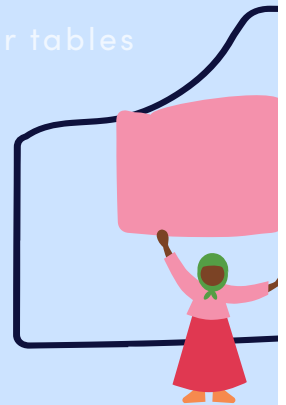
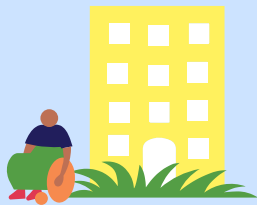




better seats at better tables



briefing

life support customers initiative
#bettertogether





Better
Together
Collective



The Energy
Charter

about this brief

This Better Together Collective brief contains a summary of key learnings and co-developed elements to guide and underpin the development of a back-up plan, guide, and national campaign messaging to help life support customers and carers feel prepared and know what to do when their life support equipment goes out due to power failure.

We'd like to thank all of our crew members for their valued efforts and contributions to this important [#BetterTogether](#) initiative.

how it comes together



context and approach



our brief



what's next and lessons learned

context and approach

context

The Energy Charter partnered with Sue Muller from the Better Together Collective to design and deliver the co-development components to fit the needs and stage of the initiative. Working alongside and co-facilitating with Bec Jolly (Energy Charter Director of Energy Equity) over a total of three crew sessions held across October and November 2024.

It's been a fantastic experience to partner with Energy Charter and collaborators to design and run this co-development process. From the start, they've recognized and embraced the need for and benefits of co-ways of working, ensuring that the first-hand experiences of life support customers and their carers are put at the heart of developing these crucial materials.

They've created an enabling environment, trusted the co-development process, and stayed curious and open to learning throughout. The result has been not only a strong foundational brief but also an invested and connected crew of many perspectives that will continue to guide the remaining stages of the initiative.

Sue Muller, Better Together Collective

the crew

The co-development crew (the crew) was made up of eight members who together represent a mix of our co-development voices (Fig.1).



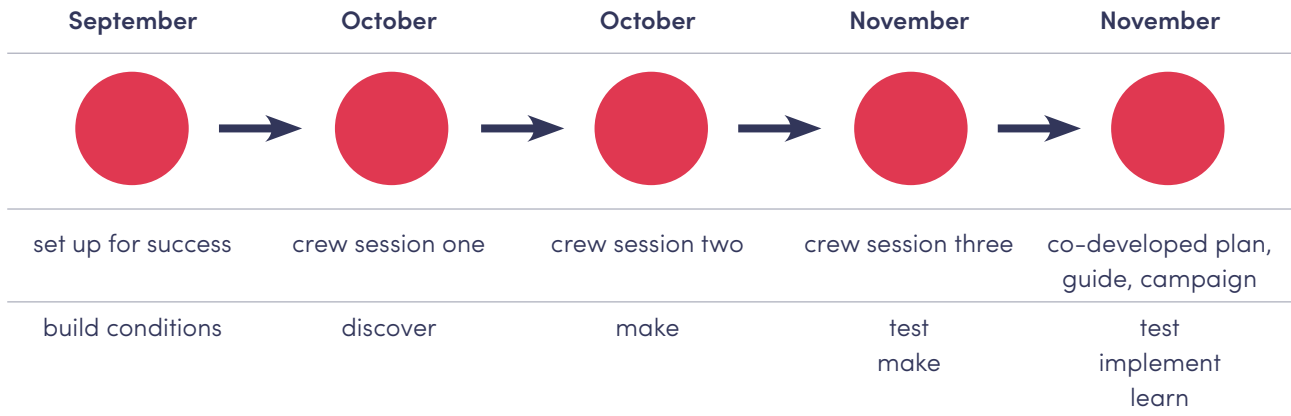
Better Together Collective Fig. 1. The voices of our co-development process and the principles that underpinned our work together.

our approach

The crew worked together in uncomplicated, relational ways to produce a brief to guide the development of effective and accessible messaging and resources to help life support customers and carers be and feel more prepared for power outages.

crew milestones

We co-developed the key elements of this final brief over three online sessions with broader consultation and additional feedback incorporated at key stages.



Better Together Collective. Fig.2. Life Support Customers Initiative Crew timeline and milestones

I've learned SO much from everyone here. Real honour. Led by the openness and drive to contribute.
Crew member

Amazing crew. honest. genuine. so much to say and great ideas.
Crew member

Grateful for such a dynamic respectful group.
Crew member

I appreciate being able to hear issues raised and feel confident the campaign material will be very beneficial to customers with medical needs, the broader community and networks.
Crew member

our brief

This Brief contains barriers and enablers to be considered and addressed, and three essential areas of importance to guide and underpin the materials.

1. preparedness

2. core guiding elements

3. what matters most (in a plan)

common barriers and enablers

The crew identified specific mindsets and elements that help or hinder people who need life support equipment at home from knowing, choosing or being able to make a back-up plan. These should be taken into consideration when developing the materials.

what can get in the way (barriers to shift)

assumptions and misinformation

- life support customers incorrectly assuming they'll be prioritised or given access to a generator in a power outage because they are registered
- lack of available and accessible information and education/literacy specifically on back up planning*
- presumption that the first responder will be able to help.

competing priorities and a sense of overwhelm

- avoiding or delaying having a plan due to this
- not wanting to burden others with helping
- lots of competing and conflicting messaging to cut through

low sense of urgency and awareness of the risks

- people may not have experienced an outage before, so it doesn't feel real or urgent to prepare and have a plan.

lack of accessibility to materials

- when language, format and availability isn't accessible and inclusive
- when what people want and need is (incorrectly) assumed
- when there are costs involved that are prohibitive
- when materials don't consider the specific needs of people in rural and regional areas

isolation

- some people are less connected in communities and more at risk of experiencing vulnerability and therefore more likely to miss out

* At the time of this report there is no National back-up plan template for life support customers

what helps (enablers to consider)

- offering materials that are person-centred, trauma-aware, accessible and inclusive
- uncomplicated messaging and memorable cues
- asking people what they need rather than assuming
- considering (and minimising) any cost of living implications
- when people understand the benefit and value of being prepared and having a back-up plan
- being able to personalise and localise - everyone's health and medical needs are different, and what is available to them in their communities also differs
- back-up plans that are specific to the nature of the extreme weather event

three areas of importance

The crew identified, focused, then built on three crucial areas of importance to ground the materials, which we've stepped out in more detail below.

1. preparedness

2. core guiding elements

3. what matters most (in a plan)

1. preparedness

Statistics show that 59% of life support customers rely on their medical equipment to sustain their lives at home, yet many are underprepared for power outages. More than half (54%) don't have a plan for when the power goes out, and only 7% have access to back-up power. At the time of this report there is no National back-up plan template for life support customers. This is a group of Australians with significant health and medical needs who are consistently being overlooked and it's time that we changed that.

Bec Jolly, Director Energy Equity, the Energy Charter

The crew grouped a range of identified opportunities into two action areas for this Brief:

- building pathways to preparedness
- raising awareness of potential helpers that already exist in communities who could help life support customers to prepare their back-up plans (**community helpers**)

Building pathways to preparedness

Our priority for this brief is a population tool to help shift the dial across the continuum below (Fig. 5) starting with awareness, moving firmly into the blue zone and ideally into the green.



Better Together Collective. Fig 5. Life Support Customers
- stages on pathways to preparedness

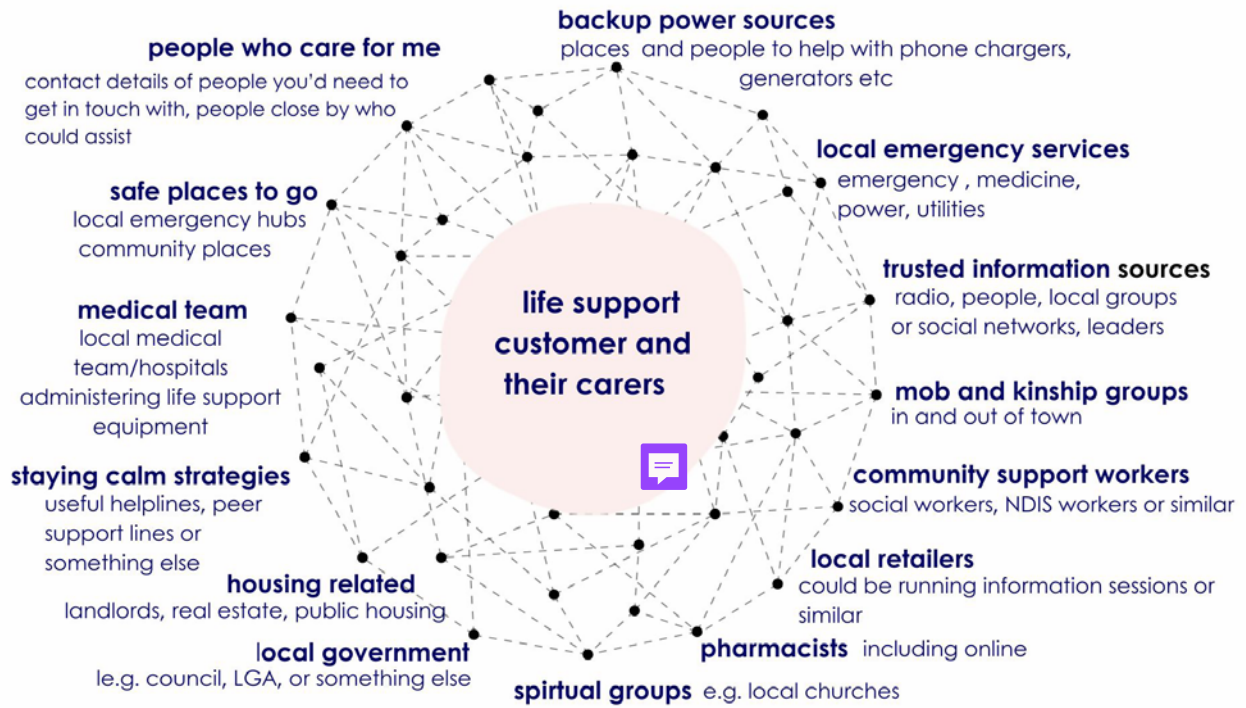
Rather than a fixed linear 'how to' resource, we recommend developing intuitive thinking prompts to guide people to preparedness across this continuum.

Using guiding prompts in this way will complement and strengthen a back-up plan. It can guide life support customers and carers in a person-centred way towards preparedness thinking and acting, regardless of their current situation and state of readiness.

preparedness in action: create an asset with prompting questions (in alignment with the guiding principles and action domains) that can serve as personalised and relevant stepping stones to guide life support customers from awareness to taking action, and population change over time.

knowing and finding community helpers

We've learned it's worthwhile to life support customers to think about potential helpers in their lives and communities who could help make a plan or assist when power is lost. While energy providers have important roles to play, it's often those who are closer by who are best placed to help. So we created a "Community Helper Constellation," highlighting potential people, organisations, and services that life support customers could reach out to before a power outage. (see Fig. 4).



Better Together Collective. Fig. 4. Life Support Customers potential community helpers constellation

We want people to be pointed in a trustworthy direction... How can we prepare the community helpers - to give accurate information, to know what to do?
Crew member

the constellation in action: use the fields in the constellation and considerations above to underpin a tool, template, or checklist that would enable a person to create a personalised community helper constellation that would be relevant and of value in their own circumstances or context.

2. core guiding elements

The nine principles that need to be consistently considered in the making of the plan, guide and national campaign messaging (the materials).

Materials must...

put people at the centre	leave no one behind	focus on what matters most
created and tested through a person-centred lens	accessible, inclusive with a range of choices and cost-free ways to access content	building awareness, preparedness thinking and acting
help people feel prepared	use memorable cues	consider transparency + trust
provide information that can help people be and feel prepared and protected	words and concepts that can be key reminders of the need to have a plan and to be prepared. (e.g. stop, drop, roll ; and slip, slop, slap)	be open, clear, and seek to connect. Be mindful of data and privacy concerns
find their community helpers	tell stories people relate to	keep building on what's strong
help those most at risk to know who in their communities can help them prepare a plan and be there when power is lost	storytelling that's relatable, strengths-based, active and human. Position making a plan as a strength and opportunity to be ready, rather than using fear. Focus on what people already have available to them	keep listening to what's already working; regularly review and update materials in line with the latest information and resources

Table 1 - Life Support Customers Summarised Core Guiding Principles

the core guiding principles in action: develop the materials to do so with care and consideration to each of the co-developed principles so that we produce consistently inclusive and accessible materials that can meet the needs of life support customers and carers.

3. what matters most

We've heard that Life Support Customers need a back-up plan which is informed by their individual medical situation. Importantly there is no current national template for Life Support Customers which accurately meets their health and medical needs. While most energy companies offer Life Support Customer register information, medically informed back-up plan templates that have been co-developed with relevant lived experience are not currently available.

How do we make it adaptable so it's relevant and so that people see that it's relevant to them?"
Crew member

The crew have identified **Six Domains** of action that should be addressed in order for life support customers to make a personalised plan that works for them.

those that care for me	equipment for my health	feel confident and prepared
my daily needs	reaching others and getting information I need	feeling confident and prepared

Better Together Collective. Fig 3. Life Support Customers Plan Six Action Domains

We call this, **my plan my way**.

The tables below step out each action domain, important fields to consider for each, and some example prompt questions/topics framed as “I’ll be prepared by knowing”.

those that care for me	thinking about <ul style="list-style-type: none">• my carers and support people• my community helpers• knowing that those I care for are ok	example prompt questions/topics I’ll be prepared by knowing Who can help me make a plan? Who are my community helpers? How will they/ Do they know I’ve lost power? How will they/ do they know what the plan is ? Have we had a practice run? Are my details up to date on the register? How will I contact my loved ones? (including family, kids, pets) and my community helpers (social connections and services that can support or assist)?
equipment for my health	thinking about <ul style="list-style-type: none">• what do I need to ensure my safety• what equipment I’ll need to be working (and for how long) to stay alive and functioning• how much (and what) medication I’ll need	example prompt questions/topics I’ll be prepared by knowing What is my generator plan? (buy or borrow) Do I know where to find it? Do I know how to use it? Do I have enough fuel to run it? Do my helpers know? Are my medical supplies packed and ready to go? How can I keep them clean, dry and at the right temperature?
my home energy essentials	thinking about <ul style="list-style-type: none">• what home energy essentials I’ll need to have ready at short notice	example prompt questions/topics I’ll be prepared by knowing Options for finding a light source Options for accessing backup power How I’ll get out of a property (Including electric doors, gates or garage) Having a vehicle or transport to go somewhere else What to take or have with me? e.g. key documents – ID, medical info, wallet, cash How I’ll handle home safety and security in the event of needing to leave
my daily needs	thinking about <ul style="list-style-type: none">• how I’ll be able to meet my basic living needs	example prompt questions/topics I’ll be prepared by knowing Do I have enough food and clean water? Where can I safely shelter? Do I have enough medicine (supply and temperature, dry and safe)? Who will check in on me if the usual lines of communication (eg phone) go down? How can I stay warm or cool? How will I maintain basic hygiene (myself, food, sanitary products, and medical)? Do I have enough pet food? Do I know what calms me down in stressful times? Do I have contact details for relevant health and mental health lines in case I need them?

reaching others and getting the information I need	<p>thinking about</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what will be my communications channels in and out? • who will check on me and how will I get the information I need to stay informed? 	<p>example prompt questions/topics</p> <p>I'll be prepared by knowing</p> <p>What will be my communications channels in and out? Who - will I most need to get in touch with? How will they know my power is out? What kind of information will I need to receive to stay informed and safe? (eg. outage updates) and what are the easiest, quickest ways to find it? Where is my phone? Is my phone charged? How will I recharge my phone? Do I have phone coverage? What will I do if my phone isn't working? Have I got paper copies of my contact numbers and people?</p>
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feeling confident and prepared	<p>thinking about</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what will help me feel assured that I've thought things through and prepared myself in advance 	<p>example prompt questions/topics</p> <p>I'll be prepared by knowing</p> <p>Do I (and my support people) know where my plan is and have I/we had a practice run? Are my details up to date on the register, including my nominated people? Do I feel confident with medical equipment - and are my helpers and support people confident too? Is there any extra training or learning we could do beforehand that would make us more confident? e.g. watch how to videos eg for generator Will I stay or go plan - do I have one? What if I'm not at home when it happens?</p>
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what matters most in action: use the domains for action to underpin the development of **my plan my way** template. Write content in action based person-first terms, and position making a plan as a strength, opportunity and of life sustaining importance

what's next and lessons learned

The final brief has been delivered to our creative partners who will use it to underpin and guide draft materials to be tested and refined with key people and partners including life support customers and carers, medical professionals and subject matter experts who work in the energy sector.

You can stay up to date with progress of the #BetterTogether Life Support Customers Initiative [here](#).

We'd like to thank

- The Energy Charter and the #BetterTogether Signatories and collaborators - leaders and true collaborators that walk their talk
- Energy **retailer** leads - leading their industry and showing commitment and respect for the communities they serve
- The **Customer and** Community Outcomes Group - for adding depth to this brief with your sense checking, insights and perspectives
- The Life Support Customers Lived Experience Panel members who will now guide the testing and finalising of the materials

A special thank you and note of recognition to the lived experience members of the co-development crew. We appreciate the strength and relentless commitment it takes to revisit often painful experiences in order to advocate for and influence change that leads to better outcomes. Thank you for all that you invested and contributed to each session to shape this final brief.

For any questions regarding this report, please contact Bec Jolly- Director Energy Equity
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