

# ENERGY CHARTER DISCLOSURE REPORT

2023-2024



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## Acknowledgement of country

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

## Purpose of this report

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

As a full signatory of the Energy Charter, we commit to publicly report how we are delivering against the five Energy Charter principles. We do this by releasing this disclosure report and regularly engaging with our newly formed Energy Customer and Community Forum.

In this report, we have assessed each principle with the Energy Charter Maturity Model. While there has been no change in status since our previous disclosure, we have many projects in progress that will be delivered to the benefit of our customers and communities.



## Message from our Chair and Chief Executive Officer

On behalf of Jacana Energy, we present our Energy Charter Disclosure Report for 2023-2024. This is our second disclosure after becoming a signatory of the Energy Charter in 2022.

This year has been both successful and challenging as we continue to embed the five Energy Charter principles into everything we do.

We have successfully established our Energy Customer and Community Forum, with the first meeting held in June 2024. We were encouraged by the enthusiastic participation of our members and excited to see the contribution this group will make to our future initiatives.

Cost of living continues to be at the forefront of our customers' minds. While electricity prices are regulated and subsidised by the Northern Territory Government, our customers remain the highest consumers of electricity in the country. This is due to the harsh climate, with continuous heat in the Top End and the extremes of a desert summer and cooler winter in Central Australia. Our customers rely on heating and cooling, which leads to an average annual electricity consumption of 8,500kWh.

This year, we have continued to focus on access to solar energy where it has previously been out of reach. Our renewable energy projects are tracking well, including a project to install solar panels on public housing and procurement of large-scale renewable energy with battery storage.

Alongside these initiatives, we continue to encourage our customers to be more energy efficient and reduce their overall consumption through engagement, messaging and advertising campaigns.



**Trevor James**  
*Chair*



**Rod Hayes**  
*Chief Executive Officer*

## Our customers and communities

### The Northern Territory

The Northern Territory (NT) is Australia's least populated jurisdiction, home to around 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 Territory. We service communities 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 Northern Territory Government, and we supply electricity to approximately 88,000 customers. We service three regulated energy grids in Darwin/Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs, and 8 surrounding communities.

More than 80% of our customers are residential and of those 3.47% are serviced by prepaid meters. The remainder of our customers are commercial ranging from local small businesses to large industrial enterprises.

Our climate varies over the vast Northern Territory. In Central Australia, a hot desert summer is contrasted by a cooler winter leading to a reliance on both heating and cooling throughout the year. In the Top End, air conditioners are relied upon for comfort during the wet season (October to May) and there is typically a spike in energy use during this time. This is contrasted with typically less energy use in the milder dry season.

## Highlights

### Highlight 1

#### **Greater access to renewables**

Access to solar energy is often challenging for customers who don't own their homes or who cannot afford the high upfront cost to install solar panels and batteries.

In 2023-24, we have continued our work to provide greater access to renewable energy. This includes a solar micro-grid pilot project for the Marlinja community, and a trial to install solar panels on public housing.

Marlinja is an Aboriginal community located near Newcastle Waters in the Barkly region, home to 60 residents in 18 properties. Residents have previously been serviced from a hybrid gas-diesel power station in Elliott which is expensive to run and not environmentally friendly. The community were often subject to periodic blackouts due to the remote location, making access for repairs difficult, especially during the wet season. The community has prepaid meters installed on each property, and rates of self-disconnection were high. An innovative new project led by Aboriginal organisation Original Power has installed a solar micro-grid with battery storage that provides most of the community's electricity needs and exports any additional electricity back to the main grid. The exported electricity is exchanged for a credit to their prepaid meters and shared across the community.

Our trial to install solar panels on public housing is also progressing. The Sun Boosters trial will install solar panels on residential properties owned by the Northern Territory Government in Darwin, Palmerston, and Tennant Creek. This trial will see some of our most vulnerable customers benefit from the renewables transition through credits on their electricity accounts.

In addition to this, procurement of large-scale renewable energy with battery storage to service the Darwin/Katherine grid is ongoing. This project has the potential to supply as much as 15 percent of the Darwin-Katherine electricity grid's needs.

## Highlight 2

### **Introduction of skills-based routing**

We continued to improve our service to customers and grade of service.

We introduced skills-based routing to the contact centre. The improved call routing allows customers with quick requests to be serviced with minimal wait times. It also ensures our more experienced customer care agents can be available to assist with complex queries.

This solution improved our customer satisfaction and grade of service.

## Highlight 3

### **Establishing the Energy Customer and Community Forum**

One of our key initiatives for this year was establishing the Energy Customer and Community Forum (ECCF). The ECCF brings together individual customers, business advocates and representatives from not-for-profit community organisations.

ECCF members have the opportunity to review and comment on initiatives aimed at improving the customer experience. They can do this directly with our CEO who chairs the meetings.

The ECCF has 11 members, comprised of six representatives from businesses or community organisations and five customer representatives. The first meeting was held on 20 June 2024, and future meetings will be held quarterly.

## Performance Measures

### 2023-24 measures

Principle	Measure	2023-2024	2022-2023
We will put customers at the centre of everything we do and the energy system	Grade of service <sup>1</sup>	95%	83.9%
	First call resolution	79%	76%
	Net promoter score <sup>2</sup>	+37	+31
	Employee engagement <sup>3</sup>	82%	73.1%
We will improve energy affordability for customers	Cost to serve <sup>4</sup>	\$217	\$198
We will provide energy safely, sustainably and reliably	Disconnection for non-payment <sup>5</sup>	2.51%	0.67%
We will improve the customer experience	Customer satisfaction score	4/5	3.8/5
	Customer effort score <sup>6</sup>	+24	+12.8
	Complaints <sup>7</sup>	0.59%	0.60%
We will support customers facing vulnerable circumstances	Hardship program customers (average number of customers)	340	380

<sup>1</sup> Grade of service: measures the percentage of customer calls to the contact centre answered within 30 seconds.

<sup>2</sup> Net promoter score (NPS): 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.

<sup>3</sup> Employee engagement measures the emotional connection and commitment our people have working for Jacana Energy, calculated via a yearly employee survey.

<sup>4</sup> Cost to serve is calculated by dividing operating costs (less impairment expense) by the total number of customer accounts.

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

<sup>6</sup> Customer effort measures the ease in which customers feel they can engage with Jacana Energy through a variety of digital and traditional channels.

<sup>7</sup> Metrics calculated as a percentage of our customer base. Sum of all quarters.



## Principle 1

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

### Where we are now

During 2023-24 we have continued to work on our strategic plan. Our vision, 'leading smart energy solutions for the Territory', means we're making electricity easy for our customers today, and finding smart, renewable energy solutions for the NT's future.

Our vision goes hand in hand with our values of diversity, innovation, honesty, teamwork and wellbeing. Living our values is key to achieving our goals and seeing the connection between what we do, why we are doing it and who we are doing it for.

### We have delivered

- **Customer Experience Roadmap:** We developed a Customer Experience Roadmap to assist prioritising improvement initiatives to ensure the customer continues to be at the centre of our business. The 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.



### How we want to improve

Our Energy Customer and Community Forum (ECCF) was recently established with the first meeting taking place in June 2024. The group will provide advice and guidance on issues that are affecting our customers. It was encouraging to see the enthusiasm and questions coming from the ECCF members. Their valuable input will help guide our strategies and help us better understand our customers' needs and improve the way we service them.

One of the goals of our strategic plan is to create new products and services. Our New Products team will deliver innovative solutions to customer issues. We have encouraged idea sharing across the business to suggest new products and services. This allows anyone with an idea to submit it to the New Products team, where it will be reviewed based on a set criteria. We recognise the value of each teams' insight into our customers' needs and the most effective way to ensure their satisfaction.

## Principle 2

### We will improve energy affordability for customers

#### Where we are now

Electricity prices in the NT are regulated and subsidised by the Northern Territory Government for residential and commercial customers consuming less than 750 megawatt hours of electricity per year. However, our customers are also the highest consumers of electricity in the country. Therefore, our communications emphasise strategies to reduce electricity consumption while highlighting the significant energy required to maintain a comfortable home temperature. Our messages include energy saving tips such as ensuring an air conditioner is set between 24 and 26 degrees and using ceiling fans at the same time to circulate the cool air.

We want our customers to be aware of how they can reduce their usage to avoid bill shock. This is particularly important during the Top End wet season when there is a spike in electricity usage due to the reliance on air conditioners for comfort.

#### We have delivered

- **NT Energy Champ:** In 2023, we encouraged Territorians to make energy awareness part of their everyday by entering the



#NTEnergyChamp challenge. We asked our customers to provide their practical energy saving tips on our social media channels. Chosen winners received a \$500 credit on their bill. Each tip was reposted on our Facebook page to create greater engagement.

- **Think Outside the Energy Box:** As an evolution of previous campaigns, we have prepared to launch in July 2024 our dry season/winter campaign *Think Outside the [Energy] Box*. As part of the campaign, customers can submit their best 'weird and whacky' energy saving tip for the chance to win a \$500 credit.

#### How we want to improve

We are further investigating better access to solar energy for some of our most vulnerable customers. Our aim is to use one of our greatest natural resources, the NT sun, to deliver greener, affordable electricity to more households in the Northern Territory.

## Principle 3

**We will provide energy safely, sustainably and reliably**

### Where we are now

During 2023-24 we have continued our focus on renewable energy. While we are not the network provider, our role as a retailer means we can provide innovative ways to access renewable energy.

Our renewable projects focus on providing access to solar energy for some of our most vulnerable customers. This includes our customers in public housing and remote communities.

### We have delivered

- **Sun Boosters trial:** This trial is a renewable energy project that aims to share the benefits of rooftop solar with customers living in public housing. Selected public housing dwellings in Darwin, Palmerston and Tennant Creek will be invited to participate, and they will receive credits on their electricity accounts in exchange for participating in the program.
- **Marlinja micro-grid project:** This solar sharing pilot project, led by Original Power, delivers clean, affordable power to the Marlinja community. This innovative project showcases how the benefits of



renewable generation can be shared amongst the community, while ensuring supply continuity.

- **Renewable energy procurement:** Our procurement process for large-scale renewable energy with battery storage is ongoing. Once the project is finished, it is expected to produce up to 15% of the energy required for the Darwin/Katherine grid.

### How we want to improve

We are exploring options to deliver reliable electricity in a financially and socially sustainable way. We will continue to invest in renewables and energy storage for the benefit of our customers.

Alongside the Sun Boosters trial, we will aim to produce energy efficiency communications to ensure customers participating in the trial have a greater understanding of how changing the way they use their electricity can lead to savings.

## Principle 4

### We will improve the customer experience

#### Where we are now

We are prioritising the customer experience and looking towards continuous improvement in this space. During 2023-24, we continued to enhance our services and deliver more for our customers.

While we are continually improving in this space, we have been limited by our current telephony system which makes improvements difficult to implement.

#### We have delivered

- **Complaints management:** We continue to work closely with the NT Ombudsman and NT Utilities Commission to resolve complaints efficiently. These relationships are critical to resolving complaints effectively and providing the best experience to our customers.
- **Skills-based routing:** Our new skills-based routing system is improving customer satisfaction by segmenting customers based on their enquiry. This means customers with simple enquiries are not waiting behind those with more complex issues.
- **Employee numbers:** We have employed additional staff in our contact centre and have implemented a seasonal hiring

#### Maturity level

Current		Evolving
Aspiration		Empowering

process to ensure adequate coverage during peak periods. The Customer Experience Roadmap is essential to improving our customers' experience when interacting with us. Our goal is to make every customer interaction seamless. To achieve this, we are identifying the key pain points and addressing them both through quick wins and more comprehensive projects aimed at strengthening our ability to deliver a quality service.

#### How we want to improve

Our current telephony system is restricting our ability to enhance customer experience. During the 2024-25 financial year we aim to introduce a new telephony system to modernise our contact centre. This upgrade will enable us to offer a more personalised service and eliminate obstacles that sometimes make interactions challenging. A more streamlined approach will support our customer care agents, helping them resolve enquiries more efficiently.

We will also be developing a Voice of Customer program by leveraging customer survey data, ensuring customer sentiment is addressed through future products and services.

## Principle 5

### We will support customers facing vulnerable circumstances

#### Where we are now

We are committed to providing support to customers facing vulnerable circumstances. Our award-winning Stay Connected program continues to be a priority for us.

We work with our Stay Connected customers to create tailored payment plans. We start by using their previous usage to estimate their energy use over the next 12 months. This helps us to create the right payment plan for the customer, ensuring they can catch up on payments. We also frequently check-in with our Stay Connected customers and offer them ongoing support.

There are also many customers that may not fit the criteria for our Stay Connected program but are struggling to pay their bills. For these customers, we continue to support them by providing flexible payment options, advice on their usage, and tips on how they can be more energy efficient and reduce their debt.

#### We have delivered

- **Staff training:** Our contact centre staff have been specially trained to identify when a customer is at risk of hardship. They have a good understanding of the issues vulnerable customers are facing, and



they can implement tools and strategies to provide an increasingly personalised service to benefit our customers.

- **Hardship team:** Our dedicated hardship coordinators continue to create working relationships with external stakeholders including financial counsellors and work with them to support our customers.

#### How we want to improve

We are continuing to look at ways we can proactively identify customers prior to them falling into hardship.

Our engagement with peak bodies including community organisations and financial counsellors is critical to helping us be more proactive in identifying customers facing vulnerable circumstances. Although our engagement with peak bodies has improved significantly, we are continuing to improve these relationships to better support our customers. For many of our most vulnerable customers, electricity is just one challenge among many that needs to be addressed. Addressing these needs holistically alongside best practice support organisations, delivers better outcomes for all.





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