
ENERGY CHARTER DISCLOSURE REPORT 2022-23



CONTENTS

Message from our Chair and Chief Executive Officer	2
Our Customers and Communities	3
Highlights from 2022-23	4
2022-23 Performance Measures	6
Principle 1	8
Principle 2	9
Principle 3	10
Principle 4	11
Principle 5	12

Purpose of this report

Accountability + Transparency

The Energy Charter is a unique coalition of like-minded energy organisations with a shared purpose and passion for customers and communities.

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

All full signatories of the Energy Charter commit to publicly report how they are delivering against the Energy Charter Principles through public Disclosures and engagement with their customer/community councils or stakeholder forums.

Signatories assess their maturity against the Energy Charter Maturity Model, indicating where on the maturity scale they are, where they intend to progress to, over what period and how they plan to achieve this.

This document is Jacana Energy first Disclosure Report since becoming a Full Signatory member of The Energy Charter in 2022.

Acknowledgement of country

Jacana Energy respectfully acknowledges the First Nations people of this country and recognises their continuing connections to their lands, waters and communities. We pay our respects to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, and to their leaders past and present.

Message from our Chair and Chief Executive Officer

On behalf of Jacana Energy, we present our first Energy Charter Disclosure Statement. As a recent signatory, we are using the Energy Charter's five principles to mature our customer-centric culture, which includes a first step towards establishing our Customer and Community Forum, through the development of the Terms of Reference, with the first meeting to be held in the new calendar year.

Jacana Energy's vision is "leading smart energy solutions for the Territory". For our customers, this means that we're making electricity easy and fair today and finding smart, renewable energy solutions for the Northern Territory's (NT) future.

In 2023, we contributed to and participated in a number of "Better Together" initiatives, particularly those focused on improving affordability and energy literacy, given that our customers generally experience higher electricity bills (due to higher energy consumption) than other jurisdictions.

While electricity prices are subsidised by the NT Government for the majority of customers, the harsh climate results in household electricity consumption being much higher than most other Australian regions, at an annual average of around 8,500kWh.

As a result, Jacana Energy invests significant time and effort in engaging with customers to educate them on energy efficiency, particularly during the top end wet season when energy use increases significantly.

The 2022-23 period saw Jacana Energy's Customer Experience team place a concerted effort on improving customer service and satisfaction metrics, with material increases in net promoter score, first call resolution, customer effort and customer satisfaction ratings by the end of the year.

We look forward to continuing to improve our customers' experience and collaborating with customers through our soon-to be established Customer and Community Forum, continuing our journey to make electricity easy and fair for our customers.



Trevor James
Chair



Louisa Kinnear
Chief Executive Officer

Our Customers and Communities

The Northern Territory

The Northern Territory (NT) is Australia's least populated jurisdiction, home to 250,000 people (1% of the Australian population) living over a land mass that covers more than 1.3 million square kilometres (almost 17% of the country). More than 30% of residents in the NT are Aboriginal.

Jacana Energy is the largest electricity retailer in the Northern Territory servicing communities right across the NT, from Alice Springs in the Red Centre to Darwin in the Top End and to Borroloola near the eastern NT border.

Our unique customers and climate

We are owned by the NT Government and we supply electricity to approximately 88,000 customers throughout the NT, servicing three regulated energy grids in Darwin, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs, plus 8 surrounding communities, in a geographic area spanning more than 3600 linear kilometres.

More than 80% of our customers are residential customers, with the remainder being commercial customers ranging from small businesses to large industrial enterprises.

The majority of our customers live in two distinct climates. The Top End of the NT is tropical with a distinct wet and a dry season, whereas the Red Centre has a cooler winter and a hot, dry desert summer. These variances in our climate mean our customers have different needs for their energy usage throughout the year.

Retail electricity prices charged to residential and commercial customers consuming less than 750 megawatt hours of electricity per year are regulated by the NT Government under the *Electricity Reform Act 2000*.



Highlights from 2022-23

Highlight 1

Virtual Power Plant Trial

We partnered with a consortium of organisations to produce an NT first trial of a *Virtual Power Plant (VPP)*. The VPP trial was part of an ARENA/NT Government funded initiative conducted as part of the Alice Springs Future Grid program.

More than 25% of Jacana Energy customers in Alice Springs have rooftop solar installations, which is placing additional pressure on the electricity network. The Solar Connect VPP was trialled to demonstrate ways in which rooftop solar and battery systems could be aggregated in a way that helped to stabilise the grid.

We developed and trialled innovative tariffs with residential customers to test receptiveness and value towards time-of-use pricing, aimed at incentivising use and storage of solar energy at certain times of day.

We are now working through the lessons learned from the trial and considering the appropriate market structures and potential costs and benefits of delivering VPPs at scale across the NT, with the aim of better managing rooftop solar exports so that both customers and the electricity system can benefit.

Highlight 2

Continued support for our vulnerable and at-risk customers

Our award-winning *Stay Connected Program* has continued to be a benchmark for supporting vulnerable customers in the NT. The program launched in 2019, shifting the focus from debt collection to a program assisting customers with long term debt to access flexible, sustainable payment arrangements and long-term strategies to help them manage the cost of electricity. The initiative included the development of a Domestic and Family Violence policy, recognising that customers experiencing domestic and family violence require more sensitive and unique support.

Winning the Chief Minister's Award for Excellence in Customer Focus and Service Delivery in 2021 was recognition for the difference we have made, and continue to make, for Territorians facing financial hardship. We appreciate that financial hardship is not a choice, and we work with our customers to help them stay connected.

During 2022-23, the number of customers on our Stay Connected Program decreased by 35% compared to the previous year, and our Hardship team received only 1 complaint out of the 380 customers on the program.

Adaptability has been increasingly important for our customer care team. The financial uncertainty that is ever present in the community has seen an increase in customers needing flexibility when paying their bills. This flexibility has seen less customers need to access our Stay Connected Program.

Highlight 3

Updates to our incoming call service

During 2021-22 we received a large volume of calls to our Customer Care Centre, resulting in increased wait times to speak with one of our Customer Care Agents.

To alleviate wait times, we introduced a *triage telephone approach* to deliver a faster response for incoming calls. This ensured that each customer spoke to a live agent in the first instance and their query triaged for resolution.

We made sweeping changes to our Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system. Previously the IVR had complicated options which would prolong the time it would take to speak with a Customer Care Agent. The options were unclear and the messaging on hold was redundant. The new IVR system is simple and easily understood, providing our customers with a streamlined experience when calling our Customer Care Centre.

The triage approach and revised IVR have delivered better outcomes for customers as demonstrated by:

- the percentage of calls forwarded to an operator answered within 30 seconds has increased to 83.9% in 2022-23 from 42% in 2021-22; and
- the percentage of calls abandoned by a customer has dropped to 5% in 2022- 23 from 10.3% in 2021-22.



2022-23 Performance Measures

Energy Charter principles		Metrics	2022-23	Performance compared to 2021-22
1	We will put customers at the centre of our business and the energy system	Grade of Service ¹	90.7%	↑
		First Call Resolution	76%	↓
		Net Promoter Score ²	31 / 100	↓
		Employee engagement ³	73.1%	↑
2	We will improve energy affordability for customers	Cost to serve ⁴	\$198	↓
3	We will provide energy safely, sustainably and reliably	Disconnection for non-payment ⁵	0.67%	↑
4	We will improve the customer experience	Customer Satisfaction Score	3.8 / 5	↑
		Customer Effort Score ⁶	12.8 / 100	↑
		Complaints ⁷	0.60%	↑
5	We will support customers facing vulnerable circumstances	Hardship program customers (average number of customers)	380	↓

¹ Grade of Service: measures the percentage of customer calls to the call centre answered within 30 seconds.

² Net Promoter Score (NPS) is a customer loyalty and satisfaction measurement taken from asking customers how likely they are to recommend us to others from 0 to 10. NPS is calculated by subtracting the percentage of customers who answer with a 6 or lower (known as 'detractors') from the percentage of customers who answer with a 9 or 10 (known as 'promoters'). The NPS is always expressed as a number from -100 to 100.

³ Employee engagement measures the emotional connection and commitment our people have to working for Jacana Energy, calculated via an employee yearly survey.

⁴ Cost to serve is calculated by dividing Operating Costs (less impairment expense) by the total number of customer accounts.

⁵ Residential and small business customers. Metrics calculated as a percentage of our customer base. Sum of all quarters.

⁶ Customer effort measures the ease in which customers feel they are able to engage with Jacana Energy through a variety of digital and traditional channels. Metric introduced in Q2 2021-22 and calculated as per the NPS score.

⁷ Metrics calculated as a percentage of our customer base. Sum of all quarters.

Our **Net Promoter Score** and **Grade of Service** are intrinsically linked. As our Grade of Service improved over the year so did the number of customers who would promote our service to others. The improvement of these statistics can be attributed to our on-going training of our Customer Care agents and our culture shift towards putting the customer at the centre of everything we do.

Customer Satisfaction, Effort and First Call Resolution have also seen big improvements over the year. We have been able to assist our customers more efficiently and effectively and this has been reflected in our results.

Improving our customers' experience in 2022-23

The COVID-19 pandemic negatively affected our resourcing at the end of 2021-22 which led to a decline in customer service levels. Since then, there has been a concerted effort to implement customer-centric improvements throughout our organisation and we are now seeing the positive results of these improvements in our customer service metrics. We are committed to making further improvements to our service, ensuring our customers better understand their energy use, and know that we are here to help and support them.

Starting July 2022, we have seen the majority of our customer experience measures significantly improving. The positive trajectory of these statistics indicate how far we have come over the previous 12 months, making improvements across board, as shown in our Performance Measures table. This Disclosure Report summarises the material changes that have helped us make such improvements.



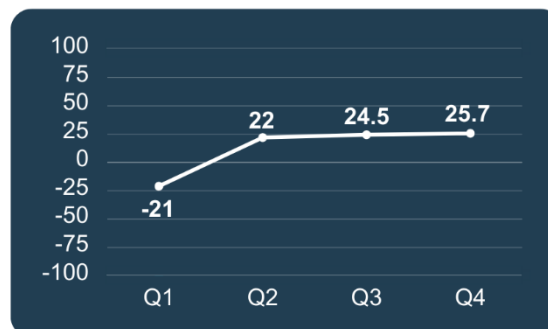
CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SCORE

Every quarter we ask our customers to grade how satisfied they are with our service. Customers rate from 0 to 5, where 0 = Very dissatisfied and 5 = Very satisfied

CUSTOMER EFFORT SCORE

Additionally, we ask our customers how easy we make managing electricity for them. Customers rate from 0 to 10, where 0 = Extremely difficult and 10 = Extremely easy.

The final score is calculated by subtracting the percentage of detractors (0-6 rates) from the percentage of promoters (8-10 rates).



Our focus areas from 2023-24

Our statistics tell a great story of how we are improving customer experience and supporting those who are vulnerable. There is still room for improvement in some areas.

Small use customers with energy bill debt increased this financial year. This can be attributed to the economic climate and increased cost-of-living pressures on households. As customers in debt increased, so did our complaints.

Disconnections for non-payment also increased from 2021-22 as we started to return to pre-COVID credit management practices. The disconnection process is undergoing a review and we are working on improving our criteria to assess customers' ability to pay and tailor our approaches to better suit their circumstances.

Over the next year we also aim to continue our work with peak bodies and advocacy groups to address issues that impact our most vulnerable customers. We now have a decreased number of customers on our Stay Connected (Hardship) program thanks to a wider set of flexible payment arrangements. We are also improving the way we identify customers at risk of vulnerability by working with them before they reach a situation of hardship.

Principle 1

We will put customers at the centre of everything we do and the energy system

Where we are now

Over the past 12 months a lot of work has been put into developing our 3-year strategic plan. The results of which are clarity of vision and direction, a stronger focus on our customers, better integration of our values and desired behaviours and realising the full potential of our people.

Our renewed vision “**Leading smart energy solutions for the Territory**” means we’re making electricity easy and fair for our customers today, and finding smart, renewable energy solutions for NT’s future.

Understanding what our vision means for our customers along with living our values (**Diversity, Innovation, Honesty, Teamwork and Wellbeing**) is critical to achieving our goals and keeping our promise to our customers plus it helps us see the connections between what we do, why we’re doing it and who we’re doing it for.

We have delivered

- The introduction of the triage system to our Customer Care Centre during the 2022-23 financial year has led to great results, as shown in our Highlight 3. This system enables Customer Care Agents in the triage centre to send inbound calls to the correct area. There has been a clear correlation between our improved Net Promoter Scores and the introduction of our triage system.
- We are shifting our focus from phone-based channels to digital channels, transitioning service metrics from how quickly we can answer calls to quality metrics such as customer satisfaction, effort and first call resolution. As a result, we are now reporting customer insights more consistently and more frequently, which leads to better



feedback loops, resulting in smaller, more actionable improvements to the customer experience.

- The development of a new **Continuous Improvement Framework** helped us identify and act on experiences in need of improvement. The framework uses the “lean” methodology to optimise resources and direct effort towards creating value for the customer by minimising waste and reducing re-work.
- We are continuously upskilling our frontline employees soft-handling skills by choosing the best training providers with experience in vulnerability training. Thanks to this training we saw improvements in both communication skills and empathy from our Customer Care Agents, which has resulted in better outcomes for our customers.
- Our **Employee Engagement Score** has recorded a positive increase for the third year in a row. We firmly believe the satisfaction of our employees is directly correlated with the improvement in our customer metrics.

How we want to improve

We are building a Customer Experience (CX) Roadmap that compiles segmented customer journeys for common interactions and will prioritise initiatives that will materially improve the customer experience.

The CX Roadmap will help us address the pain points customers experience when they interact with us. This includes helping customers better understand their bills, being more proactive with our outbound communications and providing improved tools and services tailored to customer needs.

Principle 2

We will improve energy affordability for customers

Where we are now

The 2022-23 financial year presented an ever-changing economic climate. This financial uncertainty made paying for essentials, such as energy, challenging for many Territorians.

We shifted our focus to bringing solar energy within the reach of our most vulnerable customers, as rooftop solar is now the cheapest source of energy available. We started this journey with enabling a technical trial with a rooftop solar system at the premises of one of our customers in Tennant Creek to demonstrate the feasibility of solar installation with prepayment meters. The trial has been effective in showing how rooftop solar can drive a decrease in a number of hardship markers for prepayment households, including the incidence of meter self-disconnection due to lack of credit.

We have delivered

- We began offering flexible payment plans to customers who needed short-term support in order to proactively support Territorians who did not necessarily meet long-term hardship criteria.
- Improving access to renewable energy across the Territory has the potential to make energy more affordable, particularly for those in remote communities. We continued to champion the push for renewable energy by partnering in several pilot programs, such as the Virtual Power Plant in Alice Springs and the development of a Solar for Public Housing program.
- As a signatory of the Energy Charter, this year we focussed on **#BetterTogether** initiatives that deliver positive outcomes for our customers. We played a part in the



development of the **#BetterTogether** national concessions campaign, which aims to inform customers about concessions they may be able to access to receive discounts on their energy.

- We encouraged Territorians to make energy awareness part of their everyday by entering the **#NTEnergyChamp** challenge. We asked all Jacana Energy customers to pick one energy saving tip from our **Energy Efficiency Guide** and tell us about it on our social media channels. The campaign's main objectives were raising awareness about the correlation between weather and electricity usage in the NT, empowering Territorians with practical and easy energy savings tips, which can be quickly implemented to help counteract higher energy use over the top end wet season. Distributing the guide for the first time in the local newspaper resulted in a 63% increase in engagement.

How we want to improve

Jacana Energy is keen to further investigate the potential of solar energy to reduce hardship, debt and inequality in the transition to clean energy for low-income households. Our **Solar for Lower Rate program** will launch in 2024 with a trial of public housing sites across Darwin and Tennant Creek. The trial is a key feature of Jacana Energy's strategic aim to deliver greener, affordable electricity to more households in the Northern Territory.

As we progress our strategy, we are working towards new energy products and services, including more choices of retail tariffs, that best meet our customers' needs.

Principle 3

We will provide energy safely, sustainably and reliably

Where we are now

As the primary NT energy retailer, we play a role in ensuring that our customers have access to a safe and reliable supply of electricity. We also continue to support people and communities who may be affected by poverty and disadvantage.

Our pre-payment meter customers are largely living in public housing, facing financial, social, and sometimes cultural challenges. They require regular, tailored support from us to reduce frequent self-disconnections.

We have a robust compliance culture in place with checks and balances to ensure zero electricity supply disruption for our life support customers who require a continuous electricity for medical reasons.

We have delivered

- We have greatly improved our compliance culture over the past year, which includes substantial improvements to our life support processes. Overall, compliance incidents across the organisation have reduced by 40%. Of note was a recent major system upgrade where not one life support customer was impacted. In addition, our life support register is frequently reconciled with the network provider ensuring customers are informed of planned outages well ahead of time.
- We've improved our internal workplace culture with a strong focus on safety and wellbeing. This includes new compliance stand-ups for leaders, compliance refresher training, updates to business process documents and improvements to our knowledge management system. In



addition, we now include compliance risk assessments across all our initiatives.

- We've continued our focus on reducing self-disconnections with our pre-payment meter customers. We've been able to complete a successful trial of rooftop solar pre-payment meters – an NT first.
- Jacana Energy's employee engagement score has improved from 58% in 2021 to 78% in 2023, which is translating into improved customer metrics across the business. Improved engagement ultimately means better outcomes for our customers.

How we want to improve

Minimising supply disruptions to customers as a result of retailer processes is a critical focus for our business. These supply disruptions can occur for a number of reasons including disconnections made in error, disconnections for non-payment, or for our pre-payment meter customers, self-disconnection as a result of a lack of credit.

We'll continue to review and improve our compliance practices and processes to minimise disconnections in error and to ensure our life support customers remain protected at all times. This includes the recent integration of improved life-support modules within our billing system.

Lastly, we are developing approaches to servicing customers with pre-payment meters to reduce the number of self-disconnections. We also continue to work with government housing providers to better understand the needs of our pre-payment meter customers and collaborate on delivering better customer outcomes.

Principle 4

We will improve the customer experience

Where we are now

During 2022-23 we have worked on streamlining service channels, which greatly reduced wait times for customers. We achieved these results by putting an emphasis on supporting and training our frontline employees to improve the customer experience, which led to more collaboration and helped us achieve better and more timely outcomes for our customers.

We formally announced in our *Statement of Corporate Intent 2023-24* the introduction of a new target focused on measuring the effectiveness of both our digital and phone-based customer service channels. From 2023-24 onwards our **Customer Effort Score** will help us track how easy we make managing electricity for our customers.

We have delivered

- Following extensive customer research, we developed a customer journey map and a renewed segmentation plan, which helped us better understand our customers' segment-specific pain points and identified priority activities to address them. This new approach is playing a major role in the development of our CX Roadmap.
- The new triage approach for inbound phone calls introduced in 2022-23 to improve our first call resolution for customers, has also directly influenced our improved **Customer Satisfaction Score**.
- We undertook a full review of our processes when it comes to customers with life support equipment. We are making it easier for customers to understand how life support is defined and we are leveraging our online channels to collect more details and information, which results in a faster response back to the customer and ultimately a better customer experience.



- Our website has been updated to make it easier for our customers to find information and access self-service functions, such as automated online forms. We also use Facebook messenger as an additional contact channel for our customers and have simplified options on our Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system. It is now easier than ever for our customers to contact us.
- We have worked closely with the NT Ombudsman and the NT Utilities Commission to resolve complaints and other issues that customers may have with our business. There has been a decline in complaints throughout the year, which indicates the improvements we made to our internal resolutions process are working.

How we want to improve

We have seen a slight increase in annual residential customer billing complaints, compared to 2021-22 (up by 44 complaints in 2022-23). To address this, we proactively identify poor customer experiences and are initiating call-backs or follow up conversations with customers when they indicate they have had a poor interaction.

We are also actively working on improving our engagement with the network provider as we believe building a stronger relationship will reduce complaints across the supply chain.

We want to continue improving our digital experience for customers, especially when it comes to our digital service **"MyAccount"**. This service provides customers with access to their customer data, such as historical billing, energy usage and payment options. We are aware that a more streamlined self-service offering will enable customers to better understand how they use energy and ultimately make more informed choices.

Principle 5

We will support customers facing vulnerable circumstances

Where we are now

We are committed to providing support to customers facing vulnerable circumstances. Over the past year, we have continued to invest in our **Stay Connected program** to suit individual customer circumstances. This year saw a reduction of customers accessing our Stay Connected program as we became more proactive in identifying customers at risk of long-term hardship. In 2021-22 we had on average 589 customers on our Stay Connected program, compared to an average of 380 in 2022-23.

We work with our Stay Connected customers to create tailored products and services, starting by using previous years to estimate their energy use of the next 12-month period. This helps us to create the right plan for our customer. We then continue to frequently check-in with our Stay Connected customers and offer them ongoing support.

Working with customers who are at-risk of falling into the vulnerable category has been an important learning curve for us. We are now able to identify when customers may not meet all the criteria of our Stay Connected program but are still in need of specific assistance. Thanks to this improved analysis and reporting we are now able to support these customers and ideally prevent them from falling into hardship.

We have delivered

- Our frontline employees are the first port-of-call for our customers. They speak with Territorians who are doing it tough and are seeking a reprieve from financial stress. We



have provided bespoke training for our Customer Care Agents to help them gain a better understanding of the issues vulnerable customers are facing. The training has given them tools and strategies to provide an increasingly personalised service which ultimately benefits our customers.

- We expanded our dedicated Hardship Support team by upskilling more team members on how to provide better support to vulnerable customers.
- This past year we have continued our focus on creating stronger relationships with peak bodies and advocacy groups who represent vulnerable Territorians. Partnering with these groups and organisations has helped us gain a stronger understanding of the challenges facing vulnerable customers.

How to improve

We are regularly making improvements to our billing system, ensuring employees are given the right tools to assist customers. We are working on updates to our billing system to better adapt to the changing circumstances for each customer as they progress through their payment plans.

Although our engagement with peak bodies and advisory groups has improved significantly, there is more to be done. Our next step is to work with these stakeholders to formulate programs and events focusing on proactive identification of and outreach for vulnerable customers.



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