

# Social Matters

## Management Approach

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This document details how the SA Power Networks Group manages material social matters, including how we identify and assess risks and opportunities, respond to incidents or issues, and evaluate progress on our actions.

Our material social matters are:

1. People and culture
  - Culture and employee engagement
  - Diversity and inclusion
  - Talent attraction and workforce development
  - Health, safety and wellbeing
2. Stakeholder engagement and community investment
  - Customer engagement
  - Community investment and economic development
  - Community education and safety

This document should be read in conjunction with our 2022 Sustainability Report and Sustainability Data and Disclosure Databook.

Our reporting follows the guidance of the Taskforce for Climate-related Financial Disclosure (TCFD) framework, the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) Standards and general industry standards. Supporting information that forms part of our sustainability disclosures is available on our website.

# 1. People and culture

## 1.1 Overview

This section outlines how the SA Power Networks Group approaches people and culture related matters, including health, safety and wellbeing, diversity and inclusion, talent and workforce development.

We are committed to ensuring that our people are safe, well, engaged, supported and contributing in ways that are meaningful to them and aligned to our goals. Our focus is on developing people who will add value now, and into the future and be enriched by the work they do. The energy transition presents exciting possibilities to make the working lives of our people more harmonious and productive in an environment where they thrive.

## 1.2 Management Approach

### 1.2.1 Strategy, policy, and systems

The SA Power Networks Group has comprehensive human resources, safety and wellbeing, and employee development systems which are reflective of the size, culture, role and activities of our business and people. These include a range of strategies (including an overarching People Strategy), policies, procedures, directives and guides ensuring our people are safe, well, empowered and engaged.

Our Safety Management System is accredited to ISO 45001, the International Standard for Occupational Health and Safety, and we regularly undertake system, facility and project safety audits and inspections. Our Contractor Management System, Site Pass also enables us to mandate and monitor appropriate safety and environmental compliance standards across our large contractor base. Our safety incident management system (Enablon) is an integrated Risk, Environment, Health and Safety Management system that has enabled improved event reporting, investigation and management. Information we gather from Enablon is shaping our safety strategy, approach to specific risks and emergency management.

### 1.2.2 Culture and employee engagement

#### **Employee engagement**

Our people are critical to our success, and our culture is a key foundational enabler for our business. Our culture ensures that our people demonstrate behaviours that are aligned to our values and are equipped with the capabilities that support successful delivery of our key focus areas.

We know that good communication practices are integral to the success of any organisation. The SA Power Networks Group is large, diverse and geographically dispersed, so a Communications Strategy that can engage, align and inspire our people with our organisational purpose is vital. Our strategy aims to:

- Be purposeful, bidirectional and measurable
- Build alignment and understanding of purpose
- Enable leaders to inform, engage and inspire

The Communications Team works closely with all areas of the business and is responsible for overseeing and coordinating the dissemination of clear and consistent business messaging for a variety of purposes, both internal and external to SA Power Networks. A wide variety of communications channels are used to communicate with staff including a weekly e-newsletter, a monthly business magazine, intranet and internal social media, videos, briefings and a range of audience specific channels (eg Toolbox talks, safety meetings, bulletins and alerts etc).

#### **SA Power Networks Group Employee Foundation**

A key reflection of the culture of the SA Power Networks Group is the [Employee Foundation](#). Established in 2006 and set up as a Charitable Trust with the Principal Purpose of making donations to worthy charitable

causes, the Employee Foundation has a philanthropic view that big organisations should do more to contribute to the community.

The aim of the Employee Foundation is to enable our employees, their families and friends to make a positive contribution to the lives of people in our community. We do this through payroll donations, fundraising and volunteering. SA Power Networks provides a full work day for every staff member to volunteer with a South Australian based charity.

### 1.2.3 Diversity and inclusion

#### **Diversity and inclusion**

Our ambition is to be a leader in our industry through fostering an inclusive workplace that better reflects the diversity of our community. Although diversity and inclusion has been a central element of our human resources plans, practices and processes for many years, to elevate our focus and commitment on diversity and inclusion issues, we have refreshed our Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan.

In 2022 the SAPN Group recruited a dedicated Diversity and Inclusion Manager to lead the initiatives under the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan and embed diversity and inclusion principles across the organisation. Successful delivery will enable the SA Power Networks Group to achieve our vision and capitalise on the opportunities and benefits that a more diverse and inclusive organisation can generate.

While we recognise there are many dimensions of diversity, we have identified three pillars of focus requiring our initial efforts:

- Gender Equality
- Reflecting our Community
- Respect.

We feel that these activities will also increase diversity across other aspects of the diversity spectrum.

Over the next fifteen years we will undertake a range of initiatives to meet the targets being considered for the three focus areas, but the primary pillar of focus over this period is gender equality. The energy sector has traditionally been very male dominated, but we are working hard to change this.

We report every year to the Workforce Gender Equity Agency (WGEA) and have begun developing appropriate targets to improve our gender composition and performance against other measures in line with better practice in our industry. Our pay gap in 2022 was 15.5% – an improvement on the previous year. We recognise that this gap arises mainly because we have an uneven distribution of males and females through the pay scales in our business, with more women in lower paying roles and less in higher paying roles. This is why we are focusing our efforts to not only attract and retain females in our business, but also want to see greater female career progression.

We have a strong focus on increasing female representation across our business, encompassing all roles and all levels of leadership, with multiple (current and planned) initiatives identified for achieving this over the coming years. Initiatives include specific projects around recruitment, internal movements, development, talent pipeline building, succession, and education programs. This program of work will be outlined in our D&I Action Plan, delivered as part of our People Strategy, and overseen by our Executive Leadership Team, who will meet quarterly to review and discuss the enterprises D&I progress.

#### **SA Power Networks Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) Committee**

The D&I Committee is an internal advocacy group made up of staff who are passionate about ensuring all people come to work feeling safe, valued, respected and included. The group's collective mission is to build an organisation that embraces cultural, gender and identity diversity, where individual talents, attributes and skills are celebrated. The focus of the D&I Committee's activities are around awareness raising, education and events to recognise significant days in the diversity and inclusion calendar.

## 1.2.4 Talent attraction and workforce development

### Talent attraction

To meet the challenges and capitalise on the opportunities of the rapid energy transition, in 2021 we refreshed our People Strategy, with a goal of an engaged, aligned and high performing workforce. Because culture and workforce are key foundational enablers, the organisation aims to further strengthen our existing 'performance culture', with emphasis on action to:

- Drive towards an aligned and purposeful culture that is customer centric, commercial, accountable and adaptable.
- Ensure our people are inspired and engaged.
- Ensure our people are empowered and aligned with our purpose in order to consistently deliver high performance.

Like many businesses driving the decarbonisation of the economy, the SA Power Networks Group recognises that to achieve a high performing, customer centric and commercially sustainable business for the long term, it will be critical to develop a workforce for the future, with diverse people who are ready and willing to embrace new capabilities. Our workforce planning and development activities will create a future ready workforce that embraces new capabilities and utilises robotics and technology to increase their focus on higher value adding activities.

The SA Power Networks Group aspires to be known as an employer of choice and offers a rewarding and flexible working environment where skills, safety and diversity are valued, and the importance of work-life balance is recognised. The vast majority of our workforce is covered by an Enterprise Agreement. Employees are provided 12 weeks paid maternity leave and 4 weeks paid parental leave, family and domestic violence leave, phased retirement options and a range of flexible and hybrid working arrangements. Other benefits include an Employee Assistance Program which offers a free confidential counselling service, leadership development and mentoring programs, online training and development opportunities and study assistance.

### Learning and development

The SA Power Networks Group supports a culture of continuous learning, with our Learning and Development team setting out the vision of what kind of learning organisation we aspire to be and designing the strategies that help align stakeholders and learning and development efforts. The team analyses the learning needs voiced by our staff and balances them with the critical skills to deliver organisational strategy and requirements – a challenging task given the demands of the rapidly changing and ever more complex electricity supply sector.

We recognise the key role our leaders play in achieving business outcomes and embodying the behaviours, culture and principles of our organisation. Our organisation aspires to nurture leaders that are committed to the development of themselves and their teams and we aim to support leaders to become authentic, courageous and inspiring role models. In 2022, a refreshed Leadership Development Framework was released, with an approach aimed at supporting leaders to confidently have conversations that matter, build a strong sense of purpose and aligned priorities for their teams and collaborate, innovate and continuously improve to drive strategic outcomes.

The Framework provides the structure which supports the design and delivery of programs that develop the skills that are needed by the business now and in the future, through a range of professional development activities including formal qualifications, short courses, and in the field. For learning which is best conducted via in-field training or experience, our Training Services facilities allow for students to actively obtain the skills and certificates required for on-site work. As an Enterprise Registered Training Organisation, SA Power Networks is recognised as a leader in the delivery of quality trade technical training services in the electricity supply industry.

The combination of training professionals working alongside leaders and accredited trainers in an Enterprise RTO, ensures the operational efficiency of our trade technical training delivery and apprenticeship program, resulting in a highly skilled and motivated workforce.

### **Mentoring program**

Our Mentoring Program encourages a mentoring relationship which is a hands-on, one-on-one relationship built on trust and confidentiality. The purpose of the Program is to provide a mechanism for mentoring relationships so that experienced mentors can share advice, knowledge and experiences with mentees, resulting in a mutually beneficial professional development relationship.

### **SA Power Networks Graduate Development Program, Cadet Program, Apprenticeships and Traineeships**

As one of South Australia's largest employer of apprentices and graduates, SA Power Networks runs a range of accredited training and entry-level work programs. The Apprenticeship Program includes both on and off-the-job training at a dedicated Training Centre.

Network Project Officers are responsible for leading new connections, relocations and extensions of the distribution network. They also liaise with customers and stakeholders and carry out scoping and estimating functions to ensure reliability of the distribution network. As part of our new Cadet Network Project Officer Program, cadets receive a nationally recognised qualification and on-the-job experience through structured rotations in different business areas, to develop a broad range of skills and experience.

Our Graduate Program provides the opportunity to put theory in to practice and supports the transition from university to full-time employment. It includes employment opportunities within the organisation's engineering, information technology and telecommunication departments.

SA Power Networks is a member of the Australian Associate Graduate Employers ([AAGE](#)) and we consistently rate in their top graduate employer list, as voted by graduates.

We also offer an Engineering Vacation Program, providing an opportunity for engineering students to put theory into practice. Our program is aimed at enthusiastic and energetic students in their penultimate year of study who have an interest in electrical power systems. The program spans approximately 12 weeks over the summer university break.

### **Performance management**

Performance management is an important aspect of our cultural transformation and is critical to ensuring ongoing business success. Annual people performance reviews are an important way we maximise the value of everyone's contribution and align it to achieve our vision.

We use an electronic system called SuccessFactors for annual:

- Performance Planning and Review for salaried employees
- Achievement and Development Process for wages employees
- Apprentices Achievement and Development Process
- Leadership Health Check (LHC) processes

These tools provide a framework which helps leaders and employees openly discuss and agree expectations around what needs to be delivered in a given period, and how in terms of expected behaviours which are aligned to our preferred culture.

## **1.2.5 Health, safety and wellbeing**

### **Worker Safety**

The safety of our people and community is our top priority and we work hard to ensure we have a safe and secure electricity network. We strive for a workplace free of injuries, providing our people and our contractors with the appropriate information, instruction and training to manage a range of safety risks associated with working on our electricity network.

Our safety performance is widely recognised as one of the best in the country, however we know that we cannot be complacent. Our comprehensive health and safety management system enables us to effectively manage safety risks through systematic identification, assessment, control and reporting. The Work Safe Standards – underpinned by the Work Safe Values – are the minimum expectations of all workers to protect against serious and fatal risk, however there are other activities that warrant specific risk management strategies to be employed. All employees are expected to understand the Values at every level of the company.

To ensure our people work safe, and go home safe, every day, we are focussing on managing risks and enhancing our safety leadership.

### **Switch ON Safety Leadership Academy**

Our Switch ON brand is one of the key initiatives of Safety Strategy 2021–2025, symbolising our aim to keep people safe and well, empower leaders and improve our safety culture and systems.

A signature project under our Safety Strategy 2021–25, the Switch ON Safety Leadership Academy held its inaugural event in March 2018. Since then, hundreds of employees from across SA Power Networks have taken part in the 3-day and 2-day programs, with our 1-day program for those who support or provide a service to high-risk work groups. The focus continues to be on the standards, values and supporting behaviours, with key themes of ownership and leadership at all levels to drive operational efficiency and excellence.

### **Mental Health and Wellbeing – The Health Hub**

Keeping our people safe and well includes both the physical and mental capacity of an individual. The Health Hub and Wellness Portal is an initiative that reflects the SA Power Networks Group’s commitment to holistic wellbeing of employees at work or at home and aims to provide practical resources to support and improve the work experience. Content includes tips on physical health, leadership support, positive mindset and wellbeing courses.

SA Power Networks and Enerven are committed to creating a culture that encourages conversation and engagement in support of activities relating to the mental health of our workforce. A key initiative of this commitment is the Mental Health First Aider (MHFA) program that teaches people the skills to help someone who they’re concerned about. MHFA’s are formally trained volunteers embedded within work groups.

## **1.3 Evaluation and improvement**

The SA Power Networks Group employs a range tools and systems to ensure we monitor the progress towards program delivery and the achievement of the goals and initiatives of our People and Safety strategies.

Analysis of performance associated with safety event data including but not limited to personal injury, switching, and driving, near misses, assists in developing the objectives and the focus streams that underpin both corporate and departmental strategy aligned to the corporate Risk Management Framework and associated Corporate Risk Register. Understanding safety risks and developing targeted activities across the business assists us to managing them appropriately, to an acceptable level, enhances the business’ ability to make better decisions, deliver on objectives and improve performance.

We review and report on our progress against a range of people and safety risks and priorities to the ELT, Board and in our annual ESG reporting, and we report every year to the Workforce Gender Equality Agency (WGEA).

## 2. Stakeholder engagement and community investment

### 2.1 Overview

This section outlines how the SA Power Networks Group approaches stakeholder engagement and community investment related matters, including customer engagement, community investment and economic development, energy affordability and equity, education, and safety.

We know that to achieve our strategic goals and be a leading force in the successful transition of the energy sector in our State, we will need to continue to collaborate with our stakeholders, partner with our customers and advocate for positive and constructive change.

We also recognise that it is critical to ensure that as the world transitions towards net-zero, it is done so in a just and fair manner, and that our customers feel empowered to contribute. We have integrated this objective into our strategic approach and run a range of programs and initiatives to contribute to the communities in which we live and work.

We have already made significant strides in the way we involve customers and other stakeholders in decision making on key issues and have been recognised by the industry and the Australian Energy Regulator for our customer engagement processes. To enhance the breadth and quality of our stakeholder engagement to better reflect the diversity of our communities and the complexity of energy sector issues, we are refreshing our Stakeholder Engagement Framework to:

- improve the scope, consistency and quality of engagement;
- formalise communication and engagement systems and processes;
- establish advocacy priority issues; and
- better include Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities, Traditional Owner groups and align with our Reconciliation Action Plan (in development).

### 2.2 Management approach

#### 2.2.1 Strategy, systems and engagement methods

Commencing in 2021 the SA Power Networks Group went on a significant research journey to understand more deeply what our customers want from us. We gathered valuable feedback from both customers and employees that was integral in developing the new Customer Strategy 2022–2026, with our vision of “We make energy easy for every customer, every day”.

SA Power Networks has refreshed our Customer Charter, which outlines our commitments and guaranteed service levels, and our Vulnerable Customer Strategy, to ensure access and support in the new energy future.

We engage with a broad and diverse range of stakeholders across the State, and we’re committed to improving the way we engage with these groups, understand, and consider their needs in our decision-making. Our key stakeholder groups and how we engage with them is summarised below:

Stakeholder group	About the stakeholder	How we engage
<b>Customers</b>		
<b>Residential</b>	<p>Encompassing all South Australians using electricity from our network. Dedicated Community Advisory Board and Working and Reference Groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Reference Group</li> <li>• Connections Working Group</li> <li>• Regional and Remote Customers Sub-Committee</li> </ul>	<p>Dedicated local customer relations team and Customer Relationship Management System, operating a 24/7 faults and emergencies line</p> <p>Regular formal and informal communications with customer engagement personnel and operational employees via phone, website (Corporate and Talking Power), (SMS and Card) notifications, social media, site visits, meetings, events and reporting.</p>
<b>Business</b>	<p>Electricity (SA Power Networks) and energy services (Enerven) customers. Range of sizes and scale, from small businesses through to large industrial customers.</p> <p>Dedicated Community Advisory Board and Working and Reference Groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Solar Industry Reference Group</li> <li>• Arborist Reference Group</li> <li>• Tariff Working Group</li> <li>• DER Integration Working Group</li> <li>• LGA Working Group</li> <li>• Public Lighting Reference Group</li> </ul>	<p>Ongoing communications with dedicated Major Customer Business Partner role. Regular formal and informal communications with customer engagement personnel and operational employees via phone, website, meetings, site visits, meetings.</p>
<b>Governments</b>		
<b>Governments and Regulators</b>	<p>Local, state and national regulators (Australian Energy Regulator (AER), Clean Energy Regulator (CER), Office of the Technical Regulator (OTR), Environment Protection Authority (EPA) and government agencies.</p>	<p>Regular formal and informal communications with corporate and operational senior management and employees through meetings, site visits, events and reporting.</p>
<b>Partners and collaborators</b>	<p>Universities, RACE2030, Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA), private sector technology companies</p>	<p>Research projects, trials and piloting of technologies and approaches. Communication via meetings, presentations, events.</p>
<b>Communities</b>		
<b>Local community</b>	<p>Individuals and groups local to our network infrastructure, including landowners, Traditional Owners, development groups, local businesses, and councils.</p>	<p>Location-or project-specific community engagement, meetings, formal and informal communications, (Corporate and Talking Power) website, (SMS and Card) notifications, and social media.</p>



Stakeholder group	About the stakeholder	How we engage
<b>Non-government organisations (NGOs)</b>	Local and regional advocacy, charity, social, medical, community, sports, arts, and environmental organisations.	Collaboration, funding, supporting and volunteering by employees for a range of charities events and organisations. Promotion of activities.
<b>Media</b>	Print, radio, television and online platforms.	Regular engagement with business and regional media through interviews, discussions, media releases and site visits undertaken by our Corporate Affairs team. Safety and other campaigns via media.
<b>Industry/Commercial</b>		
<b>Energy services</b>	Electricians, solar and battery providers, meter readers, and so on.	Dedicated local customer relations team and Customer Relationship Management System to manage enquiries, complaints and manage connection/technical issues.
<b>Energy sector</b>	ElectraNet (transmission), energy retailers and generators, other distribution businesses, Energy Networks Australia (ENA)	Regular formal and informal communications with corporate and operational employees through meetings, site visits, events, and trials/collaborations.
<b>Investment community</b>	Owner companies, Board of Directors, investors, financiers, mainstream brokers, analysts and fund managers, green finance advisers.	Regular formal and informal communications with senior management and employees through meetings, and reporting.
<b>Employees</b>	Our workforce is predominantly South Australian based and comprised of employees, contracting partners, and supplementary labour. Many of our employees and contractors are members of relevant Unions.	Regular communication with our workforce through the intranet, emails, bulletins, company electronic magazine, presentations and discussions, internal social media, noticeboard items, videos from the CEO.
<b>Suppliers</b>	Product and service suppliers, from local businesses to large international organisations.	Communication via email, phone and meetings by our procurement and operational personnel. Dedicated onboarding and contractor management system (SitePass).

In recent times we have also been able to engage with government to shape policy, legislation and State-based regulation, improving our ability to cost-effectively manage a stable and secure network for South Australians and to advocate on behalf of our customers.

We are industry leaders in integrating distributed or customer energy resources like rooftop solar PV, household batteries and Virtual Power Plants into the distribution network. To do this, we have undertaken a range of trials and pilots in partnership with industry leading solutions providers (eg Tesla), supported by funding through the Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA). We also work very closely with our key stakeholder groups such as the SA Government, Energy Network Association (ENA), AEMO, and ElectraNet.

## 2.2.2 Customer engagement

### **Customer experience**

We utilise a wide range of forums, channels and mechanisms to engage with our customers, communities and other stakeholders, including digital engagement websites, focus groups, surveys, working and reference groups, field days and industry events.

We have a dedicated local customer relations team and Customer Relationship Management System, operate a 24/7 faults and emergencies line, and our [Customer Charter](#) outlines our commitment to our customers and guaranteed service levels. Customer Operations is responsible for the operational functions supporting the Customer and Community department in providing the best possible customer experience. Our teams work to deliver an efficient and high standard of service and engage with both customers and industry stakeholders.

Customer Services source information from the business to provide accurate, reliable and customer friendly resolution to all telephone enquiries and complaints. Across the eight teams we manage enquires and complaints from residential and business customers, registered electricians, builders, contractors and solar installers, and provide advice. We scale up the contact centre operations during major events to manage a higher volume of calls using a trained team from all parts of SA Power Networks.

### **Service and revenue setting (Regulatory Proposal, or 'Reset') engagement**

Our most significant and deepest engagement with customers and stakeholders centres on determining our service targets and business and network plans to achieve them for each regulatory period (five years).

We generally commence these engagements about 3–4 years before the commencement of the new regulatory period. Our engagement has developed significantly over the last decade, reflecting a focus on more deeply understanding the needs of customers and their preferences in terms of the services we provide and their affordability, as well as considering other issues including sustainability and safety.

Commencing in 2022, engagement on our 2025–30 Reset Regulatory Proposal (Reset) included a series of regional and metro workshops, deep dives, collaboration with our Community Advisory Board and other Working/Reference Groups, and options presentations to a 'People's Panel'.

Our comprehensive Reset engagement reinforces our commitment to working with our customers and stakeholders to understand their needs and deliver services they value. We believe that our relationships with our stakeholders and our willingness to engage with our customers and to listen and respond to their needs, is fundamental to achieving balanced outcomes for our customers and community.

### **Community Advisory Board (CAB) and Reference Groups**

Our [Community Advisory Board \(CAB\)](#) was established in 2009 to ensure the customer voice is considered in our decision making. Our CAB consists of a broad range of stakeholders with an interest in shaping the decision-making of SA Power Networks and includes customer advocacy representatives. A new 15 Member panel was appointed in January 2022 for a two-year term.

Our CAB is our flagship group ensuring that customer views shape service delivery and are at the heart of all decision-making. The CAB is supported by a series of sub-committees, Reference Groups and Working Groups engaging with us on a range of specific topics.

## SA Power Networks Consultative Groups



This includes engagement with a broad range of stakeholders on the following topics:

- Vulnerable customers and affordability
- Vegetation management and appropriate species selection
- Connections
- Tariffs (business and residential)
- Public lighting
- Solar industry
- Flexible exports

We use the feedback from these groups to develop and refine our strategies, initiatives, and activities, and meet the expectations of our current and future customers and stakeholders.

The CAB also plays a crucial role in supporting SA Power Networks plan via its regulatory proposal process and our organisation's goal to accelerate the transformation of our state's energy system to one in which energy is affordable, reliable and zero carbon.

### Talking Power Forum

Talking Power is an online community space that is designed to give South Australians the opportunity to have their say on important issues and projects that shape their community. By participating in Talking Power people can contribute to strengthening their community and assist SA Power Networks in making important decisions. Talking Power gives participants the opportunity to access information, read the discussions, join in the conversation and add ideas and feedback when and where it suits them – 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Talking Power is also a key forum for engagement as part of developing our Regulatory (Reset) Proposal for the Australian Energy Regulator.

### The Energy Charter

*#BetterTogether Collaborator*

SA Power Networks is a signatory to the #BetterTogether initiatives under The Energy Charter, a national project focused on embedding a customer-centric culture and conduct in energy businesses. The aim is to create tangible improvements in affordability and service delivery.

## 2.2.3 Community investment and economic development

### **Empowering affordable, equitable and accessible energy services**

Our distribution charges make up around a third of customers' total electricity bills for a typical residential customer. Our charges have not changed in real terms since 1999 and are about \$12 per week for the average customer. However, we recognise that increased cost of living means that not everyone has the luxury of being able to easily afford energy, let alone new technology like solar panels or a home battery system. Supporting customers in need or vulnerable circumstances is therefore a priority.

We know that access to an essential service, such as electricity, is necessary to sustain the health and wellbeing of our community. We are committed to working with our Community Reference Group (CRG) to understand the needs of customers, particularly those in vulnerable circumstances. Our aim is to ensure their voice is heard in decision-making. We have developed a Customer in Vulnerable Circumstances Strategy and are working with our CRG to implement the strategy.

We acknowledge that vulnerability is not a label – it is a situation in which customers find themselves and there are a variety of reasons that customers may be considered vulnerable, including financial, disability, age, cultural/linguistic, or geographic/remote living. We are actively contributing to a fair and just energy transition through education, awareness and accessibility whilst maintaining affordable energy services. For example, we are:

- supporting the South Australian Thriving Communities Partnership, a collaborative organisation that connects vulnerable people to a range of government and other services aimed at relieving financial stress;
- working with organisations such as the South Australian Council of Social Services (SACoSS), St Vincent de Paul, Anglicare, and the State Government, to make sure that members of the community experiencing vulnerability are supported as best as possible;
- actively developing and enabling new energy products, services, tariffs and markets, which can make energy more affordable;
- transforming the customer experience to make energy services and options simple and accessible;
- enhancing our Energy Advisory Service to educate and build capacity in energy awareness, services, technology, and digital platforms to support customers through the energy transition; and
- working with our Community Reference Group to review and evolve the Vulnerable Customer Strategy and actions to ensure access and support in the new energy future.

### **Economic contribution to South Australia**

As the sole electricity distributor in South Australia, servicing around 1.7 million customers, SA Power Networks understands how important our service and operations are to the wellbeing and prosperity to all South Australians. In addition to delivering reliable, safe and affordable electricity to residents and businesses, we are responsible for the design, construction and connection of new and upgraded embedded generation and asset relocation for industry and government.

Our energy services company (Enerven) provides construction, maintenance and asset management services in the competitive energy and telecommunications sectors. A key project that Enerven is delivering is the Zero Cost Energy Future Project for SA Water (the State's water and sewage services provider). This involves the design, procurement, construction and commissioning of approximately 154MW of roof and ground mount solar panels and 34MWh of energy storage across around 80 sites in South Australia.

Our unique role at the heart of the energy supply chain means that we are more than just an essential service – we are actively accelerating the State's transition to a low carbon economy by facilitating the installation of hundreds of thousands of distributed energy solutions such as solar and batteries into the grid. The SA Power Networks Group believes that clean, reliable, affordable electricity will become the key foundation of the State's economic growth and prosperity – reducing cost of living for customers, improving competitiveness of existing businesses, and attracting new energy-intensive industries and those

seeking to reduce their carbon footprint. We are supporting the SA Government's vision to achieve net zero carbon emissions across the electricity sector by 2030, and net zero emissions for the State by 2050.

As a major employer in South Australia, with more than 2,400 people in around 30 locations, we are a positively contributing presence throughout the State. We are proud to be part of the SA community, creating jobs and living and working in metropolitan Adelaide, and regional and remote towns. We also support SA and Australian businesses, by procuring the majority of our goods and services locally.

### **Supporting and investing in our communities**

We are proudly South Australian and a strong supporter of South Australian community organisations and events. We have a strong presence in the general community through sport, education, environmental concerns and the arts. These partnerships not only reflect our values, but also help us to create a better future for South Australians.

Our program of Strategic Partnerships and Community Partnerships has operated since 1995 and supports a wide range of community organisations and aspirations. Contributing to the communities where we live and work has led to long-term partnerships, and in 2022, we also launched a new grants program.

Our Employee Foundation enables our employees, their families and friends to make a positive contribution to the lives of people in our community. We do this through payroll donations, fundraising and volunteering. SA Power Networks provides a full work day for every staff member to volunteer with a South Australian based charity.

### **Genuine engagement, respect and reconciliation**

Our network and operations are hosted on the lands of multiple Traditional Owner Groups, and we recognise this connection to country and know that Aboriginal heritage sites provide an important link with traditional cultural heritage. We have always striven to respect this when planning projects, and will work with Traditional Owners to ensure sites of significance are not disturbed. We also endeavour to build our relationships with local communities and employ Indigenous owned and operated suppliers.

To better articulate our aspirations and build on our current understanding and engagement with Traditional Owners, in 2022 the SA Power Networks Group commenced the development of an organisational Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

## **2.2.4 Community education and safety**

### **Community safety and education**

We are committed to providing a safe and reliable electricity supply for South Australians and an important part of this is ensuring the wellbeing of the community. Electricity can be dangerous and touching powerlines or even getting close to them, can be fatal or lead to serious injury.

Our safety ambition extends beyond the health and wellbeing of our workforce. It extends to customers and the community with a key emphasis on safety related to bushfires, electric shocks and asset management practices that contribute to public safety. All of our contractors and other workers are required to meet stringent work, health and safety requirements and be trained or inducted prior to working around our infrastructure.

To ensure the safety of our customers and communities, we:

- Proactively address bushfire, electric shock, wires down and life support risks;
- Maintain our assets to minimise risk of asset failure especially in the face of intense and prolonged summer heatwaves brought on by climate change;
- Provide safety information that is relevant, timely and easily accessible via safety campaigns, social media, website updates and two-way communication with customers;
- Maintain a timely response to community concerns raised through SA Power Networks' 24/7 faults and emergencies line; and

- Refine the definition and identification of life support customers in order to provide enhanced services to this customer group.

### **Keeping communities safe from bushfire risk**

Electrical infrastructure can also start fires if damaged or if trees or animals impact our network. This has implications for the way we design our network and monitor assets. Fire starts from either vegetation or asset failure is our highest corporate risk – a risk which is being exacerbated by climate change.

Consequently, vegetation and asset management requires proactive and rigorous management in particular in extreme weather conditions or responding to events. More information about how we manage the risk of [bushfires from vegetation](#) can be found on our website and our Environmental Matters Management Approach Statement.

## **2.3 Evaluation and improvement**

Like all essential services and large organisations, we have a comprehensive system to monitor, report and improve on our performance.

Our CAB and various Working and Reference Groups provide valuable ongoing insights, contribution and feedback on our strategic and operational aspirations. Customer research and regular satisfaction surveys used to adapt and improve our services and programs. Customer research conducted over 2021 found that we needed to augment our KPIs to better reflect the services and experience customer wanted, and we have begun exploring additional appropriate measures to monitor our social value.

A range of engagement, customer service and brand health metrics and KPIs are regularly reported through to the ELT and provided in our Sustainability Data and Disclosure Databook.