

Appendix F: Consumer engagement program report

Regulatory proposal for the ACT electricity
distribution network 2024–29

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1. Overview of our engagement program

In preparing our regulatory proposal for the 2024–29 period, we have made engaging with the community our focus. We have spent time with local energy consumers through various channels to understand what they value most and what their priorities and expectations are for the services we provide, and how we prepare for and respond to the challenges and opportunities facing the community in the future.

1.1. Engagement design and development

Genuine engagement with consumers has informed our regulatory proposal. The engagement has been guided by the EN24 and TSS consumer engagement strategy (provided as Appendix E) and Evoenergy’s broad Stakeholder Engagement Strategy 2021.¹ Evoenergy’s stakeholder engagement principles underpin how we approach engagement. These principles are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1 Evoenergy stakeholder engagement principles

We are	What this means to us	What it means to stakeholders
Adaptive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tailored approaches (not one-size-fits-all) Moving with the times 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flexible and tailored engagement and communication to meet stakeholder needs Engagement on your terms
Curious	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eagerness to learn and discover new things Welcoming multiple perspectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will listen to you—you will be heard Inclusive engagement practices
Brave	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluating our engagement practices Having courageous conversations and seeking feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You can hold us accountable We will ask you for feedback on our engagement
Honest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing information that is clear, accurate, relevant and timely Transparency around the purpose, scope and outcomes of our engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will use plain language that helps you make informed contributions You will be able to read reports on our engagement activities, and their effectiveness, on our website
Committed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dedicating time and resources to engagement Acting with integrity—doing what we say we’ll do 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are around for the long haul—our engagement is ongoing We will explain how your input impacts our work and your experiences

Reflecting the commitment to genuine engagement, the Consumer Engagement Strategy was developed in consultation with Evoenergy’s long-standing Energy Consumer Reference Council (ECRC) and its implementation has been regularly reviewed and monitored by the ECRC through a

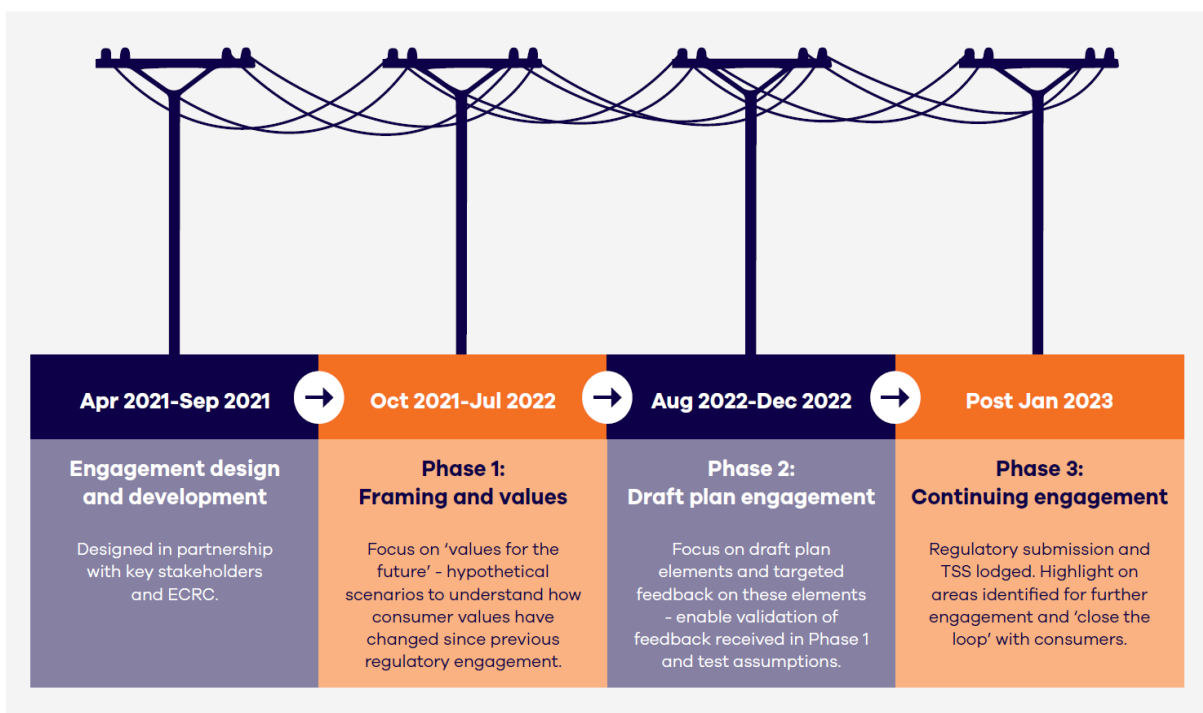
¹ <https://www.evoenergy.com.au/-/media/evoenergy/about-us/stakeholder-engagement-strategy-2021.pdf>

regular health check process. ECRC feedback has continued to shape engagement activities as they progress. The Consumer Engagement Strategy has the following overarching objectives; to:

- **Inform, consult, involve and collaborate** with electricity consumers, key stakeholders and other members of the Canberra community about the future of the electricity network.
- Gather **diverse consumer input** to inform the development of the EN24 regulatory proposal and proposed TSS.
- Further enhance consumer knowledge of Evoenergy and its business through **active engagement from Evoenergy business** during engagement delivery.

Engagement on the development of the Electricity Network 2024-2029 proposal and associated Tariff Structure Statement will be delivered over three phases which extend from October 2021 – January 2023, as summarised Figure 1 below.

Figure 1 consumer engagement program phases



The types of consumers encouraged to contribute to the development of Evoenergy’s electricity network plan and the engagement tools and activities used to engage with these consumers are summarised in Figure 2.

Figure 2 Engagement activity by stakeholder group

	ECRC health check	Community panel	Community pricing panel	Pricing workshops	Engagement Website	'Have your say' survey	EV Survey	DSO Survey	Consumer group partnership	One-on-one meetings	Energy Matters	Tariff trial engagement	Draft EN24 plan	Deep dives	Draft proposal workshop
Residential	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
Small-medium business	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓	✓				✓	✓	✓
Vulnerable communities	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓				✓	✓	✓
Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities		✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓				✓	✓	✓
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities		✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓				✓	✓	✓
Young people		✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓				✓		✓
Retailers										✓		✓	✓		✓
Large customers	✓				✓					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
ACT Government										✓		✓	✓		✓

1.2. Engagement with impact

Since the establishment of the ECRC in 2014 Evoenergy has sought to progressively increase the direct impact of consumers on network planning. Engagement activities to inform this draft Network Plan have continued to raise the bar on the influence of consumers. During Phase 1 and 2 of engagement, this was characterised by the following features:

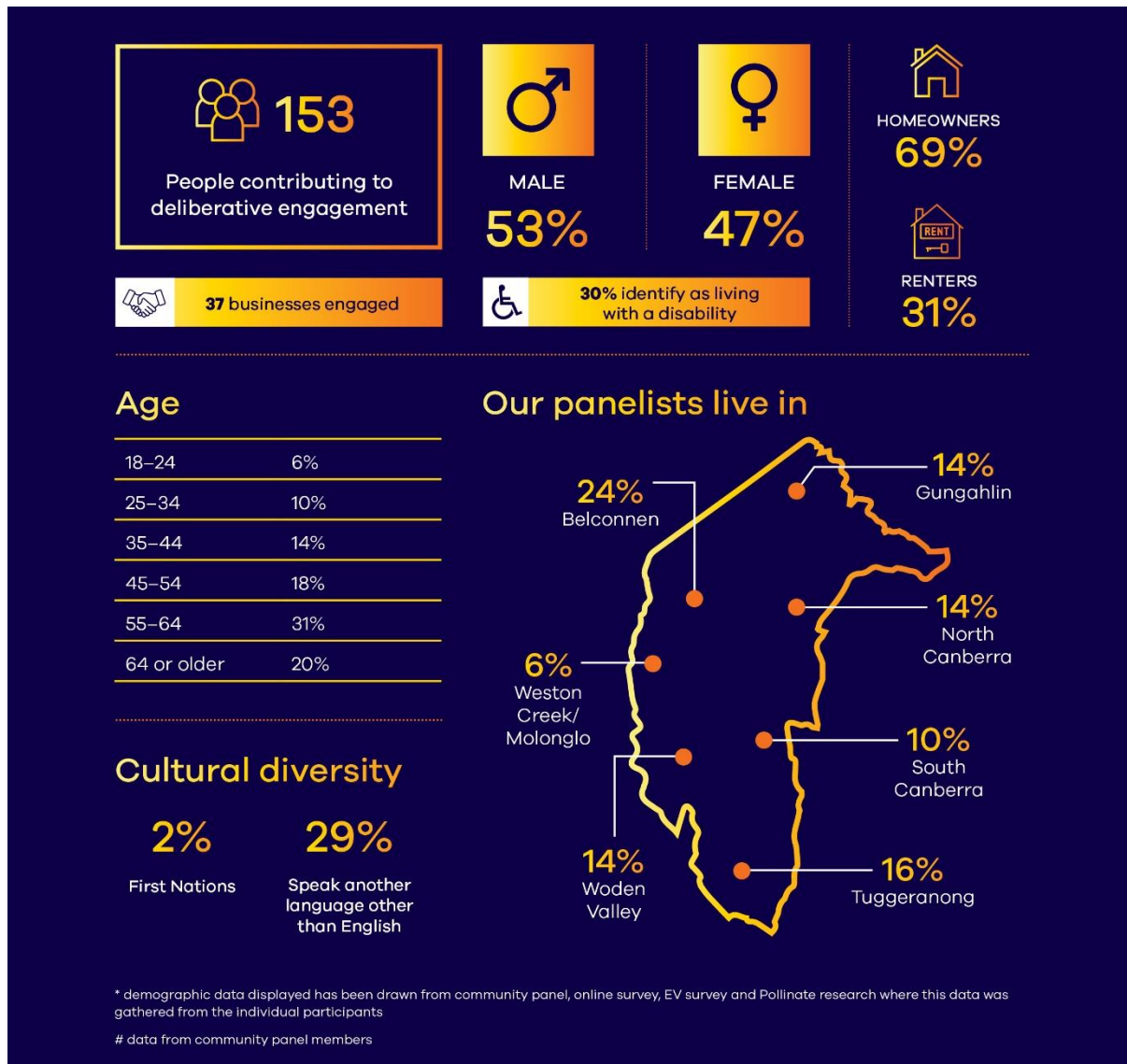
- **Sharing the challenge** – throughout the engagement, Evoenergy has encouraged consumers to understand and engage with the challenge facing all network businesses – the energy transition. This is achieved through an online video, opening presentations and discussions for each consumer activities.
- **Consumer led** – from its earliest development the Consumer Engagement Strategy has been defined and directed by the ECRC with ongoing monitoring and review. Deliberative engagement through the Community Panel prioritised understanding areas of importance to consumers (in meeting 1) and using those values to guide ongoing discussion and feedback.
- **Sincere discussions** – with senior executive involvement in all Community and Pricing Panel sessions, the design of all sessions was intended to allow time for meaningful discussion as well as feedback, through to the presentation of early-stage planning priorities before they were presented to the Evoenergy Board and incorporated into the Draft EN24 plan.
- **Building trust** – by adopting a frank and open approach to responding to questions and providing information, Evoenergy has built trust with consumers so they in turn can provide frank feedback. Consumer surveys during the Customer Panel activities has shown high levels of consumer confidence in the ability of their input to influence Evoenergy’s planning.
- **Direct influence** – by sharing early-stage thinking across key OPEX, CAPEX and Net Zero priorities, Evoenergy has been able to provide meaningful options for consideration by the Community Panel and modify network planning to reflect consumer feedback.

The engagement program was designed to allow for multiple channels of engagement featuring customer panels, workshops, surveys and forums. Overarching all of this is the ongoing advisory role of the ECRC. Activities undertaken are listed below.

- Energy Consumer Reference Council meetings
- The establishment of a demographically representative deliberative Community Panel including a pricing sub-panel
- A website providing resources engagewithenergy.com.au
- An online survey attracting over 800 responses from across Canberra.
- Electric vehicle survey
- 2 deliberative engagement forums (Pollinate)
- DER survey
- Belconnen storm survey
- Network resilience engagement
- Service classification collaboration
- The establishment of a community partnership with the ACT Council of Social Services to better understand harder-to-reach stakeholder groups including low-income households, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) and the indigenous community.
- Outreach to the ACT’s small business sector the Canberra Business Chamber, Phillip Business Community Association, Fyshwick Chamber of Commerce and Property Council of Australia.
- Capturing feedback from young people using an online survey during the Canberra CareersXpo 2022
- A large customer forum called Energy Matters
- An online briefing session for interested stakeholders
- Online feedback survey on the Draft EN24 Plan
- Submissions via email on the Draft EN24 Plan

Participation in the deliberative activities included in the list above are summarized in Figure 3.

Figure 3 Key statistics of participation in deliberative engagement activities



2. Engagement program activities

1.3. ECRC

The ECRC provided a pivotal role in designing and peer reviewing the delivery of the consumer engagement program during the development of this draft plan. ECRC members attended many of the engagement activities, in particular the Community and Pricing Panel workshops, as observers.

At each ECRC meeting an update was provided on the consumer engagement activities, and a Health Check report completed by ECRC members. This Health Check Report provided an important independent consumer view on the effectiveness of the engagement program.

Figure 4 ECRC Health Check Report example



1.4. Community Panel

The Community Panel was established in November 2021 following an ACT-wide recruitment campaign and an independent selection process. The Panel is made up of 20 representatives of the Canberra community selected from a pool of applicants to represent the demographic stratification of the ACT. Table 2 provides an overview of the Community Panel meetings. Meeting summaries for each meeting can be found on Evoenergy’s engagement website engagewithenergy.com.au

Table 2 Community Panel meetings

Meeting dates	Participation	Key areas of discussion
Meeting 1 20 November 2021, 9am-2pm	22 Community Panel members 14 senior Evoenergy representatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction and overview of the Community Panel and how it will work • Determining values and how working together • Unpacking the electricity network and energy landscape Introduction to the regulatory environment, building blocks and processes • Draft Reporting framework
Meeting 2 4 December 2021, 9am-2pm	20 Community Panel members 13 senior Evoenergy representatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evoenergy’s electricity network tariff structure • Evoenergy’s proposed Customer Service Incentive Scheme
Meeting 3 12 February 2022, 9am-2pm	17 Community Panel members 15 senior Evoenergy representatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of customer service values feedback to inform the Customer Service Incentive Scheme • Safety, quality, reliability: and security of supply • Future planning for a resilient network
Meeting 4 19 March 2022, 9am-2pm	17 Community Panel members 14 senior Evoenergy representatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction into Evoenergy’s modelling on net zero 2045 target and possible pathways to achieve target • Outline of Evoenergy’s position for working towards the target for the period to 2030 • Gathering feedback from customers on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Evoenergy’s net zero modelling – Potential customer impacts of the proposed pathway – Customer expectations as we transition to a net zero future
Meeting 5 25 June 2022, 9am- 2pm	14 Community Panel members 8 senior Evoenergy representatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operational expenditure (opex) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Draft opex forecasts – Review of consumer expectations • Capital expenditure (capex) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Draft capex forecasts – Review of consumer expectations • Tariff Structure Statement (TSS) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Overview of Community Pricing Panel insights • Customer Service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Overview of customer service improvements and incentive schemes
Meeting 6 20 August 2022, 9am-2pm	15 Community Panel members 8 senior Evoenergy representatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide additional information on outstanding areas of interest • Present the key features of the Draft EN24 Plan • Prepare a ‘final report’ from the Panel

Meeting 7 31 October 2022 5pm – 7.30pm	9 Community Panel members 10 senior Evoenergy representatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To discuss matters relating to recent ACT Government announcements and the impact this may have on the regulatory submission.
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1.5. Community Pricing Panel

The Community Pricing Panel was established to further explore and understand pricing issues and tariff structures. The Pricing Panel consists of 30 randomly selected participants, including some participants from the Community Panel. The panel met five times. The outcomes of their deliberations was presented to Meeting 5 of the Community Panel. Meeting summaries for each meeting can be found on Evoenergy’s engagement website engagewithenergy.com.au. Table 3 provides details of the pricing panel meetings.

Table 3 Community Pricing Panel meetings

Meeting dates	Participation	Key areas of discussion
Meeting 1 12 April 2022, 5pm-7:30pm	27 Community Pricing Panel members 11 Senior Evoenergy representatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is a Community Panel and how will it work Electricity Networks 101 Electricity Network Monopolies Electricity Tariffs Network Costs
Meeting 2 Tuesday 26 April 2022, 5pm- 7:30pm	28 Community Pricing Panel Members 9 Senior Evoenergy representatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Network tariff structures Electric vehicle emerging trends and network impacts Overview of solar in the ACT and impacts on tariffs Residential battery storage and network impacts Future network scenarios
Meeting 3 17 May 2022, 5pm-7:30pm	27 Community Pricing Panel Members 14 Senior Evoenergy representatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evoenergy future tariff changes Time of use, demand, and battery tariffs
Meeting 4 31 May 2022, 5pm-7:30pm	27 Community Pricing Panel Members 9 Senior Evoenergy representatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tariff options and bill impacts Export tariffs - pros and cons of assignment options
Meeting 5 14 October 2022, 5pm-6:30pm	19 Community Pricing Panel Members 8 Senior Evoenergy representatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposed tariff reforms

1.6. Engagement Website

The engagewithenergy.com.au website provides an anchoring point for Evoenergy’s engagement program. The website includes information on the network planning process, reporting from engagement activities, and information on engagement activities undertaken and how individuals can provide their feedback. An online survey was used to gather feedback on the Draft EN24 plan as part of Phase 2 engagement.

1.7. Online survey

A key feature of the www.engagewithenergy.com.au website was an online survey which features 40 questions on the following areas: service delivery; climate change resilience; tariffs; and energy use in the future. Over 800 online surveys were completed during Phase 1 of engagement.

1.8. Deliberative engagement pricing workshops

Targeted focus group sessions were conducted to dive deeper into network tariffs. Held over two nights, the focus groups were comprised of consumers that represent four energy personas—current solar users; those open to installing solar in the future; those not open to solar; and vulnerable consumers. These workshops explored consumer sentiment on the introduction of a solar sponge charge and export tariffs.

1.9. Electric vehicle survey

Understanding ACT residents' attitudes towards EVs, in particular their charging behaviours, provides important consumer input to support the development of associated tariff reform. As part of the survey, ACT EV owners and those intending on purchasing an EV in the next three years, were asked questions to understand the drivers for EV ownership, to understand charging behaviour and to measure willingness to adapt charging behaviour based on price.

1.10. Network Resilience Engagement

In recognition of our combined goals and regulatory requirements, we collaborated with other Distribution Network Service Providers (DNSP) across the country in a joint engagement process to gain an understanding from consumers on the challenges and opportunities impacting all communities in the context of network resilience.

DNSPs included in this joint engagement are Ausgrid, Endeavour Energy, Essential Energy, Evoenergy, TasNetworks, and NT Power and Water.

This work included the development of a consultation paper on the topic, on which we invited feedback and submissions, as well as an independently facilitated stakeholder forum.

1.11. Emerging services classification collaboration

As with the collaborative engagement on network resilience, we worked with other DNSPs to develop a consultation paper and ran a stakeholder forum focusing emerging electricity services and consumers' expectations for the role of DNSPs in these services.

1.12. Draft plan stakeholder sessions

Evoenergy's large customers and key stakeholders were invited to attend the Energy Matters Forum and a stakeholder briefing to hear from specialists about the Draft EN24 plan for 2024–29, and were able to ask questions and provide feedback on the plan.

1.13. Feedback on our Draft EN24 plan

On 24 August 2022, Evoenergy released its EN24 Draft plan for public consultation for a five-week period. In addition to inviting written submissions, we provided a form on our

engagewithenergy.com.au website to allow stakeholders to respond to questions raised in the Draft EN24 plan or any other comments in an easy and accessible format.

We received submissions from the ACT Council of Social Service (ACTCOSS), and ActewAGL Retail. In addition, we received feedback from the Electric Vehicle Council, seven members of the public and comments on social media, as well as feedback received through ongoing consultation with ACT Government and Evoenergy's Energy Consumer Reference Council.

A summary of feedback received is provided in Appendix J (Draft EN24 plan feedback summary).

1.14. ACTCOSS and Evoenergy vulnerable consumers workshop

Evoenergy partnered with ACT Council of Social Services to collaborate on better engagement with harder to reach consumers such as those from diverse backgrounds or on low incomes.

Partnering with ACTCOSS provided an important opportunity to host a workshop with consumer groups that may be disproportionately impacted by Evoenergy's planning and decision making. The workshop was hosted online on 17 November 2022, and the discussion topics and what we heard on these are outlined in Appendix K (ACTCOSS Evoenergy workshop listening report).