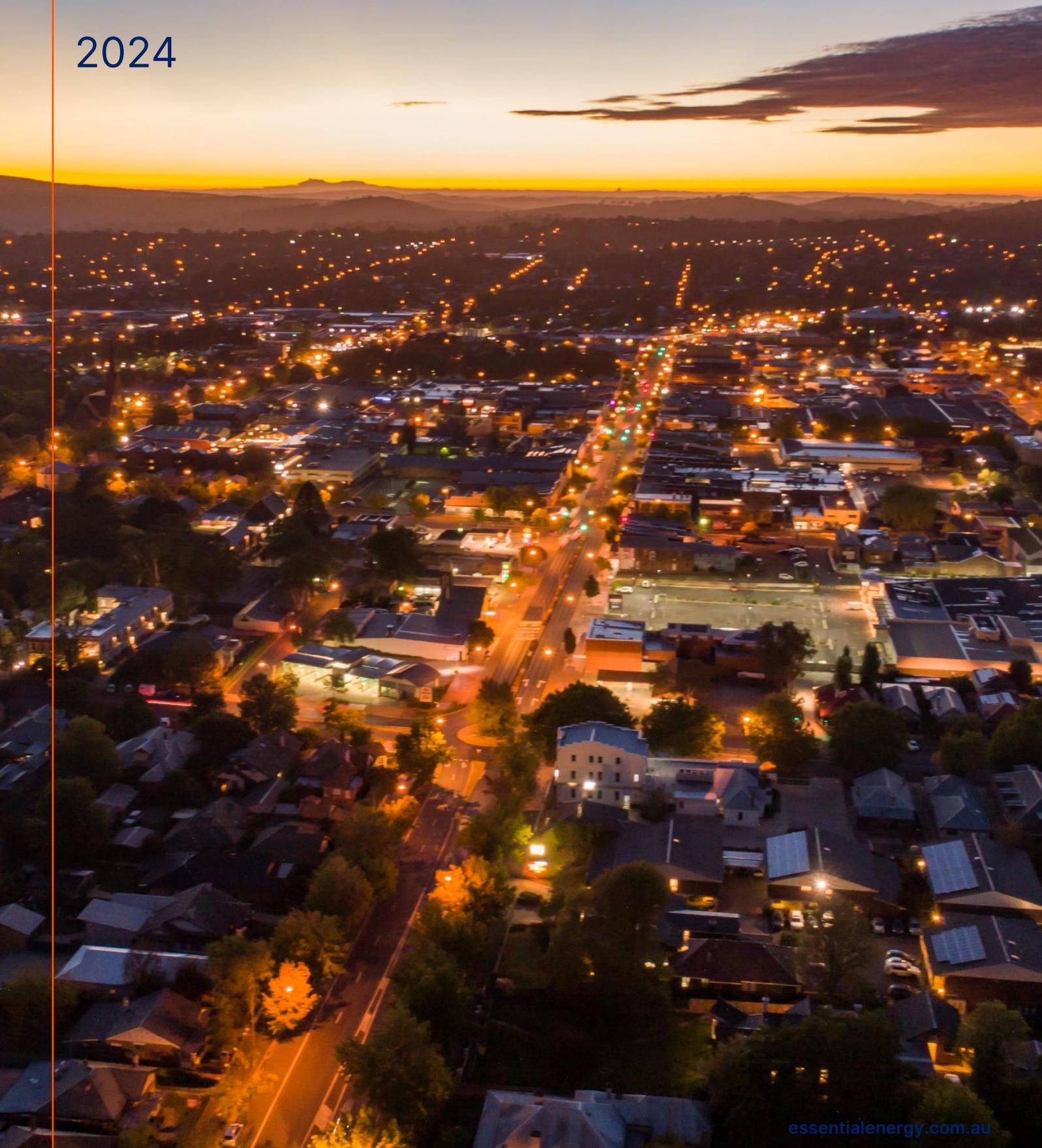
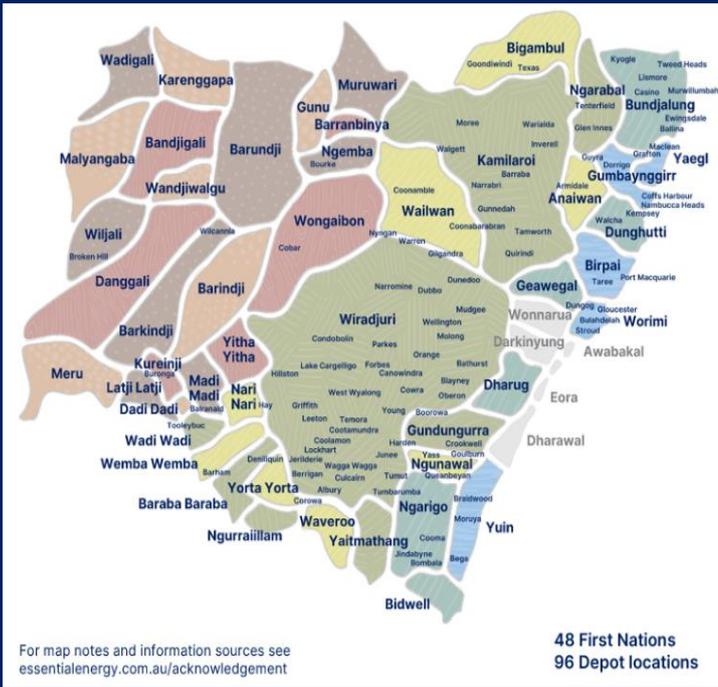


# Stakeholder Engagement Framework

2024





## Acknowledgement of Country

Essential Energy's operations are located on lands and waters that have belonged to Indigenous peoples for thousands of years. We respect their ongoing connection to lore and culture, which has been shared by generations, passed down through stories, dance and ceremonies.

Our engagement practices are rooted in this understanding, which continues to develop as part of our commitment to reconciliation with Indigenous peoples and communities. We pay our respects to Elders past and present, and further acknowledge the important role that Indigenous peoples, employees and communities continue to play within our business and the communities we serve.

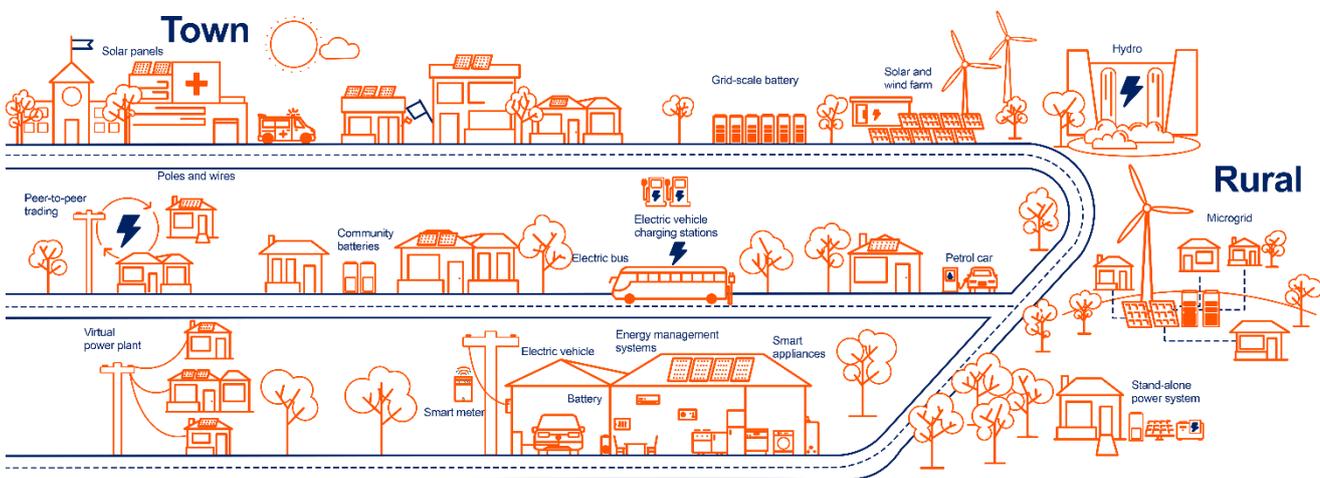
## Engagement shapes our future focus

We build and maintain the electricity network infrastructure across regional, rural, and remote NSW, and parts of southern Queensland.

Our industry is rapidly evolving, driven by emerging technologies and changing customer expectations. We are committed to building a shared energy future with our customers, empowering communities to share and use energy for a better tomorrow while ensuring our operations are environmentally, economically, and socially sustainable.

Engagement with our customers is key to understanding the impact of the decisions we make and acting responsibly in the communities we serve.

## Network of the Future





# Customer and stakeholder engagement is central to all our decisions.

## Purpose of Stakeholder Engagement Framework

Our Stakeholder Engagement Framework (SEF) guides ongoing and effective engagement across our business to inform and shape our priorities and support the delivery of our business activities. This ensures our products and services are relevant and valued by customers.

We are a member of the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2), supporting the seven Core Values for decision-focused, values-based public participation which appreciates diversity, equity and inclusion in engagement.

## IAP2 Core Values

Public participation:

- ▶ is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process
- ▶ includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision
- ▶ promotes sustainable decisions by recognising and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers
- ▶ seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision
- ▶ seeks input from participants in designing how they participate
- ▶ provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way
- ▶ communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.

## Our Stakeholder Engagement Commitments

### Curious:



We will engage early to build respectful, inclusive, and collaborative relationships with our stakeholders. We will design our engagement activities to meet the needs of all our stakeholders, actively seeking feedback to learn and improve.

### Accountable:



We will be transparent, designing our engagement with stakeholders, including setting clear deliverables for measuring and evaluating the quality of our engagement. Outcomes from engagement are visible to stakeholders and grounded in mutual respect and communication.

### Courageous:



We will be open-minded, acting with integrity and empathy. We will create a safe space for conversations, where the customer or community voice is valued and advocated. We commit to getting to the bottom of the issue, questioning assumptions, understanding the 'why'. Our business is continuously informed and shaped by our engagement.



## Planning and delivering engagement

Engagement is an ongoing conversation with stakeholders, to deliver a fit for purpose, yet adaptable engagement program, that meets the needs and expectations of our stakeholders and our business.

1. DECIDE ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY	2. DEFINE REQUIREMENTS	3. CREATE ENGAGEMENT PLAN	4. PREPARE DELIVERY	5. DELIVER	6. REVIEW
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Scope discovery</li> <li>▶ Purpose of engagement</li> <li>▶ Identify risks to engagement</li> <li>▶ Establish internal relationships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Stakeholder mapping</li> <li>▶ Community scan</li> <li>▶ Governance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Define project milestones</li> <li>▶ Plan engagement methods</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Road test engagement plan</li> <li>▶ Adjust and refine based on stakeholder feedback</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Monitor and refine</li> <li>▶ Record all engagements and commitments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Review and evaluate from all perspectives</li> <li>▶ Thank participants and share learnings</li> <li>▶ Grow stakeholder relationships</li> </ul>
Tool: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Engagement Toolkit</li> <li>▶ Engagement Plan Template</li> </ul>	Tool: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ 'Our Stakeholders' Map</li> <li>▶ Stakeholder Matrix</li> </ul>	Tool: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ IAP2 Spectrum</li> </ul>	Tool: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Engagement toolkit</li> </ul>	Tool: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Stakeholder Management System</li> </ul>	Tool: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ IAP2 Quality Assurance Standard</li> </ul>

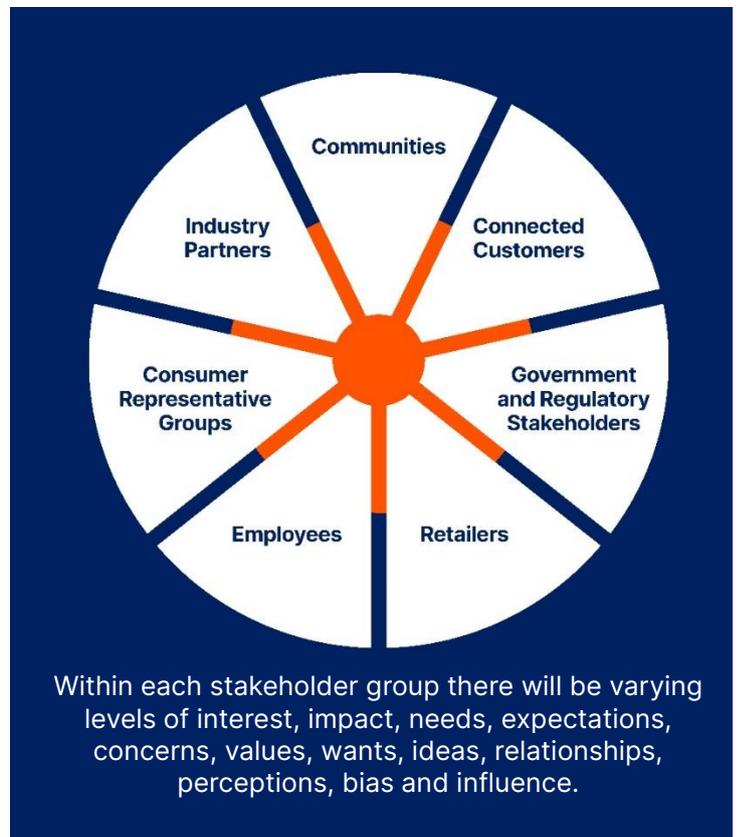
## Understanding our Customers, Stakeholders and Communities

Our relationships are evolving as we interact with customers and stakeholders to inform our business strategy and everyday operations. We take time to engage and be present in communities, to connect, to understand the challenges and the opportunities, and build relationships and trust.

Stakeholder identification and analysis is an integral part of our engagement planning process. For each engagement activity we seek to engage stakeholders who are impacted or interested in our business activity, process or outcome.

Our customer representative committees, such as our Customer Advocacy Group and Essential People's Panel, provide valuable insight and feedback. Our ongoing engagement holds us accountable to our commitments and is a platform for collaboration with customers and stakeholders on critical business investment decisions.

We respect the diversity of stakeholder views, encouraging dialogue to understand stakeholder perspectives and ensuring we are hearing from people with lived or living experience. We will regularly challenge our assumptions and reflect on biases in our engagement activities.

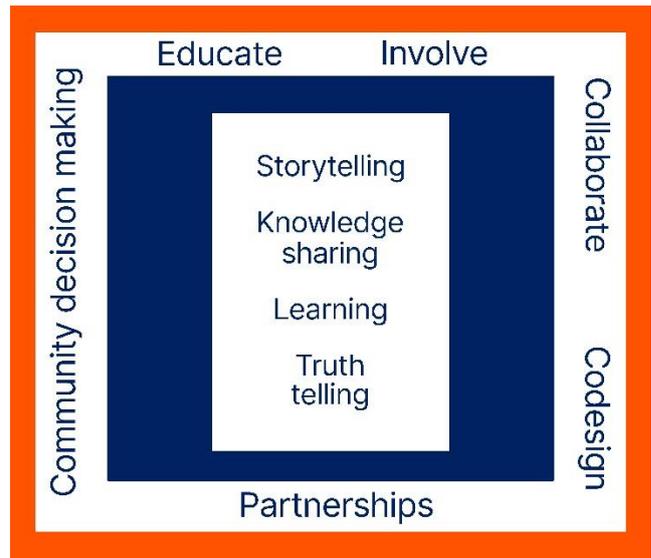


## Stakeholder Engagement Methods

There is a broad range of engagement methods, so understanding the purpose of engagement is key. In conversations with stakeholders we seek to identify the most appropriate ways of engaging.

During the Covid-19 pandemic we adapted to online participation methods, but we acknowledge that where possible face-to-face engagement is still very important.

We use a hybrid of engagement methods to provide choice and opportunities for everyone to participate in our engagement processes, without being inhibited by disability or vulnerability.



## First Nations Engagement

Essential Energy's depots, people and communities are located on the lands of 46 First Nations that hold diverse stories and cultures. Genuine engagement with Traditional Owners, and our relationship with Indigenous communities, is key to elevating First Nations voices and perspectives, particularly when our projects interact with Country.

### What are we trying to achieve?

The First Nations Engagement Team focus on supporting culturally appropriate engagement with First Nations stakeholders, including cultural authorities, Local Aboriginal Land Councils (LALCs) and Native Title Bodies. Engagement with these stakeholders is important, particularly as the business increases development of new projects and assets.

We acknowledge that through our engagement practices, deep listening will allow us to build meaningful, long-lasting relationships with First Nations communities and stakeholders. This will support community resilience and drive tangible social, economic and environmental outcomes for the business and communities we serve.

### Why are we doing it?

- ▶ Elevate First Nations voices to guide business decisions.
- ▶ Promote cultural awareness.
- ▶ Support economic opportunities for First Nations people.
- ▶ Empower community resilience, self-determination and self-sufficiency.

### How are we doing it?

Through listening, collaboration and genuine partnerships we will build long term relationships that make a positive difference to First Nations peoples and communities. We understand that cultural protocols are unique to each community and understand the importance of the need to learn about the history and cultural nuances that are unique to each First Nations community.





## Areas of focus for 2024 and beyond

We will build on our internal Stakeholder Engagement Resource Hub (Hub) to share templates, tools, reference documents and case studies. The Hub is also a place for employees to share ideas, talk about the different engagement methods and tools being considered, and connect with others working on stakeholder engagement activities.

We will continue to build capacity and capability in stakeholder engagement across our business. Providing coaching and training will empower local employees, decision makers and leaders to participate in engagement activities.

We will broaden our stakeholder engagement to actively seek to engage with customers at risk of being disadvantaged through the energy transition. We will develop relationships with youth and culturally and linguistically diverse stakeholders to ensure we are meeting their needs and learning from their insights.

We will be better at sharing our story and being transparent about all the issues – the good and the bad – so we can all learn from these experiences, be better to do business with, and build a shared energy future.



“To make good business decisions, we place listening and responding to our customers at the centre of our business using an ‘Outside In: Always On’ approach. This provides genuine opportunities for customers and stakeholders to engage as early in the process as possible. This goes for all areas of our business, and we need to do this authentically.”

*John Cleland Chief Executive Officer*



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