

#BetterTogether Customer-led Tariffs Stage 3:

Focus Group Terms of Reference

Topic: Focus Group Terms of Reference

To: Focus Group interested parties

Date: 23 February 2026

1. Purpose

The Focus Groups are designed to place customers at the centre of tariff and retail pricing design, testing how different households experience current energy pricing and respond to emerging customer-led retail offers (e.g. fixed, subscription, dynamic or hybrid options). Insights will directly inform Stage 3 paper trials and any future consideration of sandbox pathways.

2. Objectives

The Focus Groups will:

- Understand how different households experience current electricity pricing and bills
- Test customer reactions to emerging pricing ideas (e.g. fixed, predictable, hybrid or dynamic options using customer-focussed explanations and scenario tests)
- Identify what helps or hinders customers in responding to price signals, including preferences for different retail pricing options, willingness to pay for new pricing plans, and views on retailer-led coordination of customer energy resources (such as rooftop solar, batteries and electric vehicles) — including being comfortable allowing an energy service provider to manage these assets at certain times, and how to be rewarded or compensated in return.
- Surface trust, fairness, accessibility and equity considerations
- Inform the design of customer scenarios and trial safeguards for Stage 3 delivery

Scope

The Focus Groups will explore customer experiences and preferences, not make final retail tariff decisions. Outputs will be used to:

- ✓ Shape pricing scenarios and customer journeys
- ✓ Inform consumer protections and communications
- ✓ Support evidence-based trial design

Participants

Focus Groups will include a diverse mix of up to 8 to 10 customers and customer representatives, with intentional representation across:

- Low-income households and those experiencing vulnerability
- Life Support Customers



- Customers with solar, batteries or EVs
- Renters and apartment dwellers
- Regional, rural and suburban households

Participation is considered voluntary and will include a supported and inclusive environment.

Role of Focus Group participants

Participants will share their experiences and perspectives to help us better understand what matters most to households when it comes to electricity bills. They will explore how different pricing options could work in real life, what would make pricing feel fairer, clearer and easier to manage, and provide feedback based on their own knowledge and experience of energy pricing.

Some familiarity with how electricity pricing works would be helpful, but expert knowledge is not required.

Approach

- 4-6 facilitated focus groups from April to June 2026 to be confirmed with participants
- Combination of workshops, scenario testing and short follow-up activities
- Plain-English materials and accessible formats made available
- Safe, respectful and supportive discussions

Outputs

- Focus Group Insights Report
- Customer-validated retailer + network tariff design principles
- Clear inputs into Stage 3 scenario development and sandbox design

3. Governance + Ethics

- Participation will be opt-in with informed consent
- Privacy and confidentiality will be maintained refer to The Energy Charter's Privacy Policy here www.theenergycharter.com.au/privacy-policy
- Individual billing will be coordinated by The Energy Charter contact bec.jolly@theenergycharter.com.au for further information
- The Energy Charter will provide oversight and secretariat support
- Concerns can be raised directly to the CEO of The Energy Charter at: sabiene.heindl@theenergycharter.com.au

4. Contact

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