December CAP meeting: pre-read & agenda

Developed for: Customer Advisory Panel members

Date: December 2026

Contents

Page #	Item
3.	Meeting agenda
6.	Outstanding items
8.	Modernising energy communications to meet consumer needs
15.	Customer Vulnerability Strategy - 6 month review
30.	Political party outcomes and impact on customers
35.	How distribution can support renewable generation
40.	How can we further improve our services for complex connections
46.	ESV / Safety cases
48.	Engagement and research planning for 2027
55. 56. 60. 64. 68. 70. 77.	Appendix • Customer vulnerability strategy - implementation progress • Residential PESTLE analysis • C&I customer PESTLE analysis • Connections satisfaction - survey feedback • Post implementation review summary of regulatory reset engagement (from June CAP meeting) • Customer pulse program overview

Meeting agenda

Please note the location of the meeting has moved to 60 Market Street, Melbourne

Agenda

Timing	Item	Key questions	Who is responsible	IAP2	Level of development
9:00 – 9:30am (30mins)	• **Pre-brief**	• N/A	• Hilary Newstead, CAP Chair	N/A	N/A
9:30 – 9:35am (5mins)	• **Welcome** • **Acknowledgment of Country**	• N/A	• Hilary Newstead, CAP Chair	N/A	N/A
9:35 - 9:40am (5mins)	**Outstanding items**	• Are there any other outstanding items or questions?	• Angelica D'Amelio, Regulatory Engagement Lead	Collaborate	N/A
9:40 - 10:20am 40mins	**CAP update**	• DSO / AEMC policy update - Gavin Dufty • Innovation committee meeting update - Dean Lombard	• Hilary Newstead, CAP Chair	N/A	N/A
10:20 - 11:00am 40mins	**Modernising energy communications to meet consumer needs - AEMC review**	• What are best practice customer communications we should be considering in our submission?	• Bea Cleeve, Regulatory Policy Principal • Alexandra Antich, Regulatory analyst	Collaborate	Early
11:00 - 11:15am	Morning tea (15mins)				
11:15 - 11:55pm (40mins)	**Customer Vulnerability Strategy - 6 month review**	6 monthly governance review • Have we achieved the performance measures expected for this stage of the program? • Have equity and inclusion considerations been appropriately embedded? • Have we demonstrated continuous learning and adapted our approaches based on insights? • What improvements should be prioritised before the next phase of implementation?	• Dan Bye, Head of Customer Connections and Requests • Adam Nason, Head of Customer, Community and Communications • Reece Jamieson, Customer Requests Manager	Collaborate	Early
11:55 - 12:35pm (40mins)	**Political party outcomes and impact on customers**	• How can the business best respond to the new political party energy positions? • Are there any big wins or red flags to consider? • What are the broader implications for the business?	• Lauren Fetherston, Head of Policy and Compliance • Emma Tyner, Head of Media and Stakeholder Engagement	Involve	Mid

Timing	Item	Key questions	Who is responsible	IAP2	Level of development
12:35 - 1:05pm	Lunch (35mins)				
1:05 - 1:50pm (45mins)	**How distribution can support renewables generation**	• What should DNSPs be considering when exploring distribution led options? • Noting that this may involve new data centres and we are aware of the increased community concerns • What are the high level factors that should be considered when looking at options? • What protections are needed so existing customers do not carry costs created by new generators or major loads?	• Lauren Fetherston, Head of Policy and Compliance • Roy Kinston, Head of Regulatory Projects	Consult	Early
1:50 - 2:35pm (45mins)	**How can we further improve our services for complex connections**	We are seeking feedback on: • Improvements to the broader connections process, from: initial customer engagement through to final energisation • Whether the contestability framework could further benefit customer outcomes	• Lauren Fetherston, Head of Policy and Compliance • Roy Kinston, Head of Regulatory Projects	Consult	Early
2:35 -3:20pm (45mins)	**ESV / safety cases**	• Do customers benefit existing number of regulatory bodies, or should responsibilities be streamlined? • Would the CAP support ESV moving away from detailed approval of safety cases and towards an auditing role in relation to safety cases? Are there examples of how this works effectively in another industry or jurisdiction? • Do you agree with our key issues outlined in the document?	• Angelica D'Amelio, Regulatory Engagement Lead • Genevieve Hart, Regulatory Engagement Manager	Consult	Mid
3:20-3:35pm	Afternoon tea (15mins)				
3:35 - 4:20 (45mins)	**Engagement and research planning for 2027**	• Are there emerging engagement or research approaches being adopted by industry that we should consider? • Are there any insights we must be capturing that we can include in our program design? • What should we be considering in 2027 to ensure we're building on the learnings from our last reset?	• Angelica D'Amelio, Regulatory Engagement Lead	Collaborate	Mid
4:20 - 5:00pm (40mins)	**Post-meeting briefing**	• N/A	• Hilary Newstead, CAP Chair	N/A	N/A

Outstanding items

Key: Outstanding — Completed

Outstanding items

Topic	Responsibility	Status
Hot water load	Lauren	• The report has not been publicly published • Our team will follow up and share the trial report once received
AEMC pricing review	Mark	No further update September meeting note • The AEMC final report was published, but it backed away from the AEMC initiating any rule changes • Another party would need to submit a rule change • Energy Consumers Australia appears to be working towards a proposed rule change. • A CAP discussion would be triggered when they lodge a proposal however, timing is unknown
DSO engagement	Gen / Angelica	We have a placeholder for engagement activities next year, however, scope will depend on rule change announcements September meeting note: • DSO engagement expectations were included in September pre-read appendix • Please note that this may change depending on advancements in DCCEEW rule change • We anticipate DCCEEW's rule change will be submitted in November 2026 to the AEMC
Business engaging the AER on reset engagement plans early	Angelica	No further update for this meeting • AEMC package #2 - we have included feedback that the AER should be engaging more with the business and customers; this was supported in the subcommittee meeting

Modernising energy communications to meet consumer needs

AEMC consultation

Summary

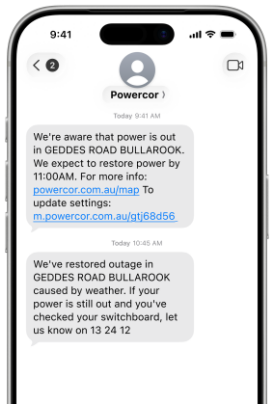
Item	Content
Background	• The Australian Energy Markets Commission (**AEMC**) is consulting on the Modernising energy communications to meet consumer needs National Electricity Rule (**Rules**) change, proposed by the Hon Chris Bowen as the chair of the Energy and Climate Change Ministerial Council (**ECMC**). • The intention of the rule is to shift the retailor and distribution customer communication framework from a prescriptive, process-based set of requirements to a principles-based requirement that better reflects customers needs.
Context	• The rule change reflects recommendations in the Australian Energy Regulator's *Review of payment difficulty protections in the National Energy Customer Framework* and the Federal Department of Climate Change, Energy, Environment and Water's (**DCCEEW**) *Better energy customer experience review.* • The Rule change relates to the National Electricity Customer Framework (**NECF**). This does not apply in Victoria however maybe precedential for Electricity Distribution Code of Practice (**EDCoP**) review. The AEMC has expressly stated a desire for alignment with the Victorian Energy Retail Code of Practice (**VERCoP**) and the Essential Service Commission's (**ESC**) broader work on outcomes-based regulation.
What we engaged with you last time on	• We have previously engaged with you on customer communication preferences in the context of the EDCoP review. • Within discussion, members broadly supported customers being engaged via preferred communications channels and felt the hypothesis of a digital communication approach would support majority of customer preferences, whilst some will continue to require written communications.
What has happened since	• The proposed research program to support the EDCoP submission was postponed and will be revisited in 2027 pending timing of the EDCoP review and the topics to engage on.
What we're now looking for feedback on	• We are looking to better understand best practice communication principles, to ensure customers have agency to make better energy decisions.
Stage of decision-making cycle	• Forming initial position.
IAP2 engagement level	• Collaborate.
Next steps	• Submissions are due 11 February. A draft determination is scheduled for October 2027 and final determination for February 2028.

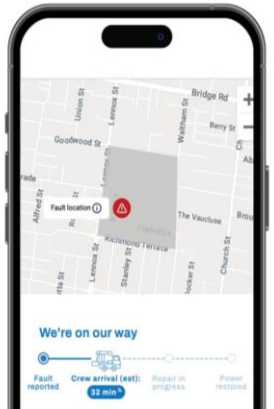
Modernising energy communications proposal

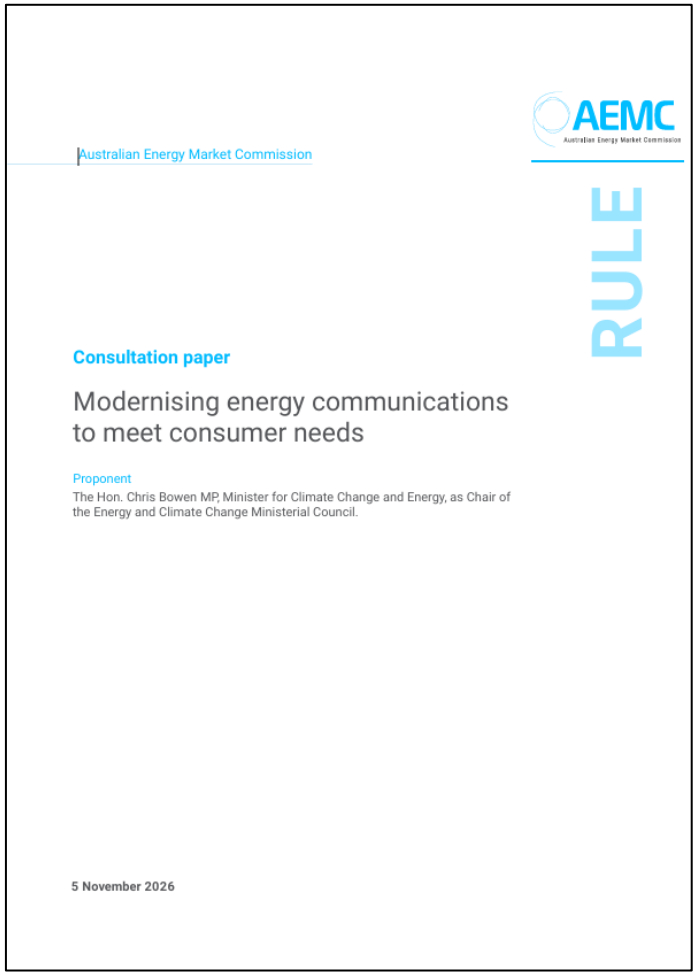
- Australia's increasingly complex energy market requires more tailored and accessible customer communication.
- To enable this, the rule change seeks to **move prescriptive customer communication regime to a principles-based model.**
- Modern technologies provide a more sophisticated evidence base of consumer behaviour, which can be used to improve communication.
- The AEMC is considering three options, ranging from a single general principle through to a principle supported by specific outcomes.
- The proposal is expected to be reinforced through AER guidance, monitoring and enforcement. The success of customer outcomes depends on if the prescription is kept out of the guidance note.

What good looks like

- Enabling all customers, but particularly those experiencing vulnerability, greater agency in making energy decisions.
- Reduce the likelihood of customers falling into debt and being disconnected.







Modernising energy communications scope

Proposed scope

- The rule proposal focuses on improving the customer journey by identifying communication touchpoints and considering different customer groups, with particular care for vulnerable customers such as those on life support.
- The scope applies only to the provision of traditional energy services regulated under the NECF.
- We acknowledge the communication needs of customers change depending on a range of factors, not just their size, this rule change ensures customers are as engaged as they want.

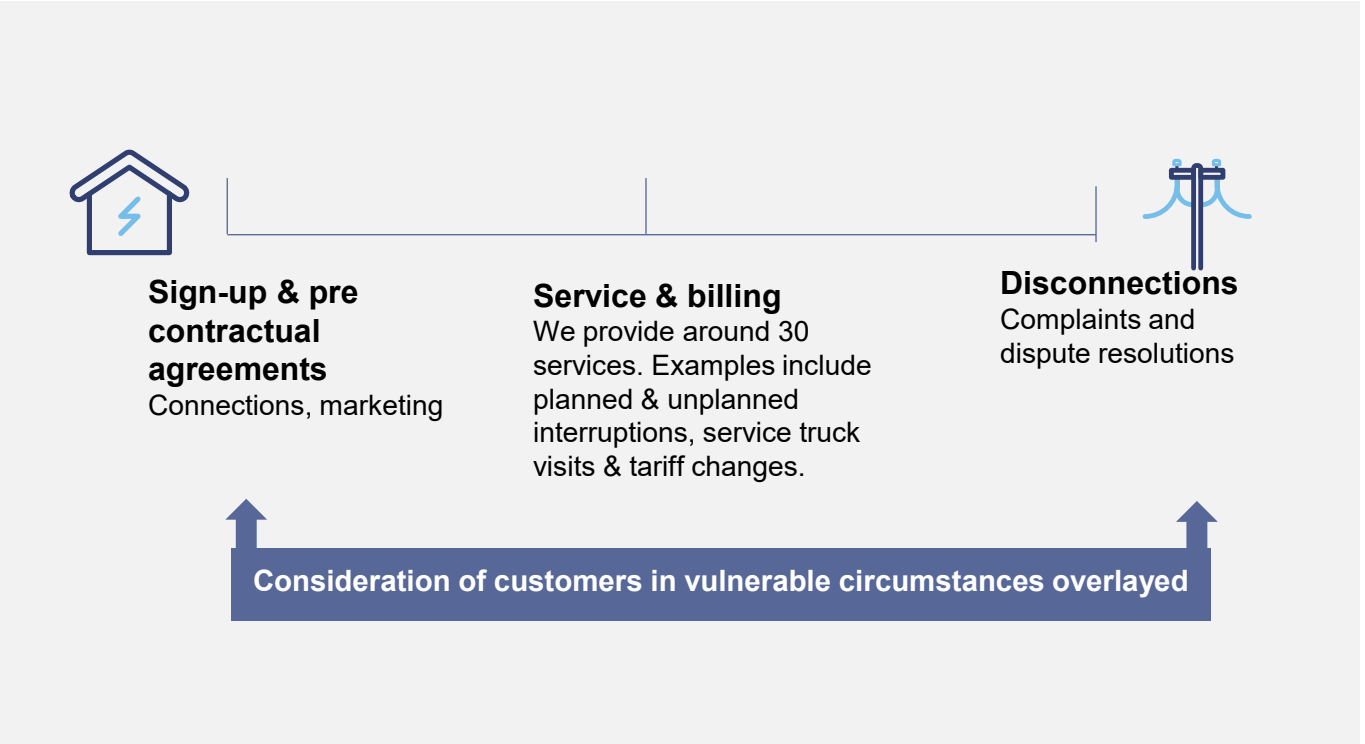


Figure 1: DNSP customer communication touchpoints

Modernising energy communications, regulatory regimes

The definition, implications and example of the regulatory types for customer communications are outlined below.

Distinction between principles-based and prescriptive regulation

	Regulation type	
	Prescribed	**Principles**
What	• Defines specific processes and procedures. • Straightforward enforcement. • Suited where risk to the customers maybe higher without standard processes.	• Sets the desired result and leaves the business responsible for choosing how to achieve it. • Provides flexibility allowing multiple pathways to achieve compliance.
Risks and benefits	• Encourage a compliance focused approach to communication. • Contributes to information overload and reduced customer engagement.	• Should promotes better comprehension, accessibility and agency as it can become more tailored to the customer. E.g. delivery of communication through channels most used by customers. • We would need to demonstrate engagement has been appropriate and effective for the customer concerned. • We would need to build on current capabilities to capture communication preferences and relevant customer circumstances, support multiple communication channels, train staff to exercise judgement and retain evidence demonstrating compliance.
Example EDCoP 11.5.1 Planned interruptions notifications	• For nonlife support customers, the network is required to give 4 days notice in hard copy unless otherwise nominated. • Life support customers are the same but can request a longer period of notice time.	• The distributor must take reasonable steps to ensure customers receive timely and effective communication about planned interruptions, having regard to their communication preferences and individual circumstances. • With an outcomes-based limbs focused on having regard to life support customer circumstances.

Modernising energy communications - what we have learnt

Changing customer expectations

- Our 2019 research identified a preference for simple, accessible and predominantly digital communication, reflecting broader trends across financial services, health, education and government.
- Powercor's 2023 Rural and Regional Summit highlighted expectations for proactive, transparent communication, with written notices preferred for planned outages and SMS and email for reminders on unplanned outages.

Customers experiencing vulnerability

- Vulnerable customers valued detailed communications, as much notice as possible, preferred communication channels and clear information about future plans and backup arrangements for major outages.

Done so far

- We proactively invest in new technology to communicate with customers when they need us most, including SMS and tailored annual notifications, digital self-service information, project milestone-triggered notifications and multi-channel fault reporting.
- For outage events, we use a multi-channel approach based on each customer's communication preferences. This includes relationship building, on-the-ground support from our emergency vehicles, traditional and social media, and direct messaging. Secondary contacts have been added for outage communications.
- Life support customers receive tailored communication during long outages. Our trained teams contact them directly for declared outages lasting more than 20 hours.
- We have already proactively invested to enable us to capture customer communication preferences through myEnergy. Online myEnergy portal found here.
- Marketing Cloud a digital platform, is being evaluated as a tool for greater customer segmentation and communications, customers with solar and without, fuse blows. Contributing to a timely response.

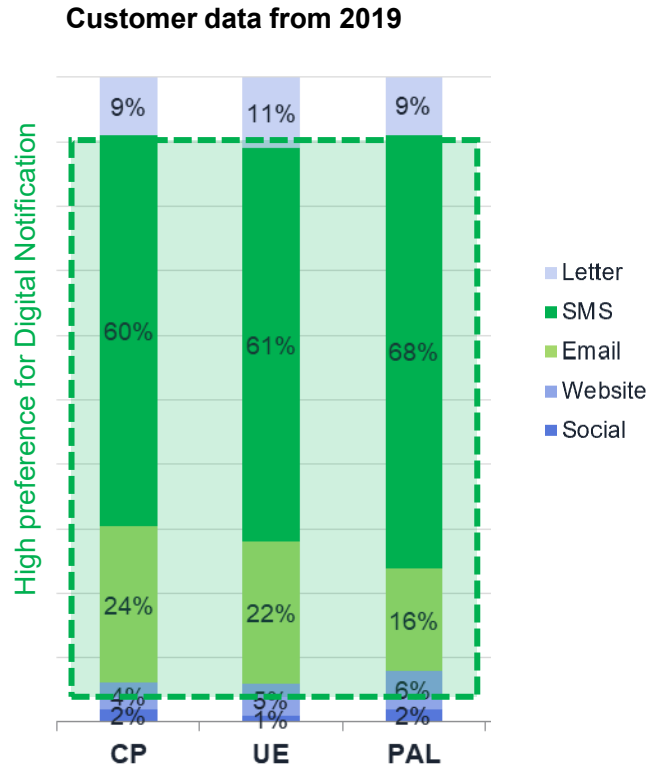


Figure 2: Customers select SMS and email as their preferred outage communication channels (for both planned and unplanned)

Modernising energy communication – principles for best practice engagement

Initial thinking on principles for good customer communication to provide agency for customers, based on previous research and CAP discussions.

Tailored communication

Is the communication right for this customer?

- Personalised to the customer's circumstances and needs.
- Relevant to the purpose of the communication.
- Accurate to the situation.

Accessible communication

Can the customer receive it?

- Delivered through the customer's preferred communication channel.
- Available in an appropriate and accessible format.
- Timely, with sufficient notice where required.

Effective communication

Can the customer understand it?

- Clear and transparent, without ambiguity.
- Simple and easy to understand.
- Sufficient detail
- Proactive and consistent
- Appropriate to the customer's level of understanding and circumstances.

CAP questions:

1. Are the communication principles indicated above wholistic to ensure improved customers comprehension of information to make informed energy decisions? Are there particular approaches that build trust, improve comprehension, or encourage engagement, and are there any that create barriers?

2. If energy businesses are given greater flexibility in how they communicate with customers, what safeguards, accountability mechanisms or performance measures should be used to ensure customer outcomes are maintained or improved? Compliance ambiguity protection for the business. – agree approaches and scenarios ahead of time.

3. Research indicates that most customers prefer digital formats, although different customer groups have different communication preferences and levels of digital engagement, where customers do not actively nominate a preferred communication method; should digital communication be the default?

Customer Vulnerability Strategy 6 month review

Summary

Item	Energy care	Vulnerable Customer Assistance Program
Background	Energy Care is a key initiative under the Vulnerability Strategy, focused on improving energy literacy. Vulnerable Customer Assistance Program is another key initiative, focused on reducing network-related costs to support electrification for customers in vulnerable circumstances.	
What we engaged with you last time on	June meeting: Expression of interest process and funding model September: Update on Community Foundations Australia as a potential partner (for information only)	June meeting: Engaged on the proposed eligibility criteria options to optimise this process and experience for customer as much as possible upfront.
CAP response	The CAP generally agreed with the expression steps and funding model	The CAP agreed with the criteria that required customers to provide proof of vulnerability however ensuring it was not an extensive process
• **What has happened since** • **What we did with this information**	• We have been introduced to Community Foundations Australia who has shown great expertise and capability to supporting the delivery of Energy Care • We are working through due diligence and statements of works with the organisation	• We have designed, built and deployed a digital application process • We have piloted the VCAP program with some successful applicants, and discussed and documented early learnings
What we're now looking for feedback on	• Do you endorse our approach to administer Energy Care grants via Community Foundations Australia, starting with a pilot case in Shepparton?	• Do you endorse the marketing rollout to further promote this program?
	Overarching feedback on program performance • Have we achieved the performance measures expected for this stage of the program? • Have equity and inclusion considerations been appropriately embedded in our approach? • Is the CAP satisfied with the documented learnings and that these insights has strengthened initiatives and business learnings? • Have we demonstrated continuous learning and adapted our approaches based on insights? • What improvements should be prioritised before the next phase of implementation?	
Stage of decision making cycle	• Mid-stage- We are working on statement of works with Community Foundations Australia	Final stages - our internal governance team agree to progress marketing launch to boost subsidy support, yet ensure learnings continued to be brought into team discussions
IAP2 engagement level	Collaborate	
Next steps	• Finalise the SOW with Community Foundations Australia, complete legal reviews • Pilot Community Foundations Greater Shepparton early 2026	• Full launch of marketing steps

Energy Care Community Grant

- Do you endorse our approach to administer Energy Care grants via Community Foundations Australia, starting with a pilot case in Shepparton?

Community Foundations Australia has been identified as our partner to deliver the Energy Care program

What Community Foundations do
Community Foundations Australia connects and supports community-led philanthropic organisations so that the field can operate more effectively and efficiently, and create lasting social change in communities.

Their mission is to catalyse collaboration, participation and innovation within the community philanthropy movement to create a fairer, more sustainable Australia.

They work with the whole field–community groups, community foundations and other forms of community-led philanthropy, partners and government–to advocate for community governance models, and to empower local communities to determine their own futures.

Locations they operate in are aligned to our networks and some include:
CitiPower:
- Queen Street (formerly the Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation
- Northcote

United Energy:
- Mornington Peninsula Foundation

Powercor:
- Ballarat
- Geelong
- Shepparton

Through our CAP member Linda, we were introduced to Amanda from the Greater Shepparton Community Foundation, who also serves as a Director on the board of Community Foundations Australia.

Community Foundations offer a unique model that combines:

- Broad regional reach through connections across community foundations across Australia
- Localised implementation capability through established relationships with community organisations
- Experience working with other organisations supporting customers in vulnerable circumstances. Greater Shepparton Community Foundation shared some of their local connections that included:
  - Family support services
  - Financial counselling services
  - Community and welfare organisations
  - Salvation Army
  - Primary Care Connect

When considering Community Foundations Australia as a potential partner of the Energy Care grant; we see many benefits

A Community Foundation partnership will provide:
- Reduced administration and establishment costs by leveraging existing community networks and delivery capability
- Access to a range of organisations delivering the program (compared through one community organisation delivering the program)
- Avoidance of external grant administration costs (e.g. SmartyGrants indicative costs of approximately $150,000 over five years)
- Consistent evaluation and reporting format, despite delivery happening across networks
- Consistent program oversight while enabling localised delivery approaches
- A scalable model that could support future program expansion, if successful

Early learnings of Energy Care Community Grant

Material outcomes will not be delivered in smaller grant sizes

- Examples shared that multiple $10,000 packages would not deliver meaningful program outcomes in improving energy literacy for customers
- This was also seen with the Bright Sparks proposal (discussed with the CAP in March 2026). Bright Sparks were quoting $110,000 to cover 1 x LGA for 1 x year of delivery
- Having certainty in organisations' ability is essential to pilot this program with larger budget sizes, ensuring customers benefit from the start
- It is essential that we have confidence in our partner and will be leaning on the steps we are now working through e.g. development of the statement of works

Discussions about funding and partnership models have pivoted the program to be delivered as a grant program

Co-design is essential for good outcomes

- Customer literacy needs may vary broadly, and it's essential that the program is tailored for who recipient customers
- Following the co-design stage is where our organisations' expertise can be leveraged, to shape literacy material that's most useful for the community
- This differs from how we initially thought this program would be delivered and therefore, we will alter the process aligned to our partner's recommendation

Non-for profit organisations have varying levels of capability

- It was challenging to identify what community organisation would best deliver the program, aligned to regulatory requirements and program needs
- There are many organisations undertaking important work for vulnerable customers. We're grateful that Linda N from the CAP was able to understand the program in-depth to connect us with an appropriate organisation

Implementation timelines

Late 2026

Due diligence established Community Foundations Australia. Including legal and with Procurement to develop the RFP and participant contract.

Development of statements of works with Community Foundations Australia (in progress)

Early 2027

Tender out the Energy Care Grant program to broader Community Foundation community groups (across three networks)

Selection of additional community groups to deliver program

- We will engage 1-2 CAP members to support review



EOI and application process
Clarify and stress test the eligibility criteria and application process to ensure it is clear, accessible and proportionate for community organisations.

First grant to go live with Greater Shepparton Community Foundation with ongoing milestones to check delivery of metrics

Assessment and approval
Clarify the end-to-end process once applications are received, including eligibility checks, assessment, scoring, approvals, applicant notification and contracting.

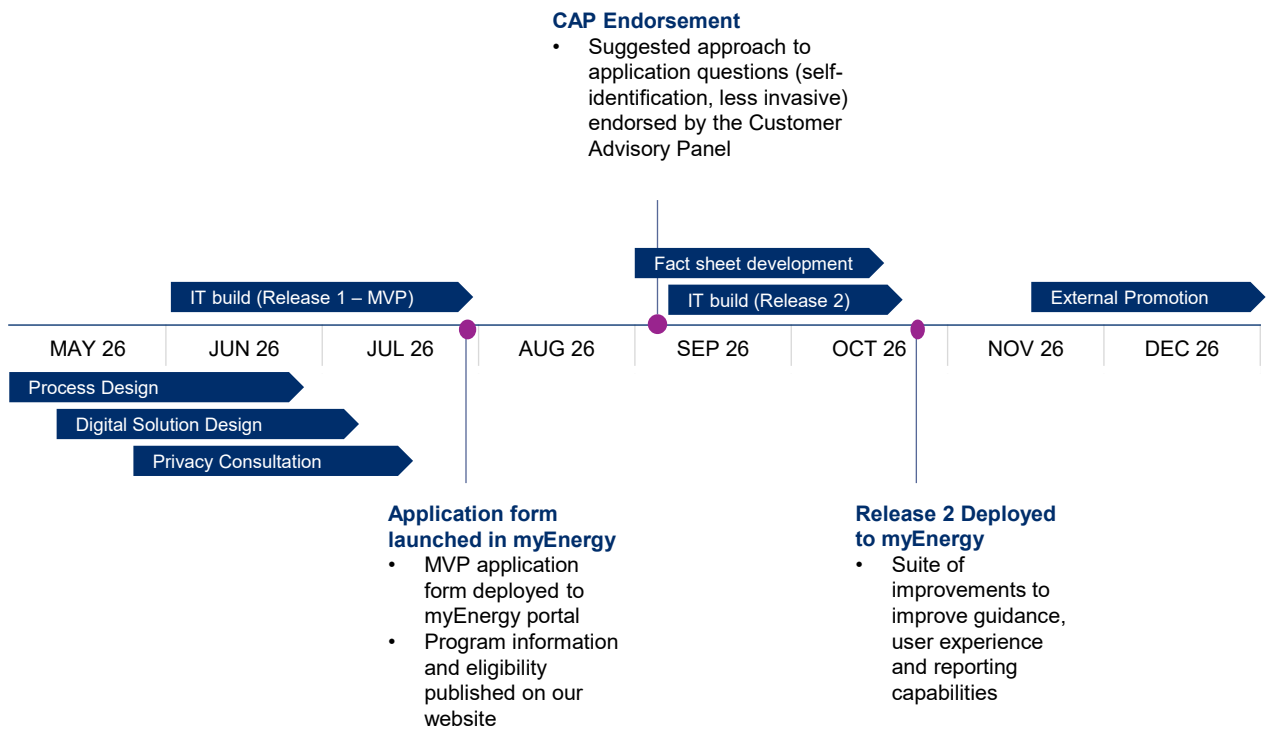
CAP question: Do you support our approach to administer Energy Care grants via Community Foundations Australia, starting with a pilot case in Shepparton?

Vulnerable Customer Assistance Program - VCAP

We have moved quickly to operationalise the Vulnerable Customer Assistance Program, which launched on our website in July

The Vulnerable Customer Assistance Program (VCAP) has been launched, with the following activities completed to support implementation and uptake

- Engaged Customer Advisory Panel (CAP) for input on application design
- Built and deployed application form and experience to myEnergy portal
- Published information on the program and eligibility on our website
- Promoted program internally via the wire and work group meetings
- Updated internal project costing tools to include VCAP pricing functionality for pit installations
- External promotional materials prepared



The application process has been designed to be simple, secure and customer-friendly. Via the myEnergy portal, customers can –

- Submit an online application through the portal
- Receive an automated confirmation and reference number
- Provide supporting documentation if requested
- Receive a notification of the outcome
- Have approved funding applied to the relevant activity

Equity and inclusion –

- We engaged the CAP for feedback on our approach to determining vulnerability and eligibility to ensure the assessment process was considerate of regulatory needs, however not unnecessarily prescriptive
- We opted for a high-level, self identification approach in our application design based on the feedback provided

We have offered support to five eligible households or businesses as part of the program

$14m
Program Funding

17
Applications submitted[1]

5
Assessed as eligible
3 pending additional information

$6.3k
In funding approved

2
Distributor works progressed

$1.8k
Actual spend to date

	CitiPower	Powercor	United Energy	CitiPower	Powercor	United Energy	CitiPower	Powercor	United Energy	CitiPower	Powercor	United Energy	CitiPower	Powercor	United Energy
Fuse Upgrades	0	5	1	0	3	1	$0	$3.2k	$1.3k	0	1	0	$0	$1.5k	$0
Pit Installations	1	2	0	0	1	0	$0	$1.8k	$0	0	1	0	$0	$1.8k	$0
POEL Replacements		0	1		0	0		$0	$0		0	0		$0	$0
Minor Customer Repairs	0	0	0	0	0	0	$0	$0	$0	0	0	0	$0	$0	$0
Total	1	7	2	0	4	1	$0	$5.0k	$0	0	2	0	**$0**	**$3.3k**	**$0**
Funding Allocated													$1.98m	$7.73m	$4.26m

Additional Insights and commentary

Financial hardship was the most commonly cited reason for applying for support

- Financial hardship (10)
- Age Related Vulnerability (3)
- Health condition (7)

Most customers reported finding out about the program through an internet search

- Internet Search (6)
- Website (5)

- All but two applications received to date have been from residential customers residing in the property (homeowners or renters / tenants). We have received one application from a business customer; and one from a landlord.
- **No customers have been assessed as being ineligible due to not meeting the programs defined vulnerability criteria.** The majority of ineligible applications were seeking compensation for outages to cover food loss or appliance damage. These customers were redirected to the claims portal. Others were seeking an increase in solar approved export; these queries were redirected to New Energy Services.
- Of those applications assessed as eligible, we have not requested further proof or evidence of vulnerability.
- Of the applications that have been approved, two customers have progressed with the physical works. They will be provided with additional assistance throughout the process.
- Program uptake has been low, however has allowed us to test systems prior to broader rollout.

1. Invalid applications submitted for solar export or claims not captured in company totals

Early learnings and observations

Empowering frontline staff with the tools and knowledge to identify customers experiencing vulnerability will improve customer outcomes

- A residential customer in the Powercor network applied for a pit installation via the mySupply portal to connect his property.
- During the process, the customer disclosed to a member of staff that they were living on a disability pension and were unable to work following major surgery that resulted in ongoing health complications. They continued to manage frequent hospital visits, rehabilitation and medical testing while progressing their project.
- The customer faced significant financial pressure and personal circumstances that affected their ability to progress the application. While keen to progress their project, they had trouble securing funding and managing administrative requirements due to their health situation. Multiple contract extensions were granted to accommodate these challenges.
- When the Vulnerable Customer Assistance Program was launched, the customer was identified as someone who could genuinely benefit from additional support. Based on the circumstances disclosed during the connection process, they were proactively contacted by the agent responsible for the application and invited to apply for assistance through the program.

We are working on targeted vulnerability awareness training for customer-facing teams increase the identification and support of customers experiencing hardship, to support a more consistent and proactive approach to customer care.

Customer-side electrification costs may be limiting the effectiveness of financial assistance programs where customers perceive the overall project cost to remain unaffordable or misunderstand the scope of available funding

- As part of the application process, we ask the applicant if they have received any quotations for the electrification works. In two instances two customers provided quotations they had obtained to fully electrify at the property, prompting the need for an increase in supply.

Submission	Distributor Costs (Funding)	Internal Customer Works (Full Electrification)
Example #1 Home Owner, Powercor	$828.12	$18,000
Example #2 Landlord, Powercor	$828.12	$40,000

- In example #1, the customer advised that full electrification was too costly, and they would instead be opting for a cheaper alternative to only transition some appliances to electric.
- Neither customer has responded or submitted a connection request following notification of their approval for funding, which is necessary to complete the fuse upgrade works. It is possible that customers assumed we would contribute towards the cost of internal customer upgrade works.

Reflection and next steps

Reflection on progress so far

- We intentionally delayed extensive external promotion of the program to ensure the technology was operating effectively and provide us with the opportunity to test and refine our processes before launching more broadly; however, we did expect more individuals to apply and be successful over this initial period
- Although the number of applications has been small, we have captured valuable learnings to support broader rollout. As we're now confident in the systems and the experience we can offer applicants, we feel this is the right time to full launch.
- To ensure the program funding is delivered to customers over the remaining 4.5 years, we will need to target $775k in approved funding per quarter
- If it becomes clear that we are unable to hit this target, we will need to pivot and reassess where our efforts can be redirected to ensure the program can still achieve its overarching goal

External Marketing of the program
Commencing November

- Fact-sheets have been developed to provide information on the program to external audiences. These will be made available for at:
  - depot front counters
  - community engagement events (via MERV & VERA)
  - via the Customer Compliance team when engaging with POEL customers, or when issuing customer installation defects
- External promotion of the program targeting commencement late November, focussing on targeted engagement with councils, charities and local community advocates.
- Additional promotion could be undertaken via REC's (Techtalk), Retailers or Social Media, but we run the risk of being overwhelmed with ineligible applications



Additional Training
Commencing November

- Only three staff members are currently able to review and assess applications. Additional resources will need to be allocated to triaging and assessing applications as submission volumes increase
- Training to be provided to additional members of Customer Connections and Requests in preparation for increased volume of applications

Evaluation review

Reminder of evaluation review and qualitative self assessment

We welcome feedback in this session to identify opportunities for improvements against the evaluation items.

1. **achievement of performance measures:** extent to which measures are achieved, such as improved energy literacy
2. **equity and inclusion:** evaluation will review who is accessing support and if support is being distributed equitably
3. **triangulation of insights**: satisfaction with the documentation of additional insights that has strengthened the organisations understanding of vulnerable customers
4. **learning and adaptability:** identification of learnings and the corresponding actions taken to refine or improve program design and delivery. This includes both within the delivery of initiatives, as well as broader business learnings
5. **transparency and accountability:** reporting shared with the CAP and public reporting of “you said / we did” summary. Reporting also includes capturing feedback from customers who have participated in this strategy’s respective initiatives

Broader learnings

Customer vulnerability learnings

1. INDUSTRY COLLABORATION AND LEARNING

We periodically connect with Kordamentha on a vulnerable customer working group. Recent roundtable discussions strengthen our understanding and reinforce good practice. Key themes from recent discussion includes:

1. **Integrating customer vulnerability into the operational model**. We currently deliver this by:
   - A wealth of existing initiatives
   - New initiatives
   - Development of our vulnerability strategy
   - Early engagement with the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion team has identified opportunities to consider learnings from the Vulnerability Strategy across broader organisational initiatives

2. **Working with other organsiations**: one example we do this is delivering the community grant program

3. **An ecosystem redesign**: Although we are not leading this agenda, we are progressing what is in our control and interested in keeping involved in working groups to share learnings, ideas and good practice

Recent article: Knowledge hub | Rethinking utility hardship: from reactive support to system-wide change | KordaMentha

2. NEW EXAMPLE OF CUSTOMER VULNERABILITY

The recent Mildura outage highlighted an additional and unexpected example of the role electricity plays in supporting vulnerable customers.

This example involved a customer who relied on home security cameras to support personal safety following experiences of family violence. During the prolonged outage, the loss of camera monitoring reduced the customer's sense of security and wellbeing. This highlighted how electricity services can underpin safety and resilience for some customers.

Vulnerable residents feeling 'distress' as Mildura power outage heads towards third day - ABC News

3. INDUSTRY INNOVATION

Rewiring Australia has developed a new AI based tool, designed to help customers understand opportunities to reduce electricity costs and make informed decisions about electrification.

Website here: Electric Saul

4. ITEMS IN DEVELOPMENT

We are continuing to build our understanding of customers experiencing vulnerability through customer research and data driven insights, including:

Ongoing customer pulse survey

- The program tracks the prevalence of vulnerability and customers at risk of vulnerability across our network over time.
- This research will give us a network understanding of the differences between vulnerable and non vulnerable customers, including energy consumption patterns, appliance ownership, electrification readiness, ability to participate in the energy transition and demand flexibility initiatives etc.

Leveraging Community Foundations Australia knowledge and reach

- We have asked Community Foundations Australia to develop a proposal for how they might support us in bringing insights into the business to support ongoing learning and decision making, especially given the next reset cycle

Political party outcomes and impact on customers

Summary

Item	Content
Background	• The Victorian election will influence the delivery of the energy transition, creating implications for customers and our business planning • The business has key areas we want to influence the government on, to support better outcomes for customers and the economy • We have reviewed the major energy policy positions of key political parties to understand the potential impacts on affordability, reliability, resilience and customer participation in the energy transition • We recognise that customers vote based on a broad range of issues and priorities, with energy policy being only one factor influencing some election outcomes. Therefore, we are not viewing the election results as a direct indicator of customer views on energy policy alone • We want to focus on the winning party and what this means for customers and business planning
What we're now looking for feedback on	• How can the business best respond to the new political party energy positions? • Are there any big wins or red flags to consider? • What are the broader implications for the business?
Stage of decision making cycle	• Developed
IAP2 engagement level	• Involve
Next steps	• Incorporate CAP feedback into strategic planning • Monitor emerging policy directions, changes and assess implications for customers and network
Note	• Additional content will be presented at the CAP meeting

Labor – Deliver the energy transition

MAIN POLICY DIRECTION

- Maintain Victorian renewable electricity targets of 65% by 2030 and 95% by 2035, alongside expanded storage and electrification.
- *Require new data centres to match additional electricity demand with new renewable generation and storage, fund connection and network costs, as well as meet new siting and local community investment requirements.
- Independently review and assess costs of Western Renewables Link (WRL).
- Continue strengthening electricity reliability and resilience as extreme weather and changing generation patterns place pressure on the network.

IMPACT ON CPU

- Continued demand for distribution capacity to support electrification, renewable integration and large data centre connections.
- Data centre installation causing some community social license concerns, due to infrastructure requirements.
- Potential flow-on implications-supporting network investment in western Victoria arising from changes to WRL timing or scope.
- Continued emphasis on network resilience, connection performance, community impacts and maintaining affordability for existing customers.

POTENTIAL CUSTOMER IMPACT

Residential customers

- Continued focus on electrification and renewable energy participation
- Continued customer focus on the affordability impacts and benefits of the energy transition
- Continued policy support for customer investment in EVs, solar and batteries may influence technology uptake
- Low social licence of transmission / energy industry as major transmission programs continue, especially in western regional Victoria

Business customers

- Ongoing focus on energy costs and competitiveness for energy intensive industries
- Businesses will continue to make significant investment decisions regarding electrification, the phase out of gas and future operational requirements
- Increasing expectations from customers, investors and government to demonstrate progress on emissions reduction and sustainability commitments
- Increasing importance of maintaining social licence when developing large energy, industrial and digital infrastructure projects
- Greater investment in backup power, batteries and resilience measures, as electrification policies continue.

* Announcement on 22 Sep from Hon Ben Carroll MP noting that data centres are required to deliver a “local investment guarantee” and are mandated to fair community consultation, We Need Data Centres But We Set The Rules | Premier

Liberal-National Coalition – Recalibrate the energy transition

MAIN POLICY DIRECTION

- Review VTP and VicGrid.
- Cancel VNI West and pause the Western renewables link pending a review of Victoria's transmission plan and alternatives.
- Prioritise new gas supply and firm generation through a proposed Energy Security Requirement, while reversing restrictions on new gas connections.
- Establish Urban Solar Parks to encourage commercial and industrial rooftop solar and battery installations.
- No specific Coalition-wide policy on data centre connection requirements was identified in the published commitments.

IMPACT ON CPU

- Greater uncertainty in demand forecasts and investment planning as generation, electrification and transmission priorities change.
- Transmission project cancellations would alter the wider network planning environment but would not automatically impact CPU's local distribution augmentation requirements.
- Increased rooftop solar and battery uptake through Urban Solar Parks could increase the need for export management, voltage control and distribution network flexibility.
- Data centre connection demand would remain a key planning consideration, pending a clearly documented party commitment for requirements.

POTENTIAL CUSTOMER IMPACT

Residential customers

- Customers may welcome a different approach on affordability and reliability if they are concerned about the pace and cost of the energy transition
- Greater policy uncertainty may create confusion for customers making long term decisions about solar, batteries, electric vehicles and electrification investments

Business customers

- Businesses may face greater uncertainty when planning investments that depend on future transmission or energy policy settings
- Commercial and industrial customers pursuing electrification may delay decisions while policy and infrastructure priorities become clearer.
- Opportunities for some C&I customers to participate in Urban Solar Parks
- Businesses may continue to assess a range of energy pathways, including gas, electrification, batteries and energy solutions

One Nation – Roll back the energy transition

MAIN POLICY DIRECTION

- Scrap net-zero targets and new renewable energy subsidies, prioritising coal, gas, nuclear and hydro based on affordability and reliability.
- Cancel VNI West, the Western Renewables Link and other major transmission projects associated with the energy transition.
- Ban new data centres and large battery storage on prime agricultural land.
- Require published assessments of major projects' energy, water and community impacts and strengthen consultation and sitting protections near homes.

IMPACT ON CPU

- Greater uncertainty in long-term demand forecasts, renewable connections and network investment as policy support for renewables changes.
- Tighter data-centre siting requirements could constrain some large-load developments, alter connection pipelines and local augmentation needs.
- Greater scrutiny of the affordability, community impacts, additional community consultation expectations and justification for network investment.

POTENTIAL CUSTOMER IMPACT

Residential customers

- Emphasis on affordability and reliability may influence how some customers view energy costs and value
- Changes to support for renewables and electrification may influence the pace at which customers adopt new energy technologies
- Customers may experience uncertainty regarding the long-term direction of Australia's energy system and future investment priorities

Business customers

- Investors and businesses planning renewable, electrification or large energy projects may face greater uncertainty regarding future policy settings
- Restrictions on major infrastructure developments such as transmission could reduce local impacts for farms on the proposed transmission paths

How distribution can support renewable generation

Summary

Item	Content
Background	There is currently substantial focus in Victoria in regards to supporting the energy transition and facilitating the connection of renewables in a commercial manner. Specifically the Victorian Transmission Plan (VTP) sets the long-term pathway for renewable generation and major transmission. If elements of the VTP are reviewed or changed there may be a larger near-term role for distribution networks and Powercor as the relevant pipeline asset licence (PAL) holder to help connect renewable generation and new load.
What we engaged with you/CAP last time on	Renewable developers and major electricity users are increasingly looking for connection pathways that can be delivered sooner, make better use of existing infrastructure and reduce dependence on new greenfield transmission corridors. The distribution network cannot replace all bulk transmission, but targeted investment may unlock additional capacity in suitable locations.
What has happened since	• What should DNSPs be considering when exploring distribution led options? • Noting that this may involve new data centres and we are aware of the increased community concerns • What protections are needed so existing customers do not carry costs created by new generators or major loads?
What we're now looking for feedback on	• How should we be engaging with customers and stakeholders to understand the implications/considerations for how distribution can best support renewable generation?
Stage of decision making cycle	Early – testing the opportunity, boundaries and customer principles before developing specific options.
Next steps	Use CAP feedback to shape the assessment criteria for potential distribution-led renewable zones, connection pathways and customer funding principles.

Background – Victoria's renewable plans depend on major transmission

The Victorian Transmission Plan (VTP) links Renewable Energy Zones with the transmission intended to connect them.

Context

Victoria is replacing ageing coal-fired generation with renewable generation, storage and firming. The 2025 VTP provides a long-term framework linking renewable targets, declared Renewable Energy Zones (REZs) and the network investment required to move renewable electricity across the State.

A future government may adopt an alternate approach which could change the timing and justification of VTP projects. VNI West, Western Renewables Link and other related reinforcement could be deferred, redesigned or reconsidered. The scale and timing of renewable development in the designated REZs would then be impacted.

However there is likely to be ongoing demand and opportunity for additional renewable and large load connections. To facilitate this, Victoria would require other methods to support and connect more renewables to the network.

Committed generation and load, plus REZ zones, support renewables connecting to the distribution network

Five onshore REZs have been declared: Western, North West, South West, Central Highlands and Gippsland. These declarations identify locations and indicative hosting capacity. They do not mean that the supporting network has been built, approved or irrevocably committed.

The solution we are considering and testing with the CAP is a change in logic to support renewable connections

From: Current VTP logic

1. Plan transmission first
2. Build network
3. Connect future projects

To: Possible alternative

1. Explore co-locating loads with renewable energy
2. Focus on reusing existing powerline corridors
3. Build only the infrastructure required

Potential benefits and risks of distribution supporting connection of renewable generation

	Benefits	Risks
For Victorians	• Reduced need for new transmission corridors • Reduced tariffs • Investment in regional Victoria • Faster connection of renewable generation • More staged, targeted infrastructure investment aligned to actual demand	• Distribution networks cannot fully replace the role of transmission infrastructure • Requires a framework to coordinate the industry to prevent rejection of projects or duplication of costs where transmission is still required • Customers may perceive large energy users or data centres are receiving preferential treatment
For our customers	Items noted above, as well as noting: • Regional customers will be able to use renewable energy in their homes and businesses (which transmission alternative did not deliver). • A major concern we heard from our Powercor regional and rural customers was that they were facilitating the energy transition, however, were not able to leverage the benefits. This approach directly addresses customer concerns and enable these customers to use the renewable energy they are hosting (compared to the energy being sent into metropolitan areas) • Reduced need for significant landholder impacts as we leverage existing infrastructure as much as possible	• Community concerns may shift from transmission projects to local distribution infrastructure upgrades

What we are doing – testing a distribution-led alternative option

The aim is to determine how much renewable generation and new load could be connected using existing corridors and staged investment.

1. Map the opportunity	Assess the practical capacity of existing sub transmission corridors, terminal stations, zone substations and established easements across the Western, Central Highlands, South West and North West areas.
2. Rebuild before creating new corridors	Test whether reconductoring, higher-capacity rebuilds, extra circuits within existing easements and targeted station upgrades could release meaningful additional capacity.
3. Bring generation, storage and demand together	Explore whether wind, solar, batteries and major users such as data centres, industrial electrification or agricultural processing can locate in the same region and reduce long-distance transfers. This also may reduce impact to regional Victoria
4. Build only behind credible commitments	Stage investment once generators, storage providers and major loads make credible commitments. Define the minimum augmentation required for their expected operating profiles before construction starts.
5. Protect existing customers	Connecting parties fund the connection and network capacity their projects cause or accelerate. Existing customers fund only genuine shared-network, replacement, reliability, resilience or ordinary demand-growth benefits.

CAP question: Is this a sensible option to explore, and what customer benefits, risks and safeguards should guide it?

How can we further improve our services for complex connections

Summary

Item	Content
Background	Various government agencies are reviewing connection contestability arrangements and engaging with us in relation to potential changes, improvements and modifications to the current framework.
What we engaged with you/CAP last time on	The Victorian Government are scrutinising connections and have been requesting insights about connections complaints. We engaged with the CAP in June to understand if we should review the connection framework with respect to augmentation costs.
Feedback from the CAP	With the information presented in the last meeting, some members did not want to remove the 'user-pays augmentation' approach without evidence. Some felt the current approach remains fair and practical as electrification increases. There were some challenges with this approach which included: electrification being increasingly policy-driven and not always discretionary, and shared connections may unfairly disadvantage customers living in units and apartments
What has happened since	We are reviewing connections and exploring ways we can improve the process to provide a better service to customers. This includes understanding what occurs in other NEM jurisdictions.

What we're now looking for feedback on	We are seeking feedback on:
	• Improvements to the broader connections process, from: initial customer engagement through to final energisation
	• Improvements to how we engage with key stakeholders and the community in relation to the impact of projects on them
	• Whether the contestability framework could further benefit customer outcomes
	  ○ Recognising that customers value a broad variety of factors in the connections process how can we best determine what to focus on?
	  ○ What are likely to be the primary drivers for customer satisfaction during the connection process?
	  ○ What are the perceived gaps in helping customers understand process timelines?

Stage of decision making cycle	Early stage. VPN/UE currently formulating response to reviews
IAP2 engagement level	Consult
Next steps	Leverage CAP feedback in submission response

Opportunities for improving connections

External drivers

AEMC are consulting on the introduction of mandatory contestability as part of the Electricity Networks Regulation Review package 1

Minister Bowen:

- has written to DNSP CEOs on transparency, timeliness and cost of connections processes
- directed DCCEEW to progress a rule change request on mid-scale connections (30 kVA to 5 MW), expected November 2026
- Submitted a rule change request on connections arrangements for flexible loads (20.10.26)

DEECA:

- drafted and subsequently discontinued, a Ministerial Order with new connection reporting requirements "to establish a consistent evidence base across Victorian DNSPs"
- are consulting on new EV connection requirements and EV specific tariffs
- plan to make a submission to the AEMC on connections contestability in early 2027

EVCI parliamentary enquiry recommended a contestable works framework for Victorian connections (Rec. 28)

Background – Social License/Community Engagement

What we are seeing on the ground

Community expectations around electricity infrastructure and connections have shifted.

We are seeing a small but growing number of communities question network activities that previously may have attracted little attention, including local network upgrades, new poles and pole-top infrastructure.

Larger and more complex connections are increasing scrutiny of how networks deliver infrastructure. The growth of data centres and other large loads can require significant new electricity infrastructure, sometimes through established residential areas. This is bringing greater attention to the visual, amenity and construction impacts associated with connecting these developments.

Community opposition to Jemena's connection of NextDC's data centre, which involved large poles being placed in residential streets in Yarraville, has placed greater focus on networks and the infrastructure required to connect large customers.

There is potential for this example of residents halting a major infrastructure project to give other customers and communities greater confidence to challenge network activities.

Expectations are also changing around how work is undertaken. Communities and stakeholders are increasingly raising issues such as working hours, construction impacts, access and local conditions, not simply whether infrastructure is required.

How we are responding

CPU continues to focus on, invest in and improve how we engage with our customers and stakeholders. As expectations change, we are continuing to strengthen our approach, particularly where new infrastructure may have a greater impact on local communities.

We have a robust process for complex connection projects, which are assessed by a specialist stakeholder engagement team to determine the appropriate level of engagement with stakeholders and members of the community. Where possible, the engagement team will be included in the project early on to allow them to provide feedback during the design and planning phase.

CPU is focused on:

- Undertaking formal community engagement where required, particularly where projects have the potential for greater community impact or concern.
- Tailoring engagement to the project and community, recognising that different projects, locations and communities will have different impacts and expectations.
- Exploring ways to reduce impacts on local customers and communities, where practical and possible, including considering how and when works are delivered.
- Providing clearer information about why infrastructure is required, what is being proposed and the impacts customers and communities can expect.
- Designing works with future needs in mind, where possible, to reduce the likelihood of communities experiencing further construction and disruption as demand grows.
- Learning from community feedback and emerging issues, and using these insights to continue improving our approach to future projects.

VPN & UE deliver a wide variety of customer connections under the current framework

Current benefits/performing well

Below are areas we feel are broadly going well and also includes improvements currently underway to further improve the connection process.

Current framework

- Strong delivery of connections contractual dates
- Positive customer experience surveys*
- Single point of contact and less handoffs
- Flexible process where required (more complex connections)

Improvements underway

- Working to find opportunities to reduce time to offer including faster planning assessments
- Further reviewing flexible connections options
- Increasing engagement with stakeholders and community

*Feedback from our yearly customer satisfaction survey has positive feedback across: Process, Experience and Expectations of the connections process

See appendix for breakdown

What else can we do?

We are keen to understand what other approaches or changes would benefit customers?

Opportunities

- Balancing improvement opportunities against cost increases (for both connecting customers and the broader customer base)
- How can we better reconcile our direct customer feedback with third party feedback
- How can we best gauge what clarify customers need as they look for new connections

The Victorian networks offer different operation models for connection services.
We have the ability to observe differences between UE and VPN.

NSW Case Study

The NSW experience demonstrates an alternate well-established framework since 1995

Key findings

Framework

- Ausgrid retains planning, scope, review, design, certification and construction audits.
- Non contestable works include: switching, zone substations
- Switching stations remain non-contestable and works in the Sydney CBD.

Costs

- **Incremental revenue-incremental Cost model differs**
- Customers pay for ASP works, Ausgrid fees and their own coordination. Assets transfer to Ausgrid at zero cost.
- Ausgrid publishes regulated fees, with fixed fees for simple jobs.
- Audit fees and defect rectification costs are additional cost considerations.
- Note that service providers (for all contract works) engaged by VPN-UE are selected on the basis of competitive tender basis.
- For Victoria the incremental cost is shared by the customer base.

Process

- Separate design and connection stages – similar to process in Victoria
- In NSW DNSP audit ASP work and manages defect rectification directly with the ASP. Failed pre-connection checks can lead to cancellation of connection dates, rework costs and delays.

Implication for Victoria

- This approach would involve a number of additional parties involved in the connection process.

Timeframes

- Ausgrid & Endeavour indicated 6–18 months for non-basic non standard contestable connections. Design can take up to 6 months.
- Standard connections fall in the 6 month to 12 month timeframe
- More responsibility on customer to resolve a number of delivery related issues

Implication for Victoria

- Timeframes appear to be broadly similar for Victorian connections of a similar sort

Question: What are the positive process and outcomes from the NSW model that we should consider?

ESV / safety cases

Summary

Item	Content
Background	Victoria is reviewing the energy safety framework, including safety cases and general duties, to ensure regulation remains fit for purpose as the energy system becomes more complex and new technologies emerge. CPU supports strong safety review and believes there are opportunities to improve regulatory efficiency, reduce duplication and ensure regulatory costs remain proportionate for customers.
What has happened	CPU has developed a submission to DEECA supporting retention of general duties but recommending reforms to: • reduce unnecessary safety case administration and duplication • improve transparency and timeliness of decision making • explore alternative regulatory models • bring clarity to how customer engagement influences regulatory decision making Pre-read for this section is our public letter submitted to DEECA. This has been uploaded to the pre-read as a separate document.
What we're now looking for feedback on	• Do customers benefit existing number of regulatory bodies, or should responsibilities be streamlined? • Would the CAP support ESV moving away from detailed approval of safety cases and towards an auditing role in relation to safety cases? Are there examples of how this works effectively in another industry or jurisdiction? • Do you agree with our key issues outlined in the document?
Stage of decision making cycle	• Mid stage
IAP2 engagement level	• Consult
Next steps	• Use CAP feedback to inform our advocacy position • Continue engagement on opportunities to improve regulatory efficiency while maintaining strong safety outcomes for Victorian customers Note this is an ongoing topic for the business and regulatory bodies

Engagement and research planning for 2027

Summary

Item	Content
Background	As we plan for 2027, our focus is on continuing to mature our engagement and research practice and how the insights and feedback shapes business decision making. Rather than always creating new engagement activities, we are seeking to meet customers where they are by leveraging established forums, trusted community relationships and existing business touchpoints. This includes working more closely with our First Peoples team, Major Customer team, community memberships and advocacy networks to strengthen our understanding of customer needs while minimising consultation burden. Complimentary to this, we are establishing a stronger "always on" program that will help us identify changes in sentiment, emerging issues and evolving customer priorities over time. This will be established by the programs above, as well as our customer pulse program. These insights will support a wide range of business decisions including policy submissions, responses to government reviews, operational improvement opportunities and preparation for the next regulatory reset. A particular focus for 2027 will be understanding whether customer needs and expectations are shifting following the Victorian election and as the energy transition continues to evolve.
What we're now looking for feedback on	• Are there emerging engagement or research approaches being adopted by industry that we should consider? • Are there any insights we must be capturing that we can include in our program design? • What should we be considering in 2027 to ensure we're building on the learnings from our last reset?
Stage of decision making cycle	Mid
IAP2 engagement level	Collaborate
Next steps	Bring CAP feedback into refinement of engagement and research planning

Objectives for our 2027 engagement and research planning

1. Build on our customer understanding

Deliver new programs, and leverage existing engagement, research and business channels to deepen our understanding of customer needs and preferences to feed into decision making

2. Optimise the way we capture and utilise customer needs and preferences

Deliver an established 'always-on' program
Create a stronger evidence base and deliver programs to understand changing customer needs, expectations and sentiment *over time*.

Continue improving how customer insights are captured, shared and used to inform business decisions.

Build on learnings to optimise how we engage with the CAP (and subcommittee) to deliver good customer outcomes.

Meet customers where they are
Leverage existing relationships, programs, internal channels and trusted networks to better understand customer electricity needs and preferences.

3. Continuous learning

Continuously look for ways to improve how we engage with customers and use customer insights to inform business decision making.

(Reminder of reset learnings are in the appendix)

Planning for 2027:

Meeting customers where they are, and building on existing knowledge to support decision making

Always on engagement

Program/ Engagement	Purpose	Notes
1. Customer pulse program (ongoing quant survey with residential & small-to-medium businesses, optional qualitative deep dives to explore findings) Overview of program in the appendix	• Maintain a current understanding of customer sentiment, priorities and evolving needs across strategic pillars and hypothesis areas • Track changes over time and provide representative customer evidence • Build on our understanding of customer vulnerability	• Long term program (5years+) supporting the regulatory reset and broader business decision making • As new information is identified, relevant questions will be added to program for continuous sentiment tracking
2. C&I engagement program	• Understand the energy needs, energy drivers/triggers, operational challenges and future expectations of commercial and industrial customers relating to energy	• Delivered via our Major Client Team and memberships e.g. EUAA
3. Community group & industry association engagement	• Leverage existing forums to gather customer insights, test emerging themes and identify customer-specific priorities	• Includes organisations such as C4GS and we are planning to adopt two new memberships similar to C4 • We are also seeking a response back from Community Foundations Australia on how they might be able to help us build an ongoing understanding of customers in vulnerable circumstances
4. First Peoples program	• Ensure First Peoples perspectives and priorities are embedded understood	• Leveraging existing First Peoples program and FPAC to understand needs over time
5. CAP & subcommittee engagement	• Provide independent challenge and advice on various strategic items	
6. Insights repository	• Launching the insight repository AI-enabled database • Allowing the business to easily to search for insights across customers , including CAP meetings minutes, to accurately and quickly identify the most recent information across topics	

Planning for 2027:

Meeting customers where they are, and building on existing knowledge to support decision making cont.

Bespoke programs

Program	Purpose	Notes
7. Scenarios for future living	• Understand what future energy scenarios will look like and build a deep understanding of expected customer needs, expectations, technologies and behaviours • Identify emerging trends, future scenarios, opportunities and risks that could influence future network services and investment priorities	• The program is Australia wide, so our program will identify trends that we can test to see if they resonate with our customers • We are able to extract some insights at a state level
8. Distribution Systems Operator (DSO) engagement	• Scope of the program to be determined, and based on information received on DSO framework	
9. Electricity Distribution Code of Pracitce (EDCoP)	• Pending final positions of the business, a bespoke engagement program may support our submission to ESC	
10. Undervoltage program	• Understand customer experiences, severity, frequency and impacts for customers experiencing undervoltage	
11. CBD security of supply program	• Understanding customers willingness to pay for improved security of supply outcomes in the CBD	
12. Innovation Allowance committee	• Provide customer-focused forum to guide and challenge innovation funding toward initiatives with clear customer benefit (that also align to the innovation criteria)	

No single customer view will determine our understanding of customer needs. Insights will be considered alongside broader customer evidence and triangulated across multiple sources

Always on insights

Discover phase programs	Residential	SMB	C&I	Regional & Rual	Vulnerable customers	CALD	First People	CitiPower	Powercor	United Energy
1. Customer pulse	x	x		x	x	x				
2. C&I engagement			x	x						
3. Community groups and membership i.e. C4GS	x	x	x	x	x	x			*2nd membership in progress*	*Membership in progress*
4. First Peoples Program							x			
5. CAP & subcommittee engagement	x		x	x	x	x	x			
6. Insights repository	N/A									

No single customer view will determine our understanding of customer needs. Insights will be considered alongside broader customer evidence and triangulated across multiple sources cont.

Bespoke programs

Discover phase programs	Residential	SMB	C&I	Regional & Rual	Vulnerable customers	CALD	First People	CitiPower	Powercor	United Energy
7. Scenarios for future living	x	x		x	x	x				
8. DSO (TBD)										
9. EDCoP (TBD)	x	x	x	x	x	x				
10. Value of undervoltage	x	x	x	x	x	x				
11. CBD security of supply	x	x	x		x	x				
12. Innovation Allowance Committee	x	x	x	x	x					

Appendix

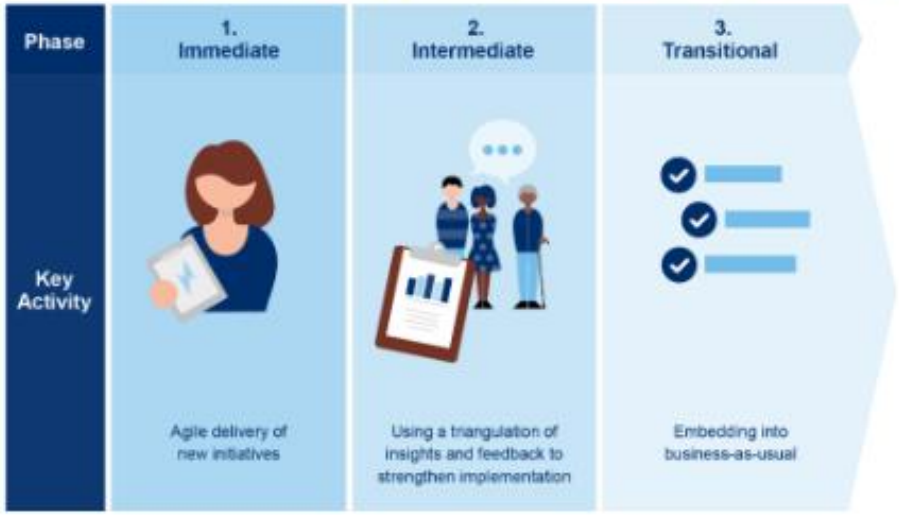
Customer Vulnerability strategy Implementation progress

We are in the first phase of continuous learning

5.3 Continuous learning

Existing initiatives will not be stagnant. They will be continually reviewed and augmented to improve outcomes for customers. New initiatives will be delivered with an agile mindset, tested at small scale, refined through feedback and adapted before expanding. By embedding this approach, we ensure that our strategy remains dynamic and responsive to customer needs and evolution of the energy transition.

GRAPHIC 6. OUR APPROACH TO CONTINUOUS LEARNING INCLUDES THREE PHASES



Immediate

- agile delivery of new initiatives including:
  - internal training and set up to support implementation of new initiatives, including identification of customers in vulnerable circumstances
  - trialling programs on a smaller scale, gathering evidence of effectiveness and refining before broader rollout
  - using clear, customer-outcome metrics to assess the effectiveness and reach of programs, ensuring that impact, rather than activity is the key measure of success.

Intermediate

- using a triangulation of insights including data, customer insights and CAP feedback to strengthen initiative implementation, ensuring they remain relevant and effective. Data triangulation includes:
  - an always-on engagement approach to remain connected to customer needs
  - direct feedback captured through program implementation call notes and surveys
  - CAP feedback via our governance approach
  - insights and feedback from delivery partners
  - ongoing data analysis to identify emerging needs and trends
  - industry learning and collaboration, maintaining regular engagement with peers, industry bodies and regulators to share learnings, align with best practice and incorporate, both local and international insights into our evolving approach.

Transitional

- embedding into business-as-usual, ensuring lessons learned are integrated across teams so improvements benefit the wider organisation, not just isolated programs.

 Reference: CPU Customer Vulnerability Strategy

We are progressing on the implementation plan

Planning (Jan – April) | **Implement** (May– July) | **Delivery** (Aug – Dec)

Internal Governance

Executive & Management Team Accountability Plan
- Planning Steering Committee and internal governance

Refine planning based on AER determination

External governance and feedback loops

CAP Governance
- Embed governance items into CAP agendas aligned with strategy

Insights and reporting
- Establish operational platforms and reporting templates to capture new program delivery and customer feedback aligned to program targets
  - Energy Care is in development stages and will collaborate with Community Foundations to develop appropriate reporting templates; VCAP is complete
- Develop cadence to ongoing analysis to identify emerging needs and trends including engagement with grass root customers
  - Customer pulse survey (ongoing quant survey with residential and SMB customers) will capture understanding of customer vulnerability and similarities and differences with other residential and SMB customers, by network (launching soon)
  - Insights from Scenarios for Future Living capture feedback on vulnerable customers
  - Capture insights appropriate media articles
- Develop cadence to internally align on industry learnings, maintaining regular engagement with peers and industry bodies
  - Community Foundations Australia is developing a proposal to help us understand vulnerable customer needs across our network areas
  - We are engaged with Kordamentha's vulnerable customer industry roundtables

Feed insights into operational team
- Triangulate feedback survey data, customer insights and CAP feedback to strengthen initiative implementation (Dec)

CAP governance
- Present 1st new initiative performance review in December 2026 (incl. delivery, customer feedback and learnings/refinements required before scaled rollouts)

(Years 1 & 2 = 6 monthly reviews, Years 2 onwards = annual reviews)

We are progressing on the implementation plan cont.

Planning (Jan – April)	**Implement (**May– July)	**Delivery** (Aug – Dec)

Operational steps

Communications
Launch customer friendly storybook and website (to support transparent reporting)

Organisational training planning
Internal planning on integrating:
- new strategy
- new program process
- onboarding training

Organisational training implementation
- Internal training on new strategy
- Integrate into onboarding training **(**in development)
- Delivery team training to implement new programs i.e. new processes and integrating vulnerability identification

Vulnerable customer assistance program
Develop:
- Year 1 delivery numbers
- Trigger points to pivot or stop
- Review to ensure consistency in eligibility
- Scale criteria

Vulnerable customer assistance program
- Align on lead development
- Develop program risk controls

Energy Care
- Map & select welfare agencies aligned to high-density customer vulnerable locations
- ~~Plan and develop energy literacy materials aligned to agency needs~~
- ~~Introduce needed energy literacy materials aligned to energy transition~~
- Capture agency partner feedback ongoing
- Develop cross program referral protocol and tracking

Note: program has been tailored as we work through due diligence with Community Foundations Australia. It was suggested that we collaborate with the Community Foundations local area to develop the required energy literacy material

Public reporting
- Reporting delivery of initiatives including how we are incorporating CAP and customer feedback (Dec)

Residential customer PESTLE analysis

Customers are living in a complex environment

A macro-environment review has been undertaken to strengthen our understanding of the broader context which customers operate and provides greater insight into the factors shaping their needs and expectations.

Political

What is happening

The energy transition is increasingly being shaped by government policy, including emissions reduction targets, electrification initiatives, renewable energy investments and incentives.

There is uncertainty around future policy settings and government priorities, particularly with a state election in 2026. Political parties have different approaches including: renewable investment, transmission development and the role of gas within the energy mix. Changes in government can alter policy priorities, funding arrangements and the pace of the energy transition.

What this could mean for customers

- Increase in gas supply will change business and residential decision making relating to machinery/appliance investments and could change competitiveness and affordability for customers
- Incentives and rebates can alter the decisions to uptake electric appliances, solar, batteries and electric vehicles

Economic

What is happening

Increasing financial pressure is resulting from rising living costs, housing affordability challenges and broader economic uncertainty.

Participation in the energy transition is increasing which requires upfront investment in technologies such as solar, batteries, electric vehicles and electrified appliances. While these technologies can reduce long-term energy costs, the ability to access these benefits varies. There is additional costs resulting from transmission and distribution investments to support the transition.

As electricity becomes a larger component of household and business expenses through the electrification of transport, heating and industry, there is increasing focus on ensuring the costs and economic benefits of the transition are shared fairly.

What this could mean for customers

- Increasing focus on maximising value from energy investments
- Financial barriers will prevent some customers from accessing transition benefits

References include: The State of Grid Transition, Scenarios for Future living 2026, ABS, government media releases and various existing research across Scenarios for Future Living, bespoke customer research and engagement.

Social

What is happening

Community trust and social licence are becoming critical to the success of energy infrastructure and transition initiatives. There have been significant issues with the social licence in regional and rural areas relating to new transmission assets. Additionally, we have seen some negative feedback on network infrastructure surrounding data centre builds, specifically in residential areas.

Demographic and lifestyle changes, includes an ageing population and increasing levels of remote and hybrid work, are driving greater reliance on electricity to support health, wellbeing, productivity and everyday living.

There is also recognition and greater importance on fairness, transparency and inclusion, with growing expectations that the benefits of the energy transition are accessible to all members of the community.

What this could mean for customers

- Increased reliability and reliance on electricity for health, wellbeing, productivity, daily life and business productivity
- Stronger demand for fairness and supporting customers in vulnerable circumstances

Technological

What is happening

Businesses are increasingly adopting AI and data-driven decision making, while growing reliance on cloud computing, digital services and online platforms is driving significant growth in data centres and digital infrastructure. This requires a significant amount of energy to operate.

Customers are becoming increasingly connected through smart devices, real-time information and digital experiences, creating higher expectations for convenience, accessibility and personalisation. As critical infrastructure becomes more digital, there is also increased focus on cybersecurity, privacy and data protection.

Specifically in the energy sector, there is a significant change from the networks operating in a one-way directional flow, to bidirectional flow of energy.

What this could mean for customers

- Increased reliance on data, connectivity and online platforms for work and everyday life
- Growing exposure to cybersecurity, privacy and data security risks
- Increased demand for resilient infrastructure to support digital lifestyles, critical services

Legal

What is happening

The legal and regulatory environment is evolving to support a more decentralised, digital and low-carbon energy system. New rules and standards are being introduced to manage the growing integration of customer energy resources, maintain system reliability and ensure customers can participate safely and fairly in the energy transition. However, there lacks a coherent whole-of-system foresight and planning approach across the energy supply chain.

Regulators are placing greater emphasis on consumer protections, data privacy, cybersecurity and equitable access to energy services. Evolving climate, sustainability and energy market obligations are also increasing the focus on transparency, accountability and long-term system outcomes.

What this could mean for customers

- Greater protections for customers relating to data access and privacy
- Clearer standards governing the installation and operation of customer energy technologies
- Increased confidence in the safety, reliability and fairness of energy services
- Increased complexity as new rules are introduced

Environmental

What is happening

Climate change is increasing the frequency and severity of extreme weather events, including heatwaves, bushfires, storms and flooding, which can impact both customers and network infrastructure.

Governments, businesses and communities are pursuing emissions reduction targets and greater renewable energy integration to support the transition to a lower-carbon economy. Commitments made to the Labour government to reduce 43% of emissions by 2030, 62-70% by 2035 and zero carbon by 2050.

What this could mean for customers

- Customers are increasingly exposed to the impacts of extreme weather and associated power disruptions with resilience becoming a higher priority
- Customers are being encouraged to adopt lower-emission technologies and reduce their carbon footprint
- Interest in batteries, backup power will support customer homes and businesses
- Customers expect energy providers and businesses to contribute to emission targets

C&I customer PESTLE analysis

C&I customers are operating with change and political uncertainty

A macro-environment review has been undertaken to strengthen our understanding of the broader context which customers operate and provides greater insight into the factors shaping their needs and expectations.

Political

What is happening
Governments are increasingly using policy, funding programs and strategic planning to shape Australia's energy transition. National and state governments continue to pursue emissions reduction objectives while also seeking to maintain energy security, reliability and economic growth.

In Victoria, the current government is supporting major electricity transmission projects, renewable energy zones, offshore wind development and industrial transformation initiatives. The upcoming Victorian election creates uncertainty around continuity of major transmission infrastructure projects, that underpin long-term energy supply outcomes and energy costs. EUAA has highlighted the importance of stable, transparent and predictable policy settings to support long-term business investment decisions.

What this could mean for customers
- Business investment decisions may become increasingly influenced by government energy policy direction
- Policy uncertainty may delay business investment decisions
- Government funding and support programs may improve the viability of industrial electrification and decarbonisation projects
- Infrastructure delivery decisions may materially shape future energy availability for large customers

Economic

What is happening
Energy remains a significant input cost for many commercial and industrial customers. Businesses continue to face pressure from inflation, labour costs, supply chain volatility and increasing capital requirements associated with electrification and decarbonisation.

“For many of the EUAA members, gas is not just an energy source but a critical production input- essential for high temperature heat, chemical feedstock use and processes that cannot be electrified or replaced with hydrogen in the foreseeable future.”

EUAA consistently highlights affordability as one of the most significant challenges facing major energy users. Members have raised concerns regarding electricity prices, gas affordability, network investment costs and the cumulative impact of energy reforms on industrial competitiveness. Reliable and affordable energy is increasingly viewed as a determinant of investment and productivity.

What this could mean for customers
- Scrutiny of energy-related expenditure and investment decisions
- Focus on productivity, efficiency and reducing operational energy costs
- Greater use of Power Purchase Agreements, batteries, onsite generation and energy efficiency measures
- Increased concern regarding Australia's and Victoria's ability to remain internationally competitive for energy-intensive industries

References include: Government media releases, CSIRO Climate change reporting, EUAA policy committee reports (Oct 2026), various existing research across C&I research and engagement.

Social

What is happening
Expectations of business continue to evolve, with focus on sustainability, transparency and social responsibility.

At the same time, community trust and social licence are becoming increasingly important for major energy and infrastructure developments. The workforce is also changing, with challenges relating to skills shortages across engineering, construction, energy and digital sectors.

More recently, the rapid growth of data centres and artificial intelligence has attracted increasing public and media attention. While data centres are often viewed as important enablers of economic growth, digital services and innovation, there is growing public discussion regarding their electricity consumption, water use, network capacity requirements and the extent to which the costs of supporting new large loads may ultimately be borne by residential consumers. The EUAA has similarly argued that network augmentation and cost recovery arrangements for large new loads should be transparent, proportionate and aligned to the customers creating those costs.

Large customer groups are also seeking greater transparency regarding how energy transition costs are allocated and how major investment decisions are made. There is increasing expectation that businesses, governments and infrastructure providers clearly demonstrate the customer and community benefits associated with significant energy investments.

What this could mean for customers
- Increased expectations to demonstrate environmental and social performance
- Increased customer interest in how energy transition costs and benefits are shared
- Greater scrutiny of large energy users and whether infrastructure investment costs are allocated fairly
- Increasing importance of maintaining social licence when developing large energy, industrial and digital infrastructure projects

Technological

What is happening
Advances in automation, artificial intelligence, electrification, energy management systems and digital infrastructure are changing how commercial and industrial customers operate. Data centres, advanced manufacturing facilities and digital industries are contributing significantly to future electricity demand growth.

Large customers are increasingly adopting technologies such as batteries, demand management systems, smart energy controls and distributed energy resources to improve operational performance and manage energy-related risks. Energy market operators are also seeking improved visibility of large customer loads and flexible demand capabilities to support system planning and operation.

What this could mean for customers
- Growing electricity demand resulting from digitisation and electrification
- Increased opportunities to optimise energy consumption and manage costs
- Greater expectations around sharing operational and energy data
- Increased reliance on electricity quality, resilience and digital connectivity to support operations
- Growing exposure to cybersecurity, privacy and data security risks

Legal

What is happening
The regulatory environment continues to evolve through reforms affecting electricity markets, gas markets, network regulation, sustainability reporting, cybersecurity and customer participation. Large customers are facing increasing compliance obligations relating to climate disclosures, reporting requirements and participation in evolving energy market frameworks.

EUAA has consistently advocated for evidence-based regulation, greater transparency, stronger consumer representation and regulatory arrangements that allocate risk to the party best placed to manage it. Concerns remain regarding increasing complexity and administrative burden associated with multiple overlapping reform programs.

What this could mean for customers
- Increasing reporting and compliance requirements
- Greater participation in regulatory consultation processes
- More complex obligations relating to sustainability, energy and operational reporting
- Increased need to monitor and respond to regulatory change

Environmental

What is happening
Climate change is increasing the frequency and severity of extreme weather events including heatwaves, storms, bushfires and flooding. These events can create operational disruptions, supply chain impacts and risks to critical infrastructure.

At the same time, businesses are expected to reduce environmental impacts. Industries are assessing how climate change may affect performance, operational resilience and long-term business continuity.

What this could mean for customers
- Increased focus on operational resilience
- Greater investment in backup power, batteries and resilience measures, as more machinery and operations are electrified
- Increased exposure to weather-related disruptions and infrastructure impacts
- Greater consideration of climate risk within long-term business planning

Connections satisfaction
Survey feedback

Annual customer experience survey summary

We engage an independent market research provider to undertake annual surveys to understand customer experience, across many aspects of our business, including our connections processes, and identify areas of improvement.

For negotiated connection requests our 2026 results (surveying customers who had a recent negotiated connection/augmentation experience) showed the below.

Results across all three distributors have improved over the last three years.

Proportion of customers who found the below processes very easy or somewhat easy

Process	CitiPower	Powercor	United Energy
Using the online portal to submit application	85%	83%	90%
Using the online portal to complete application	85%	79%	88%
Accepting the offer via the online portal	87%	90%	90%

The overall 'ease' score increased by 7% (CitiPower and Powercor), and 5% (United Energy) from the 2025 results.

Proportion of customers who strongly or mildly agreed with the below experiences

Experience	CitiPower	Powercor	United Energy
The works were completed in a reasonable time	81%	86%	91%
The works were completed within the advised timeframe	100%	84%	91%
Satisfied with the quality of the works	94%	94%	93%

The overall 'experience' score increased by 6% (CitiPower), 1% (Powercor) and 4% (United Energy) from the 2025 results.

Proportion of customers whose expectations were met or exceeded

Expectation	CitiPower	Powercor	United Energy
Extent the overall process met expectations	76%	80%	82%
Extent communication from distributor met expectations	82%	81%	86%

The overall 'expectations' score increased by 12% (CitiPower), 1% (Powercor) and 9% (United Energy) from the 2025 results.

We had a contact at Powercor who was extremely helpful, explained any parts of the process that we were unsure about. She was responsive and it made the process much easier. Also the online portal is very easy to navigate and the flow chart of the progress of the application is excellent.
Powercor customer

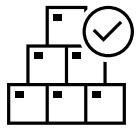
Post implementation review summary of regulatory reset engagement (from June CAP meeting)

Prior to sharing the PIR summary, we wanted to be clear on the feedback shared by the CAP and how this has been implemented

You said	We are actioning
Strengthen early engagement with the AER to clarify expectations on prudency, customer evidence and where engagement can influence outcomes.	• We are aligning internally on the avenues to connect with the AER i.e. undervoltage program (seen in this document) • Initially the Engagement Strategy, and when ready our Engagement Program (2027) will be clear avenues
Better articulate how CAP influences organisational decision-making.	• Insights Framework: We have built a process to document and testing supporting tools to support how insights are reviewed, applied to decisions, recorded and reused over time. This is for the CAP, customers and stakeholders.
Build on existing customer knowledge rather than restarting each reset.	• Insights Framework: We have created a staged process to assess existing evidence first, check sufficiency and avoid unnecessary new engagement. • Ongoing quant survey: We are in the tender process for developing an ongoing quantitative program to track key customer questions relating to the strategic customer pillars (affordability, equity, reliability, resilience, energy transition).
Reduce consultation burden, particularly for regional, rural and capacity-constrained communities.	• Insights Framework: The process requires teams to check for overlap, combine work where possible, and only proceed if all steps are met. • Including this item in our engagement strategy: particularly in 'how we engage with customers,' ensuring that we are continuously considering engagement burden in engagement planning. • Continuing to work with Major Customer team and engagement with memberships and committees, such as Committee for Greater Shepperton and Energy Users Association Australia to find avenues when customers and stakeholders are already been engaged with.

Engagement program summary

The review found that engagement provided clear value with the next stage of maturity coming from: sharper focus, clear design staging, timing optimisation and improved use of insights



1. The reset engagement delivered value

- **Fit-for-purpose methodology:** Leveraging qualitative research, engagement and quantitative approach (quotes are powerful, qualitative insights help explain ‘why and are difficult to challenge. Quantitative outcomes provided validity).
- **Positive feedback built** from the amount of programs that covered the program’s building blocks, key areas of the strategic pillars, early commencement and well-run programs.
- **A clear point of difference** strengthened the program by giving us a distinct, credible position to share with stakeholders, demonstrating confidence in good-practice and showing that our approach was purpose-built rather than simply following what others were doing.
- **Having funding locked in early and a single engagement partner** across the journey allowed the team to focus on delivery, establish expectations and good practice early. Importantly learnings were discussed after each program and consistently brought into the next engagement or research project.
- **Continuing to review recognised good practice** gave us greater confidence in how the program could be designed and delivered.
- **There were standout program** that were most valuable in shaping proposal design and brining clarity to customer needs and preferences included:
    - Broad and wide
    - Regional and rural programs
    - Tariff specific programs
    - C&I engagements
    - Mass market trade off
    - Energy transition summit
    - Future energy network forum
    - Partnerships with Farmers for Climate Action, Committee for Greater Shepperton, Energy Users Association Australia
    - Monash program



2. Strengthening early regulatory alignment

Following the final determination, a clear need was identified to engage the AER earlier on engagement expectations, evidence requirements and how customer insights will be considered in regulatory decision-making.

While the program delivered value, the final decision placed less weight on customer-led programs than expected. This reinforces the need for future engagement to be more clearly linked to business decisions, supported by early AER alignment, and focused on areas where customer and stakeholder feedback can meaningfully influence outcomes.

Engagement program summary

The review found that engagement provided clear value with the next stage of maturity coming from: sharper focus, clear design staging, timing optimisation and improved use of insights



3. Engagement framework was fit-for purpose

The engagement strategy and four-phase delivery model provided a clear and effective framework for planning, sequencing and delivering the reset engagement program.

- It gave the business, participating customers, stakeholders, the CCP and CAP a shared understanding of the engagement journey, including where the program was in the reset cycle, how each phase contributed to proposal development, and what would happen next.



4. Engagement delivery would benefit from stronger governance and sequencing

- **Disciplined readiness** would help ensure engagement occurs at the right time, with the right inputs.
- **Comfort in testing -t**o support meaningful engagement within program timelines, our teams need to be more comfortable testing emerging thinking earlier, rather than waiting for materials, metrics or solutions to be near-final before engaging customers.



5. Greater value will come from improving how insights are used

- **Some programs delivered the exact outputs** required for proposal development, clearly supporting the shaping of business cases, understanding of customer needs and preferences, or were the building blocks required to get to ‘flagship’ programs.
- **Some program insights were challenging to incorporate** into proposal development (some joint workshops -not related to tariffs, and an early ideation workshop).
- **The Insights Synthesis was relied on** from senior team members, new employees and should be continued.
- **There was opportunity seen in amplifying the promotion of engagement** programs publicly to support customer education, information about our proposal process and how to get involved. Additionally, sharing the insights and feedback we have collected over time. This includes working more closely with Corporate Communications as well as Reputation teams.

Recommendations included: leveraging the new customer insights framework, existing memberships, optimising engagement in team governance, finding opportunities to promote the program



1. Review and refine overarching framework

- Review reset engagement strategy and refine into an overarching document (incl. DNDP, strategic programs, BAU engagement, as well as reset)
- Build robust customer insights to inform the reset strategic plan
    - This includes planned quantitative program in 2026 to have an ongoing understanding of needs and customer sentiment relating to strategic pillars
- Map engagement plan against the strategic reset framework early in the reset process, to support alignment in timing and ensure key areas are being planned for
- Establish our point of difference for the next reset that is nuanced by our customers and network
- Continue use of stagged program phases tailored to the next reset's needs (Broad and Wide, Deep and Narrow etc.)



2. Optimise design through program enablers and leveraging the new customer insights framework

Enablers

- Establish a partner and budget early, to maximise focus on delivery, establish expectations and good practice, as well as carry learnings consistently across engagements and research
- Ongoing review of best practice engagement to support ideas and continue bringing learnings into our next reset program

Insights framework

- Leverage the new insights framework
    - E.g. determine if we need further engagement, or if insights already exist (that we could add key questions into)
    - Continue Insights Synthesis documentation
    - Clear documentation of how customer or stakeholder insights have been used in the business
    - Find synergies across the business i.e. leverage First Peoples program and team to ensure we continue to understand communities' needs and preferences



3.Strengthen engagement with the AER

Ahead of the next reset engage the AER on engagement plans to clarify expectations on customer program and where customer and stakeholder insights can meaningfully influence outcomes.

This will support a more targeted and influential engagement approach that reduces consultation burden and better demonstrates the role of customer-led decision-making.

Engagement program recommendations cont.



3. Continue to leverage memberships

- Continue memberships with regional and rural committees as well as commercial and industrial groups to support recruitment and engagement of these customer segments and stakeholders



4. Incorporate engagement closer into project management cadence

- To improve sequencing and governance
- To further improve visibility of the programs and customer insights through our planned triangulation process
- Continue early engagement delivery
- Build a closer working relationship with Leads to establish more comfort in testing proposal areas without being completely finalised



5. Find opportunities to promote how customers can get involved and key programs in external communications

- Working closely with Corporate Communications as well as Reputation



6. Find targeted opportunities to engage executive team to further understand needs and preferences, as well as build empathy with customers

CAP engagement summary

The CAP is a valuable input to a credible, customer-led reset, with maturity to come from more strategic use of the forum

Feedback

- **The CAP delivers value and should remain a strategic stakeholder input**. The CAP strengthens customer-led thinking, proposal development and regulatory credibility especially when the business is engaging effectively. (Some key examples include CSIS, regional and rural programs, engagement planning, overarchingly when challenging customer outcomes on strategic areas).
- **The CAP is most effective when engaged early and on the right topics.** Value is greatest when the CAP is engaged on discretionary, programs where there is genuine scope to shape outcomes.
- **There is still benefit in engaging the CAP in programs they might not be able to directly influence**; as the panel requires oversight of the overarching proposal.
- **We can leverage the CAP further to support** a more customer-led culture. We can influence stronger customer outcomes with internal teams with the panel as core support.

Recommendations

- **Continue the improvements already implemented** to CAP leadership, membership and overall CAP design.
- **Use the CAP more selectively and earlier in the decision-making cycle,** supported by clearer topic selection and questions aligned to outcomes they can influence. Spending more time on considered questions is critical.

Customer pulse program overview

Customer pulse program overview

Program objective

Maintain a current view of future customer needs, preferences and sentiment across strategic pillars

Approach

Questionnaire programming and fieldwork (Nov)
- Start continuous data collection

Reporting and presentation -2 x per year

Questionnaire review to ensure design remains fit for purpose (every 6 months)

Current scope

Survey Length
- 10min online survey
- 5min flexible module used as needed 1 x per year

Sample size
- n=100 customer completes per month, per network
- n=1200 annually, per network

Addressable market
Representation of customer population

Representation across:
- Age
- Gender
- Postcode
- Regional / Rural
- CALD
- Vulnerable
- Low income and digital literacy
- Residential (rental vs home owners)
- Small to medium business

Questionnaire sections*

Demand and tariff profiling
- Current home appliances
- Home appliance uptake in the next 5 years
- CER uptake intentions

Strategic pillars
- Importance ratings of strategic pillars e.g. reliability, safety, capacity, supply, resilience, affordability, value for money, equal access to the energy transition
- Sentiment across trades off e.g. paying more to use electricity when wanted, lower bills for increase in power outages, all Victorians having similar access to electricity
- # of customers identifying as beneficiary / non-beneficiary of the energy transition & why

Program specific insights
- Undervoltage: Identification of customers experiencing disruption of appliances over the last 3 months
- Flexible services:
  - Willingness to shift load by appliance
  - Motivation to shift

Vulnerable customer
- # of customers by network at risk of vulnerability
- (Ability to link to consumption data)

Trust in sharing information
- Who customers trust to share information about electricity

Anticipatory investments
- Sentiment on investment timings

Demographics e.g. household type, # of people living/working in home/business, household income, household structure, CALD, First People, concession, age of main residence, street address

* Note that wording is not exact and has been simplified for this document

End.

