was the sharing of case studies and swapping of key tips, which all provided professional development and greater insights into customers for the hardship team.
- **Work with local councils to improve energy management in First Nation communities [EER]**
 - Ergon Energy Retail continues its face-to-face engagement with customers in Townsville and Rockhampton as well as visits to Aurukun, the Torres Strait, and other regional communities. The team was able to initiate another community-wide roll out of digital meters in the Indigenous community of Cherbourg in Central Queensland. The new advanced meters, installed by Yurika, give customers the option to better manage their electricity use, and to budget better.

Focus Areas for 2023-24

- Outwork the refreshed *powersavvy* energy literacy program and update to support the energy transition.



energyq.com.au

Energy Queensland Limited
ABN 96 612 535 583

Head Office Level 6
420 Flinders Street
Townsville QLD 4810
PO Box 1090
Townsville QLD 4810