

Social Matters: Management Approach



This document describes 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
 - Inclusion and diversity
 - Talent attraction, retention and workforce development
 - Safety, health and wellbeing
2. Stakeholder engagement, customers, and community investment
 - Customer experience, affordability and equity
 - Community investment and economic development
 - Community safety education

SA Power Networks Sustainability Reporting Suite

This document should be read in conjunction with our:

- Sustainability Report;
- Sustainability Data and Disclosure Databook; and
- Environmental, Network and Governance Matters Management Approach Statements.

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.

Disclaimer

The information contained in this report is relevant and accurate to 31 December 2023. This report and the information contained in this report is for general information only and should not be taken, read or relied upon as anything other than general information.

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.

In 2023, we launched a new era of employee engagement, with an invigorated program of initiatives, including a new Employee Value Proposition, an enhanced employee induction process, a new Culture and Engagement Survey regime, improved and more frequent communications to and from the Executive Leadership Team, and the re-commencement of our Making a Difference Awards after a COVID-19-induced hiatus. This program of work will be ongoing and will grow, as we know that creating better engagement and improving organisational culture is something that takes time.

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). In 2023, the CEO began providing weekly video updates, and Town Hall forums were introduced as a new and more interactive way to engage with staff.

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 workday for every staff member to volunteer with a South Australian based charity.

1.2.3 Inclusion and diversity

Inclusion and diversity

Our ambition is to foster an inclusive workplace that better reflects the diversity of our community. Although inclusion and diversity 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 refreshed our Inclusion and Diversity Strategy and Action Plan and recruited a dedicated Inclusion and Diversity Manager to lead initiatives and embed inclusion and diversity principles across the organisation. Successful delivery of the Inclusion and Diversity Strategy will enable the SA Power Networks Group to achieve our vision and capitalise on the opportunities and benefits that a more inclusive and diverse 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 established 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. Notably, we are striving to achieve female participation of 25% by 2025 and 40% by 2035. Both targets represent a stretch for the organisation.

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 2023 was 12.5% – 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 is outlined in our Inclusion and Diversity 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 enterprise's inclusion and diversity progress.

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

The I&D 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 I&D 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, retention and workforce development

Talent attraction and recruitment

Our People Strategy is designed to enable the organisation to meet the challenges and capitalise on the opportunities of the rapid energy transition. As culture and workforce are key foundational enablers, we aim 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; and
- ensure our people are empowered and aligned with our purpose 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. Although we already have people working in artificial intelligence, electric vehicles, virtual reality, robotics, drones, and cyber security, we will need to actively grow this skill base.

We actively engage with schools and universities to promote a career in the energy sector and STEM fields, from internships and scholarships for existing students and graduate positions for those who have recently completed their studies to forging closer relationships with the universities themselves.

We seek to recruit the best people and an integral part of the selection process is that our recruitment, selection, and appointment is based on merit to meet the needs of the business whilst also having regard for the needs of the individual. We balance new external talent with a significant focus on internal promotions and career broadening and are committed to creating a fair and equitable recruitment experience for all internal and external applicants which is free from discrimination.

Permanent roles are advertised internally prior to external to facilitate access by all of our employees and we use gender-neutral language in our advertisements. We seek to provide a diverse range of candidates for presentation on shortlists and to have male and female interviewers as part of the recruitment process. Where there are female candidates for advertised vacancies (internal, external and secondments), it is mandatory that a female be on the selection panel formed by the Hiring Manager. However, where there are no female candidates for an advertised vacancy, it is leading practice that the selection panel has a female member to support gender-diverse assessment of candidates where practical.

Employee benefits and wellbeing

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.

We care about our people and offer incentives and benefits to support health and wellbeing, remuneration and rewards, flexibility, and career development. Employees are provided:

Health and wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employee Assistance Program (EAP) • Family and domestic violence leave • Discounted health insurances (Bupa and Medibank) • Vaccinations (Flu shots) • Gym membership discounts (ZAP Fitness)
Remuneration and rewards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reimbursements on power bills • Novated leasing options • 17.5% annual leave loading • Salary Sacrifice into Superannuation • Additional 1% on top of the legislated superannuation guarantee
Flexibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16 weeks parental for primary carer, 4 weeks for secondary carer • Flexitime • Purchase additional 4 weeks of annual leave • Hybrid work models are available for certain (non-field-based) employees
Career development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership development programs • Mentoring • Award-winning training • Secondment opportunities
Other benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paid volunteering leave • First Nations leave (3 days per year) • Superannuation contribution to primary carer or parental leave without pay • Social clubs in certain departments • Free parking and bike storage (and shower facilities)

The SA Power Networks Group is committed to providing a safe working environment for all employees, contractors, visitors, and the community. We recognise that all employees, including contractors, have the right to work in an environment free from discrimination, harassment, and bullying and all other types of unfair treatment.

We provide training and awareness to ensure that all employees are aware of the Fair Treatment Directive; treat all discrimination, bullying and harassment complaints in a sensitive, fair, timely and confidential manner; act against victimisation; and encourage the reporting of behaviour which meets the definition of discrimination, bullying and/or harassment.

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. Our leadership development programs have been designed with the business to deliver experiences that are rewarding for leaders at all levels. The Leadership Development Framework provides a structure which supports the development of the skills that are needed by the business now and in the future. The framework combines structured, immersive programs that may lead to a formal qualification, and flexible offerings which allow for targeted development in specific areas of need.

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.

We offer traineeships and apprenticeship opportunities across a variety of areas within our organisation. Our Apprenticeship Program is run by nationally accredited staff who are experts in their field. It includes both on and off-the-job training at our dedicated Training Centres and TAFE SA. Apprenticeships are available in various locations around South Australia, and include:

- Powerline
- Electrical
- Powerline Transmission
- Electrical with Telecommunications

Our Graduate Development 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, asset management, information technology, strategy, innovation and telecommunications departments. 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.

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

Cadetships are offered by SA Power Networks which will include an external qualification – such as project management or electrical engineering – over a three year program. Through our 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.

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 management including:

- 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 Safety, health and wellbeing

Worker Safety

SA Power Networks and Enerven workers undertake a range of high-risk activities daily, so the safety of our people (and community) is our top priority. 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. Our 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.

Design Safety

The SA Power Networks Group has adopted a Life Cycle Safety approach including Safety in Design to ensure that any construction, life of asset, maintenance, decommissioning, and disposal is undertaken with minimum risk. Processes include the Construction Risk Assessment, Hazard and Risk Tool, situational Hazard Identification and Risk Control activities that provide documented evidence of harm mitigation. Processes are driven by a streamed approach to hazard mitigation from Concept (internal/external) to disposal in consultation with project stakeholders. Where required, when hazards are identified with a potential for community impact there may be a community consultation phase.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

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. We continuously refresh and expand the Health and Wellbeing Framework, with guidance on managing psychosocial safety at work being a recent addition.

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.

Contractor safety

Our focus on and approach to safety goes beyond our employees, encompassing our contractors and the broader community. We utilise a dedicated Contractor Management System - Site Pass - which enables us to mandate and monitor appropriate safety and environmental compliance standards across our large contractor base. Every year, SA Power Networks and Enerven hold a Contractor Safety Forum to bring together all of our key contractors to hear about the latest developments in the safety space and share experiences about working in the electricity maintenance and construction industry.

1.3 Evaluation and improvement

The SA Power Networks Group employs a range of 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 in managing them appropriately, to an acceptable level, enhances the business' ability to make better decisions, deliver on objectives and improve performance.

To analyse employee wellbeing, the People and Culture team draws on insights and data from the newly implemented Culture and Engagement Survey regime, usage of the Employee Assistance Program and feedback from employee focus groups and forums. 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, customers, and community investment

2.1 Overview

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

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 and operational 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.

2.2 Management Approach

2.2.1 Strategy and engagement principles

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”. Our [Customer Charter](#), which outlines our commitments and guaranteed service levels, and our [Vulnerable Customer Strategy](#), outlines the key ways in which we

can and do help address vulnerability, and our top priorities with respect to implementing the strategy.

The overall objective of our Stakeholder Engagement Strategy is to improve how we engage with our stakeholders and ensure their needs are considered in our decision-making, with the underlying intent being to:

- Support sustainability of our business in the long-term;
- Help us meet changing customer and community expectations;
- Underpin an improved relationship with stakeholders and consumers; and
- Ensure we meet best-practice engagement and show leadership in the industry.

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 and better include Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities, Traditional Owner groups and align with our Reconciliation Action Plan. Our engagement principles are aligned to the core values of the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) spectrum:

Best practice	Follow regulatory and good practice guidelines and show leadership in the industry in stakeholder engagement
Inclusive	Be inclusive, inviting stakeholders’ views where appropriate on the design of our engagement to promote accessibility
Informing	Inform our stakeholders via open, clear, relevant and timely communication
Transparency	Be transparent, clearly outlining what stakeholders can expect from us and how their feedback will be taken into account
Listening	Listen to and seek to understand our stakeholders’ views and concerns
Responsive	Consider and respond to concerns, providing prompt and clear feedback
Consistent	A proactive, coordinated and consistent approach to engagement across the business
Targeted	Engage early and ensure engagement is prioritised and tailored to specific issues and projects
Measurable	Measure the success of engagement and apply learnings in designing and developing future engagement

2.2.2 Our stakeholders

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
Customers		
Residential	<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"> • Community Reference Group • Connections Working Group • Regional and Remote Customers Sub-Committee 	<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>
Business	<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"> • Solar Industry Reference Group • Arborist Reference Group • Tariff Working Group • DER Integration Working Group • LGA Working Group • Public Lighting Reference Group 	<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>
Governments		
Governments and Regulators	<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>
Partners and collaborators	<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>
Communities		
Local community	<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>
Non-government organisations (NGOs)	<p>Local and regional advocacy, charity, social, medical, community, sports, arts, and environmental organisations.</p>	<p>Collaboration, funding, supporting and volunteering by employees for a range of charities events and organisations. Promotion of activities.</p>

Stakeholder group	About the stakeholder	How we engage
Media	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.
Industry/Commercial		
Energy services	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.
Energy sector	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.
Investment community	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.
Employees	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.
Suppliers	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.

2.2.3 Key customer and stakeholder engagement methods

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 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

SA Power Networks is a full signatory to The Energy Charter, a national project focused on embedding a customer-centric culture and conduct in energy businesses. The Energy Charter engages energy companies, regulators, customers, and stakeholders to work together for positive change in the energy sector to improve outcomes for customers through their four foundational principles: putting customers first, improving energy affordability, supporting a reliable and resilient energy system, and working towards a

lower-emissions future. We actively participate in a number of the *#BetterTogether* initiatives under the Energy Charter.

2.2.4 Community investment and economic development

Empowering affordable, equitable and accessible energy services

As a monopoly business our revenue is independently determined and capped by the AER on a 5-yearly basis. This follows an extensive process of engagement with customers and stakeholders to understand the services they require and their willingness to pay for the level of service they might seek. The AER also approves our network tariff structures every five years and our annual network price changes.

Our distribution charges make up around 22% of customers' total electricity bills for a typical residential customer, and have not changed in real terms since 1999. 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 Community Reference Group 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:

- 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;
- supporting organisations that connect vulnerable people to a range of government and other services aimed at relieving financial stress;
- using the customer research and the customer voice and lived experience to inform the design and delivery of our energy services;
- actively developing and enabling new energy products, services, tariffs and markets, which can make energy more affordable;
- advocating for positive regulatory, rule and technology changes that will result in better customer outcomes;
- providing clear and accessible information to educate and build capacity in energy awareness, services, support/concessions, 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

Our activities positively contribute to the economy through employment, infrastructure projects, innovation, investment, education, philanthropy and procurement.

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. The electricity and energy services we deliver powers South Australian businesses, enables the economy to grow and our residents to thrive.

Infrastructure projects – such as the connection of new and upgraded embedded generation and asset relocation for industry and government that we design, construct and maintain – also provide employment for a range of contracting industries and specialists. The goods and services we procure pump money into the local and Australian economy, particularly benefitting small businesses and South Australian-based companies.

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.

As a major employer in South Australia, with around 2,600 people in over 40 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, build on our current understanding and engagement with Traditional Owners, and mature our approach to reconciliation in 2023 the SA Power Networks Group lodged our first (Reflect) Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

2.2.5 Community safety 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.

More information about how we manage the risk of bushfires 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. We are currently augmenting our KPIs to better reflect the services and experience customer want, and we have begun monitor our social value via a Social Value Scorecard.

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.