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# Peak Stakeholder and Customer Committee

Committee Charter

June 2020





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## 1.0 SUPERIOR OUTCOMES FOR CUSTOMERS

Endeavour Energy is committed to building a customer-centric business to help achieve its ambition of being the best performing network in Australia.

Our **Peak Customer and Stakeholder Committee** forms an important part of our collective efforts to deliver better value and strengthen our relationship with our customers and stakeholders.

The Committee provides a forum for key customer advocacy groups and stakeholder organisations to provide advice and insights into issues that affect our customers and the wider community. It also provides a structured forum for Endeavour Energy executives and senior management to actively engage with peak organisations on issues of business and community concern.

Endeavour Energy has hosted a Committee for 25 years, drawing on the advice of representatives from a raft of respected organisations when making decisions that impact our customers and community.

In 2019 we revised the Committee structure and broadened membership to further reflect the diverse interests of the customers we serve, the rapid growth our region and our support for customers' preferences for more environmentally sustainable energy.

We have also revised our Charter to reiterate the roles and responsibilities of all Committee members to ensure the best possible outcomes for our customers.

## 2.0 ABOUT ENDEAVOUR ENERGY

Endeavour Energy distributes affordable, safe and reliable electricity to 2.4 million people or one million connected customers in homes and businesses across Sydney's Greater West, the Blue Mountains, Southern Highlands, the Illawarra and the South Coast.

We are a 'poles and wires' business that lights homes and streets, powers businesses, keeps communities safe, sustains jobs and drives economic growth.

We plan, construct, operate and maintain an electricity network that powers Australia's third largest economy and some of the fastest growing regions in Australia.

Our area includes Sydney's second airport, its surrounding 'aerotropolis', and the NSW Government's priority land release areas in Sydney's North West, South West. Over the next 20 years, these areas will be home to communities similar in size to Wollongong and Canberra. The population of Western Sydney is expected to increase by 900,000 over this time and we expect more than 20,000 new customers will connect to the network each year.

We also serve large cities and urban centres, major medical precincts, manufacturing areas and tourist destinations including the world heritage listed Blue Mountains. We work with customers, stakeholders and regulators to prepare for Australia's clean energy future where smart meters, batteries and solar will enable customers to generate, store and sell back electricity into the grid.

## 3.0 ROLE OF THE PEAK CUSTOMER AND STAKEHOLDER COMMITTEE

The Committee brings together customer and stakeholder representatives who meet with senior decision makers to provide oversight and advice to Endeavour Energy on its goal to achieve better outcomes for

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- customers. We want to embed a customer centric culture and engage committee members in policy, planning, services and decision making designed to improve outcomes for customers.

### 3.1 ENGAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

Endeavour Energy undertakes engagement according to the principles of the IAP2's Public Participation Spectrum, the AER's Consumer Engagement Guideline for Network Service Providers and as a signatory to the Energy Charter.

The Energy Charter represents the first whole-of-energy industry initiative to address community expectations and encourages signatories to collaborate to identify, prioritise and deliver key cross-sector initiatives that achieve credible customer outcomes. The Charter was developed in response to stakeholder feedback that customers and the community expected far better from the industry.

As a signatory to the Charter, Endeavour Energy is committed to reporting performance and progress across five key principles:

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

We are seeking advice and support from the Committee on how we can realise improvements against each of these principles.

Central to the AER's consumer guideline are the best practice principles that our customer engagement must be:

- clear, accurate and timely
- accessible and inclusive
- transparent and
- measurable.

Feedback from the AER in its final decision on our last regulatory determination was that while our engagement had improved, there was still more to do. The AER urged us to continue to collaborate with stakeholders on a consistent basis, especially on issues related to growth across the network area. As a result, we have restructured the Committee's operations.

The third framework we observe is the IAP2's Public Participation Spectrum shown below, is recognised as an international, best practice guide to undertaking quality engagement. This has guided our approach to engagement since 2000.

Through our Committee structure we aim to collaborate with customers and stakeholders about our plans and develop solutions to customer issues together.

## IAP2'S PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SPECTRUM



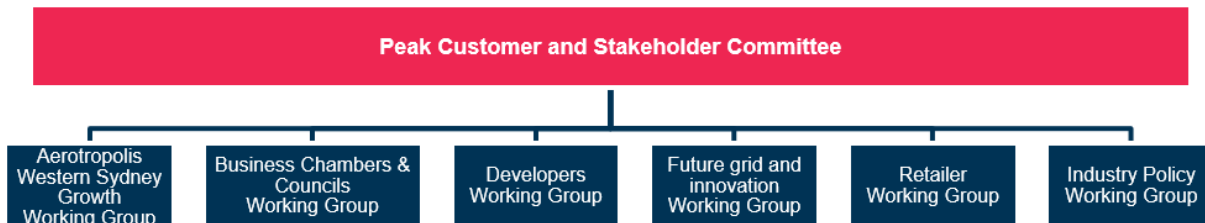
The IAP2 Federation has developed the Spectrum to help groups define the public's role in any public participation process. The IAP2 Spectrum is quickly becoming an international standard.

		INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION				
		INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL		To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
	PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. We will seek your feedback on drafts and proposals.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work together with you to formulate solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

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## 3.2 COMMITTEE WITHIN CONTEXT OF ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

The Committee is informed by several stakeholder working groups comprised of external organisations and senior decision makers from Endeavour Energy. Working groups engage to discuss and resolve issues which emerge when undertaking business-to-business operations. Those items requiring Committee consultation are then elevated to the Committee for its information / input. Members of the Committee are welcome to be members of working groups.



## 4.0 OBJECTIVES OF THE COMMITTEE

The Committee has the following objectives:

- provide a vehicle for achieving effective customer and stakeholder engagement into policy, planning and service decision making processes relevant to network customers
- provide a forum for the examination of issues by customer representatives and Endeavour Energy
- promote a just, equitable and effective delivery of service to customers
- propose to senior management policy, planning and service provision solutions to community concerns
- provide opportunities for the concerns of customers and stakeholders to receive direct consideration and response from Endeavour Energy
- develop a climate of trust and transparency between Endeavour Energy, customers and stakeholders by maintaining an open approach to energy related issues.

## 5.0 OPERATIONS

### 5.1 CONSUMERS

Endeavour Energy as a network operator is committed to its statutory role under the [Electricity Supply Act 1995](#) regarding the appointment, constitution and function and customer consultative groups. Please click [here](#) for detail.

### 5.2 FORUM FOR CONSULTATION

5.2.1 Any member of the Committee may nominate issues for consideration, including:

- (a) customer service
- (b) major capital projects
- (c) network connections
- (d) network prices and tariffs
- (e) customer and stakeholder engagement
- (f) regulatory proposal engagement and submissions
- (g) future technologies
- (h) assisting vulnerable customers
- (i) strategic objectives and plans
- (j) performance trends
- (k) environmental issues
- (l) impact on local communities (emergency response times, construction, vegetation management)
- (m) community services.

5.2.2 A work plan of potential agenda items will be developed at the initial Committee meeting of each financial year whereby members will be asked to nominate items for discussion. This work plan will form the basis of meetings throughout the year.

5.2.3 The Committee is an advisory body through which customers and stakeholders may inform Endeavour Energy of the type of services they want. The Committee has a vital role in providing a direct link between Endeavour Energy and its local communities to help to build trust and positive relationships which are central to better customer outcomes.

5.2.4 We want to include the Committee in our plans to embed customer centricity in our operations. While we want to collaborate where ever possible, the Committee does not have a decision-making role, not should members raise individual customer complaints. They are normally handled by Endeavour Energy's established procedures, via the customer comments system.

### 5.3 MEMBERSHIP

5.3.1 The Committee represents Endeavour Energy's network franchise area which incorporates Sydney's Greater West, the Blue Mountains, Southern Highlands, the Illawarra and the South Coast.

5.3.2 The Committee members:

- a) up to 15 regional representatives of customer and community organisations and up to four Endeavour Energy senior staff. Representatives from organisations may be invited to participate in an observer capacity.
- b) generally, members will be the nominees of organisations.

5.3.3 In selecting members for the Committee, Endeavour Energy has a statutory obligation to include, wherever possible, representatives from:

- (a) consumer groups
- (b) low income households
- (c) persons living in rural and remote areas
- (d) domestic customers
- (e) industrial and commercial energy users.

5.3.4 Endeavour Energy is committed to including members from different customer cohorts, particularly as our network area continues to grow and diversify. These members may represent the interests and concerns of the following customers and stakeholders:

- (a) non-government organisations
- (b) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- (c) Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities
- (d) environmental and clean energy advocates
- (e) urban and regional development organisations
- (f) councils

## 5.4 SELECTION OF MEMBERS

5.4.1 Representatives from different organisations operating within our network will be invited to become members of the Committee. To be eligible, nominees must currently live or work within Endeavour Energy's geographic region or be a professional representative of a community group or organisation serving customers within our network.

5.4.2 The following criteria define a consumer or community organisation that may be represented on the Committee:

- (a) its primary objectives are directed towards promoting the interests of the nominated sections of the community;
- (b) its membership consists of not less than 25 fully paid financial members, or for organisations, the combined individual membership of not less than 25 different persons;
- (c) it is non-party political;
- (d) it is non-profit making in character; and,
- (e) it prohibits the commercial exploitation by others of information and advice that it gives to consumers.

5.4.3 Appointment of members to the Committee is at the discretion of Endeavour Energy.

Selection will be made with regard to the following criteria:

- (a) committee members will have an interest in energy and electricity
- (b) the requirements of the *Electricity Supply Act 1995*
- (c) the need for the Committee to comprise a representative cross-section of the local community
- (d) the ability of nominees to represent the views of the community, customer or business groups
- (e) a strong commitment to working constructively within the framework and philosophy set out in this Charter.

5.4.4 Members are appointed for two years. Following this period, members they will be asked if they wish to continue their membership. Reappointment is at the discretion of the Chair.

5.4.5 Endeavour Energy reserves the right to alter representation on the Committee at any time, and will notify member bodies in writing, should this occur.

## 5.5 RESIGNATIONS

5.5.1 Members are asked to notify the Chair in writing.

## **5.6 TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP**

- 5.6.1 A community or business representative's position on the Committee will be declared vacant if he/she:
- (a) completes a term of office and is not reappointed;
  - (b) resigns the office in writing to the chairperson; or,
  - (c) acts in a way contrary to the spirit of the Committee and or in a manner unacceptable to other members (by majority vote of the Committee and Endeavour Energy representatives present at a Committee meeting).
- 5.6.2 If members are regularly absent from meetings, the secretary will contact the relevant organisation's senior office bearer(s) to consult on the reasons for the non-attendance and, if necessary, seek replacement membership. Every opportunity should be given to the member's organisation to investigate, consider and report on the reasons for lack of involvement. The monitoring of attendance will be the responsibility of the secretary.
- 5.6.3 Membership of the Committee may be terminated at the discretion of the Chair.
- 5.6.4 Notification of the termination of a member will be made in writing to the member organisation.

## **5.7 CHAIR**

- 5.7.1 Endeavour Energy's Deputy CEO Rod Howard or nominee will chair the committee.

## **5.8 MEETING FREQUENCY AND LOCATION**

- 5.8.1 The Committee will meet at least three times a year, at times to be agreed. The timing of meetings will be decided by the members according to particular needs and issues. If an issue needs to be addressed by Committee members outside of the regular meetings a teleconference or web-based meeting may be arranged.
- 5.8.2 The venue for the meetings will generally be Endeavour Energy's Huntingwood office. Meetings will be held during business hours.

## **5.9 ATTENDANCE**

- 5.9.1 A Committee member should arrange alternative representation if possible, whenever they are unavailable to attend a meeting. The alternative representative should be recommended and supported by the organisation they represent. The alternative will have full member status for that meeting and be reimbursed for reasonable out-of-pocket expenses associated with attendance at that meeting (as outlined below). No sitting fee or any other out of pocket expenses will be paid if the member or their representative does not attend.
- 5.9.2 At least fifty percent of Committee Members must attend in person or by proxy are a quorum for Committee meetings to be held.

## **5.10 AGENDA ITEMS**

- 5.10.1 The agenda will include topics agreed to by the Committee and Endeavour Energy from time to time.
- 5.10.2 We encourage members to nominate items for the agenda by sending details by email, phone, mail to the nominated Endeavour representative two weeks before the meeting. The agenda and any other relevant material will be mailed to all members at least one week before each meeting.



- 5.10.3 There will also be an opportunity to raise general business at each meeting.

## **5.11 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS OF MEMBERS**

- 5.11.1 A member who has a direct financial interest in a matter being discussed by the Committee will, as soon as is practical, disclose the nature of the member's interest either at a Committee meeting or by notifying the chairperson in writing, prior to the meeting. A disclosure of a conflict of interest by a member shall be recorded in the minutes of the relevant meeting of the Committee and need not be made again.
- 5.11.2 The interests of a member of the Committee arising by virtue of the organisation he or she represents will be assumed and need not be specifically disclosed.

## **5.12 ADVICE, DISCUSSIONS AND FEEDBACK**

- 5.12.1 Endeavour Energy will present the Committee with proposals on certain issues for discussion and/or consideration. Views will be sought and matters noted for investigation and/or action.
- 5.12.2 As the aim of the Committee is to represent a diversity of views and customers concerns, it is not a requirement that consensus be reached on the issues discussed.
- 5.12.3 Feedback provided by the Committee, including a consensus position if one is reached, will then be put to the Executive Leadership Team of Endeavour Energy, where relevant. Endeavour Energy undertakes to give due consideration to Committee discussions by notifying other key staff of relevant issues or concerns that relate to their business but is not required to adopt any proposal put to it by the Committee.
- 5.12.4 Endeavour Energy representatives will give the group clear feedback on the outcome of their suggestions and views.
- 5.12.5 Summaries of meetings will be posted on the Endeavour Energy website.
- 5.12.6 There may be times when Endeavour Energy will seek feedback on specific topics both at meetings and outside of meetings. Committee feedback on different topics may be used regulatory submissions.

## **5.13 EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION**

- 5.13.1 We encourage Committee members to engage in conversations about the energy industry and the best interests of consumers. We ask members to take care if representing Endeavour Energy in public forums and to talk to us before commenting to journalists or in social media on our operations. Where ever possible Committee members should note that their comments are the comments of their respective association or community group.

## **5.14 MEETING SUMMARIES AND REPORTING**

- 5.14.1 An Endeavour Energy staff member will summarise meetings and manage contact with members. A meeting summary will be distributed to Committee members within one week after each meeting.

## 5.15 INFORMATION AND CONFIDENTIALITY

- 5.15.1 Endeavour Energy recognises the need for open discussion on issues related to the supply of energy and arrangement and provision of connection services as a key element of the consultative process.
- 5.15.2 In order to support the effective operation of the Committee, Endeavour Energy will make available sufficient information to enable members to become familiar with relevant issues affecting the electricity industry. This may be by means of verbal presentations and/or written material. Endeavour Energy's staff will be available wherever possible, to provide specialist or technical advice.
- 5.15.3 Discussions in Committee meetings may include information of a commercially sensitive nature. This particularly relates to commercial information that would be of benefit to Endeavour Energy's suppliers or to proposals at an early stage of development. In this regard, Endeavour Energy expects confidentiality from all parties present at any Committee meeting and reserves the right to withhold information it regards as "commercial in confidence".
- 5.15.4 Matters discussed by the Committee should not be disclosed to employees or representatives of other energy companies. Endeavour Energy undertakes to use information relating to group discussions only for the purposes set out in this Charter.

## 5.16 EXPENSES

- 5.16.1 Membership is intended to be voluntary, however Endeavour Energy may, at its discretion, pay a sitting fee of up to \$500 to a member's organisation if that member otherwise would not receive payment while attending Committee meetings.

All members will be reimbursed for any out-of-pocket expenses (e.g. travel, parking and accommodation). as agreed to by Endeavour Energy.

- 5.16.2 By prior agreement, members' organisations may be:
- (a) paid an agreed sitting fee for each meeting attended.
  - (b) reimbursed for reasonable out-of-pocket expenses for items such as photocopying, research and transport to meetings.
  - (c) Requests for reimbursement must be in writing (email is fine) and must be accompanied by a receipt.
  - (d) Members should not undertake activities that may incur expenses without prior discussion and written agreement of Endeavour Energy.

## 5.17 CODE OF CONDUCT

- 5.17.1 Endeavour Energy agrees to:
- (a) Ensure all advice and recommendations provided by the Committee receives due consideration by Endeavour Energy's Executive Leadership Team or appropriate Endeavour Energy staff.
  - (b) Provide feedback to the Committee on how their recommendations will be used by Endeavour Energy.
  - (c) Provide an appropriate level of information to members to support the effective operation of the Committee.
  - (d) Respond quickly to requests for information and ensure open and honest communication, subject to the need for commercial confidentiality.
  - (e) Encourage all members to present their views.
  - (f) Support the smooth operation of the Committee by providing secretariat support.

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- (g) Operate the Committee within the spirit of open and honest communication and consistent with Endeavour Energy's core values of:
  - Safety excellence
  - Respect for people
  - Customer and community focus
  - Continuous improvement
  - Act with integrity

5.17.2 Committee members agree to:

- (a) Respect the need for information provided by Endeavour Energy to be treated appropriately.
- (b) Attend meetings and participate in discussions.
- (c) Report their views and those of the wider community to Endeavour Energy.
- (d) Report discussion of Committee meetings to the group they represent and relay feedback to Endeavour Energy via Committee meetings.
- (e) Allow all members to present their views.
- (f) Refer any request for public comment on issues affecting Endeavour Energy to the Corporate Affairs branch of Endeavour Energy.
- (g) Act within the spirit of the intent and values outlined in this Charter.

**Produced by Corporate Affairs**

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