

Media release

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Customers benefit from world-first collaboration

Essential Energy has today welcomed a key milestone in its journey to be part of delivering a more affordable, reliable and sustainable energy system for all Australians. The Energy Charter's Independent Accountability Panel has released its evaluation report on annual disclosure statements made by the 18 signatory companies.

Essential Energy CEO, John Cleland, said the report, titled Building Trust Together, confirms the extraordinary value of the world-first initiative as signatories from across the energy supply chain work together to build consumer trust and deliver meaningful change. The report acknowledges the industry has embarked on a journey to improve outcomes for customers and has identified a range of opportunities for companies to pursue together.

"We welcome the Panel's findings and are pleased to have been recognised for our achievements towards the Energy Charter principles; in particular our customer segmentation model and the use of innovation that can help support affordability.

"Our focus now is to consider fully the 32 recommendations made by the Independent Accountability Panel, to understand where we can further improve our customers' outcomes and to work in a collaborative way with customers, industry colleagues and stakeholder groups to continue to progress implementation," Mr Cleland said.

The Independent Accountability Panel is led by Dr Wendy Craik AM, and is comprised of consumer, commercial and industry representatives. As an inaugural signatory to the Energy Charter, Essential Energy, submitted its first report at the end of September 2019 on its progress to deliver against the Charter's five principles. Since the reports were lodged, the Energy Charter's Independent Panel has met with signatory's CEOs; run stakeholder forums and accepted submissions to inform their analysis. All the material can be found at theenergycharterpanel.com.au/

FACT FILE:

- **Essential Energy builds, operates and maintains one of Australia's largest electricity distribution networks, servicing 855,000 customers across regional, rural and remote NSW.**
- **Our footprint covers 95 percent of NSW, traversing 737,000 square kilometres of landmass with 183,612 km of powerline, 163,417 of those in designated bushfire zones.**
- **The network services more than 855,000 customers with approximately 4.6 customers to each kilometre of powerline, which is almost one-tenth the customer density compared with our counterparts in NSW.**
- **Essential Energy's footprint also includes 1.38 million power poles, equating to 1.6 power poles per customer.**

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