

AusNet



Committed to Customers

**Addendum to our 2023/2024 Energy
Charter Disclosure report on commitments
to customers made for our Electricity
Distribution Price Review 2021-26**

December 2024



Acknowledgement of Country

AusNet acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we live and work. We pay our respects to Elders past and present, and celebrate their continuing connection to Country.



About the artist

As part of our reconciliation action plan we have commissioned an artwork by the artist Bitja (also known as Dixon Patten). A proud descendant of the Gunnai, Gunditjmara, Dhudhuroa, and Yorta Yorta tribes, with blood ties to Wiradjuri, Yuin, Wemba Wemba, Wadi Wadi, Monaro and Djab Wurrung, Bitja is deeply connected to his roots.

The artwork honours the strength in being part of a community, it honours our commonality as humans, but honours our diversity also and by having different views and experiences.



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1. The way we report on our performance is evolving

AusNet's customers are at the heart of everything we do, and we are committed to continuously improving our understanding of their needs and delivering to them. We aim to create a seamless customer experience, build trust and do what's right for the local communities we serve.

In 2019 AusNet made a number of commitments to our customers, co-designed with our Customer Forum during the Electricity Distribution Price Review (EDPR) 2021-26. Reporting on progress against these commitments via the Committed to Customers report (previously known as the Customer Interactions and Monitoring Report), is designed to keep us accountable for continuously improving outcomes for our customers. In the spirit of continuous improvement and making things easier for our customers, we are changing the format for our reporting in our fifth reporting year.

The driver of this change is AusNet becoming a Full Signatory to the Energy Charter in mid-2023. As a Full Signatory, we are required to publicly release an annual Energy Charter Disclosure report (Disclosure), on AusNet's performance against the Energy Charter's five principles. There is a significant overlap between the Disclosure and our Committed to Customers report. All six of our commitments to customers are covered within the Energy Charter's five principles and are therefore reported on in our Disclosure report. To make our performance reporting clearer and reduce duplication, we are publishing our yearly Committed to Customers report as an addendum to our 2023/2024 Energy Charter Disclosure. This addendum outlines the relationship between our commitments to customers and the Energy Charter principles, how our commitments have been addressed through our Energy Charter Disclosure, and reporting on sub-commitments we have made that are not included in the Disclosure.

EDPR 2021-26 customer experience commitments

As part of our 2021-2026 Electricity Distribution Price Review, we engaged a Customer Forum to represent customers' interests and negotiate on aspects of our proposal, including a set of commitments to customers.

We have been reporting on our progress against these commitments annually since 2020.

Our six commitments to customers are:

- **Commitment 1:** Building our understanding of customers' needs and expectations
- **Commitment 2:** Establishing clearer accountability for customers
- **Commitment 3:** Aligning our incentives with customer outcomes
- **Commitment 4:** Fixing customer pain points and improving the customer experience
- **Commitment 5:** Collaborating with the community and taking care of customers in vulnerable circumstances
- **Commitment 6:** Making our organisation easier to deal with

For more information on our commitments to customers, please visit our website.

The Energy Charter Disclosure

The Disclosure highlights our progress toward the Energy Charter's principles, our self-assessment on the Energy Charters' Maturity Model and priorities for the next 12 months. It demonstrates our ongoing efforts to meet customer needs and enhance our customers' experience across AusNet's whole business.

The Energy Charter principles are:

- **Principle 1:** We will put customers at the centre of our business and the energy system
- **Principle 2:** We will improve energy affordability for customers
- **Principle 3:** We will provide energy safely, sustainably and reliably
- **Principle 4:** We will improve the customer experience
- **Principle 5:** We will support customers facing vulnerable circumstances

The Disclosure process has a strong governance and accountability framework. In particular, our Customer Consultative Committee play a pivotal role assessing our performance for customers and identifying areas for improvement, working alongside AusNet's CEO and senior leaders. In September 2024, we published our inaugural Energy Charter Disclosure for 2023-2024.

Via the Disclosure, we now annually report on our performance against the Energy Charter's five principles and our priorities for further improvements.

Timeline of changes to our customer reporting

Our reporting on the commitments has evolved with changes in our operating environment. The diagram below illustrates the changes to our reporting since 2019.



2019–2020

Negotiated a set of customer commitments with the Customer Forum during EDPR 2021–26 engagement process

Mid-2020

Released first Committed to Customers report (then called Customer Interactions & Monitoring Report) on performance against the principles

Mid-2023

Became a full signatory to The Energy Charter, subscribing to an organisation-wide set of principles and associated governance and accountability arrangements

Late 2023

Final standalone Committed to Customers report released

September 2024

First Energy Charter Disclosure released, reporting on the 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024 period

December 2024 & 2025

Customer commitments made through price review processes reported on via an addendum to The Energy Charter disclosure.

2026 and beyond

AusNet begins reporting on its EDPR 2026–31 commitments (currently being developed)

2. Reporting on our commitments to customers | 2023-24 in review

In the table below we have outlined how we have addressed and reported on our customer commitments through our Energy Charter Disclosure report from July 2023 – June 2024, as they relate to the electricity distribution network

▼ **Table 1 |** Alignment between customer commitments made in EDPR 2021-26 and reporting in the **Energy Charter Disclosure**

AusNet's 2021-26 commitments to customers	Where to find reporting on this commitment in the Energy Charter Disclosure (or this addendum)	Proof points in the 2023-24 Disclosure (or this addendum)
1. Building our understanding of customers' needs and expectations	Energy Charter principle 1: We put our customers at the centre of our business and the energy system	<ul style="list-style-type: none">An overview of how we undertake industry leading engagement to understand changing customer needs, which we use to help inform our planning and support others' decision making is available on page 6 of our Disclosure.
	Addressed in this addendum	<ul style="list-style-type: none">We made a sub-commitment to publish details of our customer research activities which are not included in our Energy Charter Disclosure, until mid-2026. We now publish details of our customer research activities on our Community Hub site. You can read more about our customer research in FY23-24 in Section 2.2 of this addendum.
2. Establishing clearer accountability for customers	2023/2024 customer highlights	<ul style="list-style-type: none">In June 2024, we announced our new vision, along with a refreshed corporate purpose and strategy. Our updated vision, purpose and strategy articulates who we are, what we stand for and signals our intent to be a leader in the energy industry, taking clear accountability to deliver for our customers. Details on our corporate vision and strategy refresh can be found on page 3 of our Disclosure.
	Message from the CEO	<ul style="list-style-type: none">As part of our commitments as a Full Signatory to the Energy Charter, we undertake a CEO-led accountability process, covering many aspects of our performance in delivering for customers. This includes publicly releasing our annual Disclosure, and having regular discussions with our Customer Consultative Committee about what we are doing well and where we are not meeting customers' needs and expectations. Additional commitments and accountability we are taking on as a Full Signatory to the Energy Charter can be found on page 1 of our Disclosure.
	Addressed in this addendum	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Appropriately resourcing customer experience and having clear accountability for customer outcomes was a key focus for the Customer Forum during engagement for the EDPR 2021-26. We agreed to publish details on volume of engagement occurring until mid-2026. This is not included in our Disclosure, so we have addressed this sub-commitment in Section 2.1 of this addendum.

3. Aligning our incentives with customer outcomes

2023/2024 customer highlights

- Within our refreshed corporate strategy, we have developed our organisational performance indicators to align with the Energy Charter's five principles. This directly aligns our business' performance incentives with customer outcomes. Details on how our performance indicators align with customer outcomes can be found on page 3 of our Disclosure.

4. Fixing customers pain points and improving the Customer Experience

Energy Charter principle 4: We will improve the customer experience

- We have made improvements to our connections process, including establishing a customer experience survey to better understand and act on the pain points they experience connecting to the network. More information can be found on page 13 of our Disclosure.
- We've introduced new tools and processes to enhance customer experience during unplanned outages, including improving usability of our Unplanned Outage Management tool. Details on how we are improving the usability of our Unplanned Outage Management tool are on page 13 of our Disclosure.
- We have partnered with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) experts The LOTE Agency to help improve the experience of our CALD customers. An update on this uplift is available on page 13 of our Disclosure.

Addressed in this addendum

- We made a sub-commitment to report on work we are doing to address a specific customer pain point – alleviating constraints in solar exports – until mid-2026. This is not included in our Disclosure so we have addressed this item in Section 2.3 of this addendum.

5. Collaborating with the community and taking care of customers in vulnerable circumstances

Energy Charter principle 4: We will improve the customer experience

- We are strengthening our presence in communities, including – but not only – when things go wrong. This has included efforts to improve the electricity reliability for customers along the 1,200km Benalla to Euroa powerline. Information on how we collaborated with the community to improve reliability for regional customers is available on page 13 of our Disclosure.

Energy Charter principle 5: We will support customers facing vulnerable circumstances

- We are working with government and regulators to streamline the life support registration process and collaborating with the Energy Charter's Life Support Customer #BetterTogether initiative. An update on how we're working to provide further support to our life support customers is on page 15 of our Disclosure.
- We are investing \$1.5 million in our ElectrifiAIRCation trial to understand how low-income households can benefit from electrification. Details on this trial can be found on page 15 of our Disclosure.
- In addition to administering the Prolonged Power Outage Payments (PPOP), we provided hardship grants for AusNet customers who were without power for more than 72 hours but were not eligible for PPOP. Information on this customer hardship grant can be found on page 15 of our Disclosure.
- Each year we offer a \$30,000 Vulnerability Research Grant to a social service organisation or public institution. This grant supports research projects aimed at understanding and addressing the needs of a specific customer cohort. Details of our 2023/24 Vulnerability Research Grant are on page 15 of our Disclosure.

6. Making our organisation easier to deal with

Energy Charter principle 1: We put our customers at the centre of our business and the energy system

- We have launched an electric vehicle charging tariff trial to help understand our customers charging behaviours. Learnings from this trial will help inform the development and design of tariffs to complement electric vehicles, and ensure they effectively meet customers' needs and keep network costs down for all customers. Information on this trial is available on page 6 of our Disclosure.

2023/2024 customer highlights

- We are learning from each event to make AusNet easier to deal with during future major outages. This has included implementing 31 recommendations from the post-incident review and 41 recommendations from the Outage Tracker review. Further details on how we are learning from previous events to improve our storm and emergency response for customers is on page 4 of our Disclosure.

2.1. Engagement by the numbers in 2023-24

At AusNet, understanding and ensuring clear accountability for customer outcomes is a top priority. This was a key focus during our Customer Forum for the EDPR 2026-31 process. Previously, we used the volume of customer engagement, such as the number of meetings, as an indicator of our performance in this area. However, with significant increases in our customer experience resources, tracking the volume of engagements has become impractical. This year, we have instead reported on the growth in customer experience resourcing since the start of the EDPR 2021-26 period.

In addition to extra resourcing in customer engagement and experience-related roles, our new corporate strategy makes it very clear that accountability for customers is not the responsibility of these people alone, and there are many others across the business who directly engage with customers are/or are accountable for and contribute significantly to customer outcomes.

We will continue to report on our engagement volumes via an addendum to our Disclosure until 30 June 2026, when our EDPR 2026-31 customer commitments and accountability arrangements (currently being negotiated) will come into effect.

2.2. AusNet's customer research

In FY2024, we remained committed to undertaking customer research to further enhance our understanding of customers' needs and improve their overall experience. For the electricity distribution network, this has included:

- Our twice-yearly Energy Sentiments study
- Our customer satisfaction (C-Sat) program
- Workshops with residential and business customers to inform our EDPR2026-31 planning
- An industry-leading willingness to pay study to support customer-focussed business planning
- Our annual >5MW generator connections study
- Evaluating various communications campaigns
- Journey mapping and customer service design improvements.

We are making it easier for stakeholders and customers to learn about our research program by sharing information our Community Hub website, particularly on studies others working to advance customer outcomes might be interested in. You can access our research page [here](#).

We will continue to update Community Hub with information on our research program at least until 30 June 2026, when our EDPR 2026-31 customer commitments and accountability arrangements (currently being negotiated) will come into effect. Given it is already published on Community Hub, we will not report separately on our research activities in next year's addendum.

Between July 2023 and June 2024, we invested a lot of time listening to customers to build an understanding of their needs and priorities, and help AusNet make important decisions. We also invested a lot of time building customers' understanding of our activities, such as on our plans to improve the supply to their area.

Our engagement activity includes listening to customers through surveys, focus groups, forums and everyday interactions, and communicating with customers on things that are important to them.

We are continuing to invest in engagement. Since the start of the currently regulatory period in 2021, we have recruited an additional 22 employees dedicated to improving outcomes for customers.

10,000+

Customers shared thoughts with us, helping AusNet to reflect their needs and priorities in our decisions

2021

- 1 x GM overseeing key electricity distribution customer service functions
- 2 x relationship management and works engagement specialists
- 1 x price reviews and standing forum engagement specialists
- 1 x customer researcher
- 3 x service designers
- 1 x Flexible Exports program engagement specialist
- 4 x communications specialists

35

Staff in customer engagement service design, communications and research

2024

- 1 x GM overseeing key electricity distribution customer service functions
- 14 x account management and works engagement specialists
- 3 x price reviews and standing forum engagement specialists
- 1 x customer researcher
- 3 x service designers
- 1 x Flexible Exports engagement specialist
- 12 x communications specialists

2.3. Enabling more Consumer Energy Resources (CER) to interact with the network

AusNet is investing to support more customers with their own CER investments, like rooftop solar and batteries, to interact with the network. This investment helps enable customers to share solar power they don't use with their communities and to be paid for their excess generation.

Investment to enable more rooftop solar exports was proposed and approved by the Australian Energy Regulator in EDPR 2021-26, and AusNet is supporting CER integration through a range of projects. In recognition of the importance of addressing solar export constraints to customers, we made a sub-commitment to report publicly on how much and where AusNet is investing to enable more rooftop solar into the network. We will continue to publicly report on this sub-commitment via an addendum to our Disclosure until 30 June 2026, when our EDPR 2026-31 customer commitments and accountability arrangements (currently being negotiated) will come into effect.

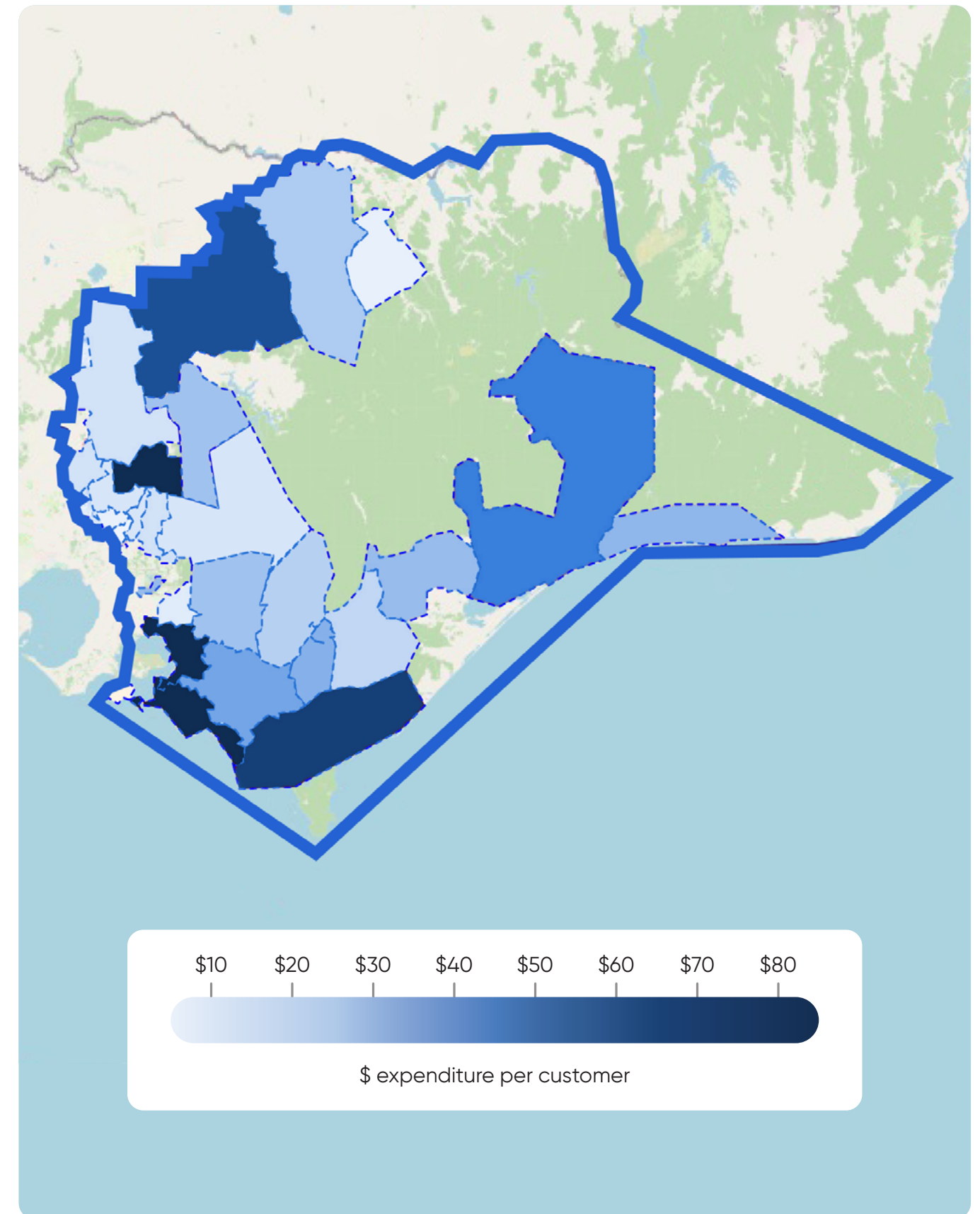
Completed projects include:

- The Supply Improvement Program FY2023 – a \$4.4 million initiative that includes a variety of solutions for more than 298 sites experiencing voltage issues. Solutions comprise:
 - additional Supply Improvement Program CY23 of \$1 million for 68 sites having voltage issues
 - upgrading distribution substations with a wider tapping range to cater to an increase in rooftop solar penetration
 - low-voltage circuit upgrades and rearrangements
 - rebalancing loads and the addition of high voltage and low voltage circuits.

Projects currently being delivered include:

- The Supply Improvement Program Calendar Year 2024 – 2026 (CY24–CY26) – \$9M to continue ongoing low voltage upgrades and optimization works.
- The Proactive Voltage Management for replacement of Voltage Regulating Relays, valued at \$3.6 million (expected to increase), includes replacing Voltage Regulation Relays (VRRs) at 15 locations. VRRs monitor and help ensure a stable voltage supply through different operating conditions. The new VRR's would enable upper and lower limits to voltage control. It will also cater for reverse power flow, which is causing voltage issues with older VRRs. As part of this initiative Voltage management action plan was delivered at 52 locations to improve voltage compliance performance and enabling more solar into the network.
- The innovative Dynamic voltage management project valued at \$2.7 million (expected to increase) has been kicked off, with the first stage being automatic voltage management for five sites. This program is being expanded to embed as part of digital project.

▼ Infographic 1 | Location of DER expenditure delivered to date






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