

Energy Charter

Disclosure Guidance 2024





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.



1. Introduction

As part of their commitment to the Energy Charter, CEOs agree to publicly disclose how they are delivering against the Energy Charter Principles through public 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 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.

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.

2. About this Guidance

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

This Disclosure Guidance includes:

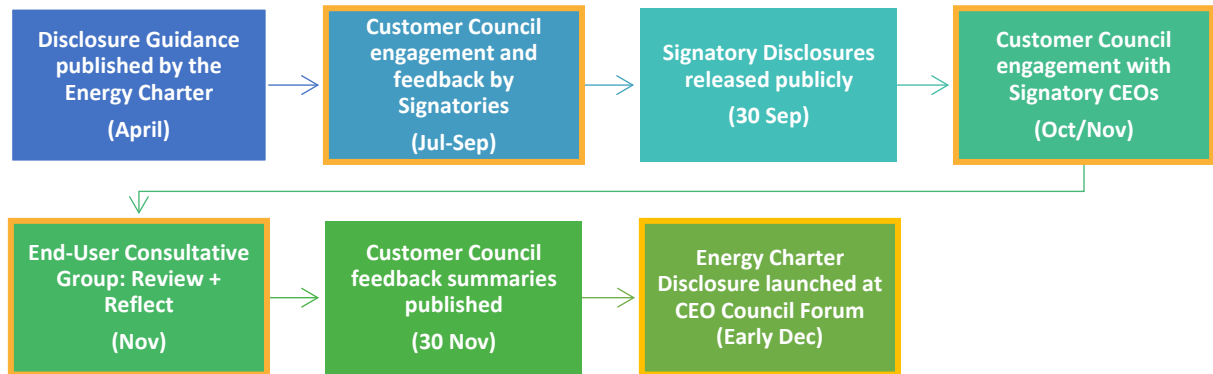
- Overview of the Accountability Process
- Disclosure process
- Engagement with customers and communities
- Feedback Summary guidance
- Formatting and style
- Overview of the Energy Charter Disclosure

This was developed with the Industry Working Group and Impact Working Group and incorporates all recommendations made by the End-User Consultative Group (EUCG) set out in **Appendix A**. The Impact Working Group meet monthly to support the application of the Impact Framework into the delivery of Energy Charter initiatives. To leverage the Accountability Process, all Signatories are encouraged to participate in the Impact Working Group throughout the year and share this Disclosure Guidance with all internal and external stakeholders involved in the Accountability Process.

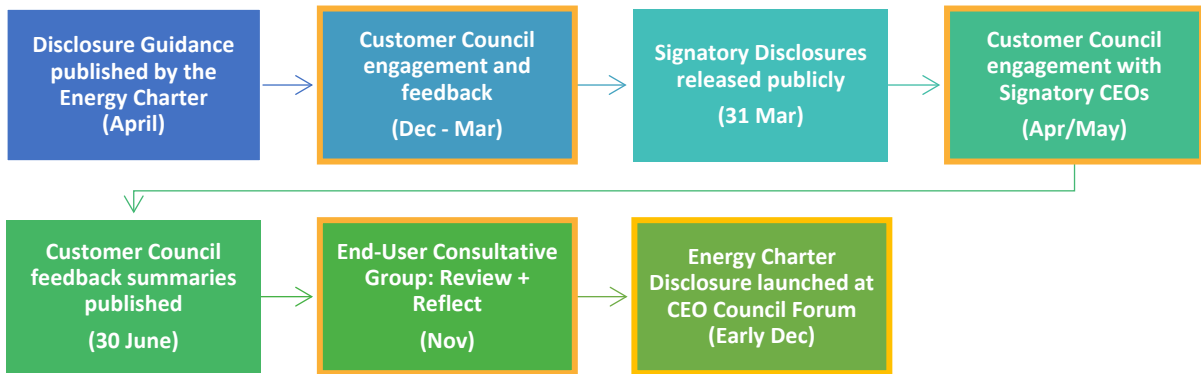


3. Overview of the Accountability Process

Financial Year



Calendar Year

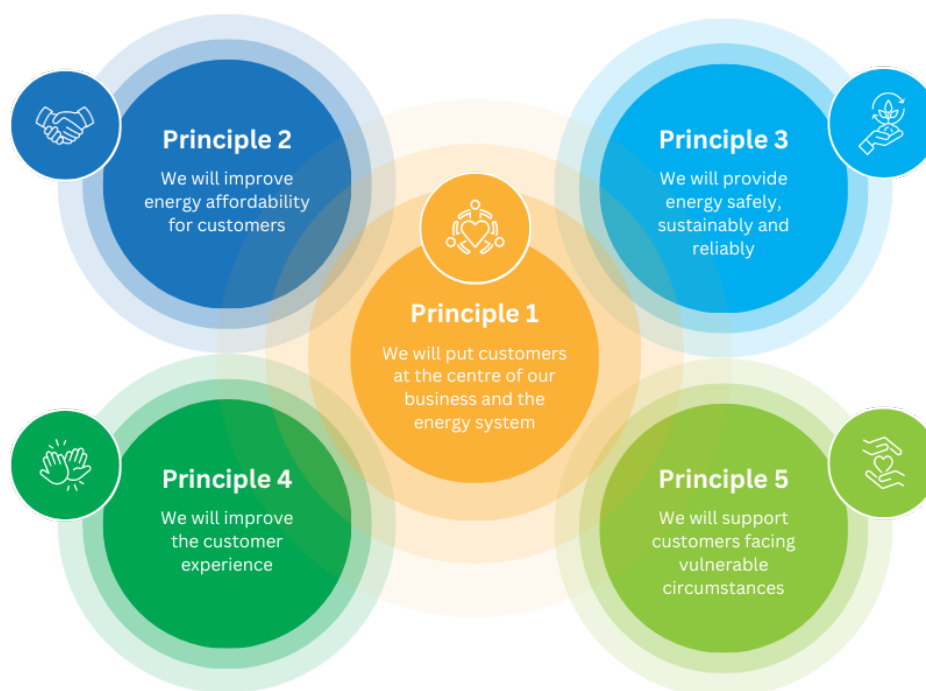




4. Disclosure Guidance

The primary purpose of the 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 and their focus on continuous improvement.

Energy Charter Principles



[The Energy Charter](#) sets out Principles in Action under 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 while preparing their Disclosure.

Key expectations for Disclosures

- Disclosures report to previous financial year or calendar year (Signatories opt which timetable is the most suitable for their organisation)
- Disclosures are submitted by close of business to director@theenergycharter.com.au by:
 - 31 March for calendar year reporting
 - 30 Sept for financial year reporting
 - Please communicate formally any exceptional circumstances to the Energy Charter CEO 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 – Disclosures are formally endorsed by CEOs and/or Boards.
- Disclosures are supported by engagement with customer and community representatives as part of the decentralised Accountability Process introduced in 2022.
- 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.
- Disclosures are published the [Energy Charter website](#) and Signatory websites shortly after submission.

Content of Disclosures

Previously, Disclosures followed the same basic format with recommended content allocations to support consistency and comparability.

Given the growing maturity of Signatories and the feedback of the EUCG at the end of 2023 (refer Appendix A), we encourage a more flexible approach be taken within the 10 pages of Disclosures, namely one that focuses on outcomes and impacts for customers and communities leveraging the Energy Charter Impact Framework (discussed below).

Different parts of the supply chain may focus on those commitments under the Principles where they are better placed to deliver outcomes and impacts for customers and communities.

Area	Content guidance
Introduction by Chair and/or CEO	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.
“Our customers and our communities”	A profile of the Signatory customer base and/or communities, including relevant socio-economic and environmental factors that influence their needs, priorities, relationship with energy and the Signatory.
Customer and community highlights	<p>Top 3-5 customer and community outcomes that are clearly above and beyond regulatory requirements and business as usual. These may be presented as case studies and focus on the customer and community outcomes and impact achieved. All highlights include evidence via appropriate outcome and impact measures.</p> <p>This can include an outline of foundation activities, change achieved and impact expected as a result, as per the Impact Framework.</p>



Area	Content guidance
Reporting against Principles	<p>Signatories cover all Principles broadly but put more emphasis on the Principles that are most relevant to their customers and communities. This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A maturity assessment using the Maturity Model• Performance leveraging the Impact Framework against previous commitments and supporting evidence (including metrics and measures)• Future commitments and maturity aspirations <p>Signatories are encouraged to align the appropriate level of content against each Principle, depending on their customer and community priorities.</p>
Appendix (up to 5 pages)	<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 will be evidenced by appropriate metrics and measures, validated through engagement.

The Menu of Possible Evidence (Attachment B to the Energy Charter Accountability Guidance 2023) was created by the Measures, Metrics and Maturity Working Group 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 OPPORTUNITY

The measures and metrics included in Disclosures evidence customer and community outcomes and impacts – 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

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.**

Impact Framework

We also encourage Signatories to leverage the [Energy Charter Impact Framework](#) to articulate their activities, outcomes and impact for customers and communities.

The Impact Framework will help Signatories outline the different stages of impact and the role that Signatories play specifically:

- Outline the Foundation activities that have occurred to establish the activity and enable its success.
- Make clear the Change that has occurred in the business and for your customers & communities.
- Demonstrate the expected impact and social benefit expected / occurring as a result of your activities.

The Impact Framework enables a clear outline of impact from your specific delivery to customer and community benefits. It is an outline of the theory of change that illustrates your performance and commitment to customer and community priorities.

The Impact Framework is a guiding tool to show the direct relationship between your activities and better social outcomes, it is also not a compliance tool, but a tool to assess and encourage continuous improvement to customer and community centred delivery.

5. Engagement with customers and community

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

- Signatories are encouraged to look for opportunities to strengthen the role of the CEO in the Disclosure process 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.
- Signatories are encouraged to meet collectively with customers and communities in their relevant jurisdictions.
- 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>Share, validate self-assessments and understand improvement opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commit to supporting customer and community representatives meaningfully engaging. • Create an authentic platform for discussion with customer and community representatives and other stakeholders about what you have achieved for customers and communities. • 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. • Get constructive feedback from customer and community representatives and other stakeholders on where you can do better moving forward. • Validate maturity self-assessments, measures and commitments to continuous improvement. 	<p>Collaborate, create a feedback loop and look forward</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commit to supporting customer and community representatives meaningfully engaging. • Share the Disclosure against the Energy Charter Principles. • Look for opportunities to meet collectively with customer and community representatives with other Signatory CEOs. • Discuss how previous feedback has/is being considered and what actions will/are being progressed as a result. • Focus on setting and planning what will happen over the next cycle in partnership with your customer and community representatives. Increase the focus on future commitments. • 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?) • Explore opportunities for Energy Charter collaboration on future #BetterTogether initiatives.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collect feedback on the engagement process for continual improvement for better outcomes for customers and communities.
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BETTER PRACTICE OPPORTUNITY

Signatories are encouraged to 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](#) Community of Practice initiative.

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

6. Feedback Summary guidance

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

- Feedback summaries align directly to the current years' Disclosure engagement process on how the Energy Charter Principles are being met.
- Feedback Summaries are to be submitted by close of business to director@theenergycharter.com.au by:
 - 30 June for calendar year reporting
 - 30 November for financial year reporting
 - Please communicate formally any exceptional circumstances to the Energy Charter CEO 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 – 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 OPPORTUNITY

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.



Content

Item	Content Guidance
Who we engaged	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.
How we engaged	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.
You said, we heard, we did	<p>This is the core component of the Feedback Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • 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. • 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.
Our engagement performance	This section includes feedback and performance against the engagement objectives, along with any continuous improvement commitments.

BETTER PRACTICE OPPORTUNITY

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.



7. Formatting and style

- Provide as a PDF, up to 10 pages (excl. title page and appendices).
- Acronyms are spelt out in the first instance and any business specific terms defined. Please do not use industry jargon!
- Disclosure is accessible and easy to read with appropriate font size and spacing.

8. Overview of 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 and impact for customers and communities, themes of focus for future #BetterTogether initiatives and identifies areas for continuous improvement. This will increasingly leverage the Impact Framework.

The Energy Charter Disclosure also reflects maturity observations and key themes across all Signatory Disclosures.

The Energy Charter Disclosure is launched at a CEO-led Forum in December and published on the Energy Charter website. As with the Signatories, the #BetterTogether Disclosure is grounded in effective engagement with customer and community representatives.

This includes:

- **Customer/Community Outcome Groups (COGs):** 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 strategic 'feedback loop' for the #BetterTogether initiatives and the Energy Charter overall.

Signatories are encouraged to invite customer and community representatives to attend the CEO-led Forum and share the Energy Charter Disclosure across customer and communities to highlight their collaboration in #BetterTogether initiatives.

Appendix A: Summary of End-User Consultative Group Feedback (November 2023)

You said	We will
<p>The longer the process is going, the better their engagement processes get. Led them to be prepared and able to talk to stakeholders. Plenty of statements where feedback has been taken on Board. Relationships are maturing to a point where they are offering real value. Seeing both industry and customer advocates mature together.</p>	<p>Encourage more Signatories to do joint Accountability CEO Forums building on current work of Qld and Tasmania.</p>
<p>The higher bar for engaging is flowing across the sector. The Energy Charter is having a broader impact across the sector even for those not involved. It's always been a good process as we can have feisty conversations on what is innovation and above and beyond. Push the business to ask what is above and beyond, what is 'best' practice.</p> <p>Slow but steady change, which is welcomed.</p>	<p>Encourage Signatories to "ask what is above and beyond, what is 'better' practice?"</p>
<p>Accountability Process runs smoothly and is making a true difference. It provides access to senior leaders with the Signatories which has led to real outcomes for his stakeholders. Strongly supportive of the Energy Charter and the #BetterTogether initiatives from the perspective of the ag sector nationally.</p>	<p>Ensure CEOs and Boards continue to lean.</p>
<p>There has been a huge improvement across the board but not everyone is at the same maturity level. The success could be relevant to the degree to which the Energy Charter is integrated within standard business processes within Signatories – a key change for businesses to make meaningful disclosures.</p>	<p>Encourage that Customer Councils to be involved in setting and planning what will happen over the next cycle in partnership with the business. Increased focus on future commitments.</p>



You said	We will
<p>Noted that the timing of the disclosure process is challenging if we are discussing things from 12 months ago. Therefore keen to encourage the focus to be forward looking commitments from Signatories.</p> <p>This also means there is greater obligation on Customer Councils to be involved as a critical friend and stay on top of what is happening</p> <p>Other supports to help the Customer Councils in engaging – businesses need to be giving their Customer Councils permission to be playing a more engaged role?</p>	<p>Signatories to more explicitly support their Customer Councils to play a proactive role in the Accountability Process.</p> <p>Leverage the Energy Charter Impact Framework to guide future commitments.</p>
<p>What can be done to support advocates? Opportunity for advocates to engage and learn from each other, on what value can be offered. Mentorship is so valuable.</p> <p>Despite being 5 years old, the Energy Charter is just beginning. The way the transition is being received means that community opposition is delaying transition. We still haven't got it right, and there is a lot of pressure to achieve goals. We learnt and have runs on the board, but we can't think we're there. And we cannot "run over" communities, as this will erode the value of everything achieved so far. We've got to do things we've never done before.</p>	<p>Continue to support Signatories on the Priority #BetterTogether Social Licence work focussing on impact to communities and the support that can work to help understand and encourage communities.</p>
<p>Openness and transparency is key and the businesses need to give room that enable input. When this happens, we can have meaningful conversations, and consider new options and for the stakeholders to have an understanding how decisions are made.</p> <p>Resourcing engagement is critical, both within and external to the business.</p>	<p>Signatories to more explicitly support their Customer Councils to play a proactive role in the Accountability Process, including resourcing them to participate meaningfully.</p>
<p>What is it that is driving cultural change and how does the devolved Accountability Process assist this? Proposal for further evolution, CEO-led initiatives that shift the dial. Instead of the current model,</p>	<p>Explore potential trial of this approach in 2024 if there is interest from customer and community representatives and Signatories.</p>



You said	We will
<p>proposed a CEO-led model where they call out the one-two big things on 1 page that have moved the dial for customers.</p> <p>Potential to look at a single initiative that really impacts customers/communities led by CEOs? Not sure if it beneficial currently as a self-assessment across all initiatives. Is this really moving the needle for culture change?</p>	
<p>Picking activities to put under Energy Charter Principles was not what the Accountability Process was designed for. What would be more useful is a CEO statement that this is what we did and this is where we miss the boat – and provide better opportunity for community and consumer representatives can be tangibly involved. Even in the current streamlined process it is still limiting access for advocates and their limited time & resources.</p> <p>Disclosure format encourages businesses to find things to report against. The real aim is ‘What did you do that weren’t otherwise required to do that changed the dial?’</p> <p>If each business only does 1 page, that’s okay, but it’s about a meaningful project, which could be #BTs. Expecting advocates to engage in this kind of process and expecting them to read all disclosure is a lot to expect.</p>	<p>Further encourage that Disclosures are only “over and above” regulatory requirements.</p> <p>Signatories to more explicitly support their Customer Councils to play a proactive role in the Accountability Process, including resourcing them to participate meaningfully.</p>