



The Energy
Charter

#BetterTogether Better Practice Social Licence Guideline:

2026-27
Priority Actions

theenergycharter.com.au

About The Energy Charter

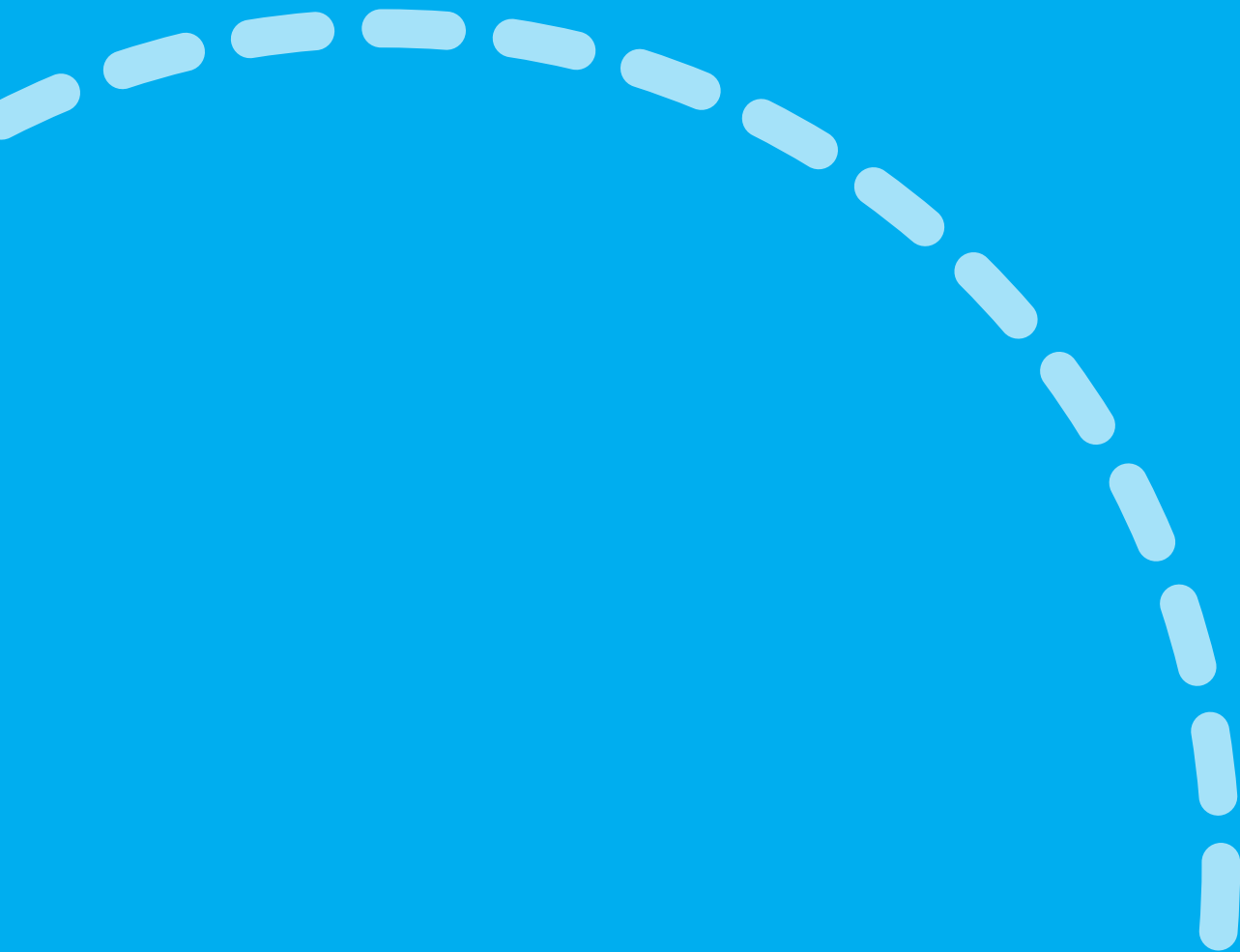
Expectations from customers + communities are understandably rising; however no individual, organisation or part of the energy supply chain can meet these challenges alone.

Our role is to help the energy sector put humans at the centre of the energy transition.

We are a one-of-a-kind CEO-led coalition united by a shared passion and purpose: delivering for customers and empowering communities in the energy transition.

Our vision is that together, we can create a better energy future for all Australians.

Our purpose: Together, delivering better outcomes by placing customers + communities at the heart of Australia's energy transition.



Co-design + commitment to better practice

The Energy Charter Better Practice Social Licence Guideline (Social Licence Guideline) exists to lift trust through co-designed and transparent commitments and independent review. Working with the Ag Energy Taskforce - representatives of peak Australian agriculture bodies - it sets clear co-designed expectations for how transmission and renewable businesses minimise impacts, improve co-existence with agriculture and deliver shared value, then prove progress publicly through a structured accountability cycle.



Social Licence Guideline + Review Timeline

The Social Licence Guideline is backed by a rolling independent accountability program designed to drive continuous improvement, grounded in evidence and co-design with the people most affected.

2022 | Independent research

The Social Licence Guideline was informed by independent lived experience research into landholder and agricultural stakeholder experiences, risks and priorities. This evidence base ensured the work was grounded in real-world impacts, not theory.

2023 | Co-design and commitment

The Social Licence Guideline was co-designed with agriculture, community (Community Outcomes Group) and industry voices ensuring it reflected practical on-the-ground realities and shared expectations for better practice. This collaborative design phase established the initial actions and focus areas for improving social licence with agricultural communities.

2023 | Social Licence Guideline launched

The Social Licence Guideline was launched, identifying 37 actions to strengthen engagement, respect and shared value with agricultural landholders. Six transmission businesses publicly committed to implementing the actions and being accountable for progress.

2023–2025 | Quarterly accountability

Participating transmission businesses provided quarterly progress updates to the **Ag Energy Taskforce**, creating ongoing visibility of progress, barriers and emerging risks.

2024 | First Independent Review

Nine Creeks Consulting independently reviewed implementation, drawing on community and transmission business input to identify progress and practical opportunities for improvement.

Late 2024 | Reviewed Priority Actions 2024-25 agreed

Building on the first Independent Review, the Community Outcomes Group and Industry Collaborators co-designed 20 Priority Actions for 2024–25, sharpening focus and accountability.

2026 | Second Independent Review

Next Generation Engagement + The Australian National University completed a second Independent Review, assessing progress against the 20 Priority Actions with input from the Ag Energy Taskforce.

2026 | Reviewed Priority Actions 2026-27 agreed

Building on the second Independent Review, the Ag Energy Taskforce, Community Outcomes Group and Industry Collaborators revised and co-designed 22 Priority Actions for 2026–27.

Reviewed Priority Actions for 2026-27

The **Second Independent Review** in 2026 highlighted:

‘Since the first Independent Review in 2024, performance against 19 of the 20 Priority Actions has improved markedly’.

It also provided recommendations for greater consideration on factors such as management of contractor behaviour, biosecurity training and farm infrastructure.

The Ag Energy Taskforce members agreed that the Second Independent Review provided a timely opportunity to test whether the existing 20 Priority Actions remained fit for purpose. The co-design process with the Ag Energy Taskforce and industry collaborators confirmed that the existing framework remains strongly relevant. Rather than replacing the original Priority Actions, the agreed approach retains the actions that continue to work, refines those where clearer expectations or stronger implementation are needed, and adds two Priority Actions addressing material gaps identified through the review.

The principal areas of uplift are:

- A new focus on **cumulative impacts and regional coordination (new Priority Action)**
- Stronger expectations for **contractor and workforce conduct (new Priority Action)**
- Greater emphasis on **implementation, governance and organisational accountability**
- Continued **sector-wide advocacy for affordable, reliable and resilient energy for host communities.**



Continued commitment

Five Energy Charter Signatories: AusNet, Marinus Link, Powerlink Queensland, TasNetworks and Transgrid have re-committed to a further 18-month period (July 2026 – December 2027) of implementing better practices followed by a third Independent Review. In consultation with our Ag Energy Taskforce, 22 Priority Actions have been agreed to be of focus in this third phase – set out in the table below.

Accountability

Demonstration of progress against each Priority Action recognises that implementation opportunities, timeframes and outcomes will vary depending on organisational role, project lifecycle stage and regional context, and that meaningful improvement against some Priority Actions may require sustained effort over multiple reporting periods. Therefore, different, overlapping areas of accountability apply:

Ag Energy Taskforce: The five Energy Charter Signatories will provide quarterly progress updates to the Ag Energy Taskforce during 2026-2027. These will be opportunities to discuss progress, flag any challenges and clarify expectations.

18-month consolidated report: In February 2028, the five Energy Charter Signatories will submit a consolidated report outlining the progress they have made to implement the 2026-27 Priority Actions and providing demonstratable case studies to the independent reviewer.

Third Independent Review: The third Independent Review will be undertaken in early 2028.



Agreed 2026-27 Priority Actions

Priority Action #	Original 2024-25 Priority Action	2026 Review Outcome	Agreed 2026-27 Priority Action	Co-design Notes
SECTION 1: LANDHOLDER RELATIONSHIPS AND SERVICES				
1.1 Community involvement in planning & operations (previously 'Community involvement in route planning')				
1	Consideration and communication around undergrounding	Revised	Community-informed design and route optimisation	Demonstrate how local knowledge informs undergrounding assessments, route selection, micro-siting and alignment, enhancing energy literacy and clearly communicating the rationale, trade-offs and design outcomes to affected landholders and communities.
2	Upgrades and maintenance activities in construction and operations	Revised	Transparency on upgrades, maintenance and operations	Provide clear, timely and transparent communications on upgrades, maintenance and operational activities, including the rationale, options considered, potential impacts, property-specific management requirements and relevant biosecurity controls.

Priority Action #	Original 2024-25 Priority Action	2026 Review Outcome	Agreed 2026-27 Priority Action	Co-design Notes
1.2 Engagement and communication				
3	Regional engagement teams	Revised	Governance and accountability for regional relationships	Show how engagement insights, community feedback and social licence considerations inform organisational decisions through clear accountability, regular Executive and Board oversight, and transparent internal and external reporting.
1.3 Infrastructure impacts (previously 'Tower placement and screening')				
4	Minimising visual impact of substations	Revised	Managing visual and broader infrastructure impacts	Demonstrate active collaboration with other infrastructure proponents, government and regional communities to assess and manage cumulative impacts arising from energy infrastructure, including visual, landscape, roads, construction, workforce, housing and community impacts, while maximising shared community benefits.
1.4 Access				
5	Easy and timely access to records of access on request	Unchanged	Easy and timely access to records of access on request	Retain the existing Priority Action: provide landholders with easy and timely access to records of access on request.
6	Management plan reviews	Unchanged	Management plan reviews	Retain the existing Priority Action, including the expectation that management plans remain live documents with clear review and update processes.

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1.5 Compensation				
7	Annualised compensation	Unchanged	Annualised compensation	Retain the existing Priority Action on annualised compensation for ongoing impacts to agricultural business operations.
1.6 Safety education				
8	Proactive, tailored education programs on safety	Unchanged	Proactive, tailored education programs on safety	Retain proactive, tailored safety education for affected landholders and communities.
SECTION 2: MANAGEMENT OF ON-FARM ACTIVITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE				
2.1 Biosecurity				
9	Strong, tailored biosecurity management plans	Revised	Biosecurity planning and implementation	Develop strong, property-specific and fit-for-purpose biosecurity management plans, with appropriate staff and contractor training, clear responsibilities and compliance before, during and after accessing land.
10	Ongoing management of biosecurity risks during project lifecycle	Unchanged	Ongoing management of biosecurity risks during project lifecycle	Retain ongoing management of biosecurity risks across the full project and asset lifecycle, complementing the strengthened implementation focus in Priority Action #9.

Priority Action #	Original 2024-25 Priority Action	2026 Review Outcome	Agreed 2026-27 Priority Action	Co-design Notes
2.2 Soil management (previously 'Use of materials and management practices')				
11	Engage with landholders on soil requirements	Unchanged	Engage with landholders on soil requirements	Retain engagement with landholders, including before entry, to understand property-specific soil requirements and protection needs.
12	Protect soil from compaction, erosion, or other damage	Unchanged	Protect soil from compaction, erosion, or other damage	Retain the requirement to protect soil from compaction, erosion and other damage associated with project activities.
2.3 Farm infrastructure				
13	Engagement with landholder regarding use of scrap materials and equipment	Unchanged	Engagement with landholder regarding use of scrap materials and equipment	Retain engagement with landholders regarding the appropriate use or availability of scrap materials and equipment where appropriate and consistent with safety, environmental, commercial and asset management requirements.
14	Provide labour and equipment in-kind	Unchanged	Provide labour and equipment in-kind	Retain and reinforce the existing Priority Action to discuss practical, opportunistic in-kind assistance with landholders where it is useful and appropriate.

Priority Action #	Original 2024-25 Priority Action	2026 Review Outcome	Agreed 2026-27 Priority Action	Co-design Notes
SECTION 3: COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS AND SERVICES				
3.1 Community benefits sharing				
15	Develop Community Benefit Sharing programs	Revised	Community-led benefit sharing	Programs should be informed and prioritised by local landholders and communities, aligned with agreed local and regional needs and aspirations, and designed to create enduring social, economic and community value. References to local landholders relate to their participation in identifying and prioritising local and regional community benefit opportunities and should not be interpreted as linking community benefit sharing directly to property-specific farm infrastructure arrangements.
16	Advocate for improved access to affordable, reliable energy for host communities	Revised	Affordable, reliable and resilient energy for host communities	Retain as a Priority Action with a focus on transmission, distribution, and developer businesses working more collaboratively across the energy supply chain to advocate for affordable, reliable and resilient energy for host communities and regions, recognising that meaningful progress requires collective action beyond any single proponent and that opportunities to contribute will vary across different parts of the energy supply chain.
17	Prioritise impact-aware Community Benefit Sharing	Unchanged	Prioritise impact-aware Community Benefit Sharing	Retain the existing Priority Action to prioritise Community Benefit Sharing with regard to the nature and scale of impacts experienced by host communities.

Priority Action #	Original 2024-25 Priority Action	2026 Review Outcome	Agreed 2026-27 Priority Action	Co-design Notes
3.2 Community infrastructure				
18	Consultation on community infrastructure needs	Revised	Community infrastructure needs and impacts	Engage local and regional communities to understand infrastructure needs and manage utilisation, capacity, damage and environmental impacts across construction, operations and decommissioning, including roads, traffic, biodiversity, restoration and replacement where damage occurs.
3.3 Community economic development				
19	Social and environmental criteria in procurement decision-making	Revised	Local economic participation in procurement	Apply social and environmental criteria and actively improve practical opportunities for suitable local businesses and workers to participate, including review of local suppliers and existing/future procurement settings that might unintentionally exclude sole traders and small businesses.
20	Agreements with local businesses for local goods and services	Unchanged	Agreements with local businesses for local goods and services	Retain the existing Priority Action to support agreements with local businesses for local goods and services, complementing the strengthened local participation focus in Priority Action #19.

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3.4 Cumulative impacts and conduct - to be included in the 2026-27 reporting period				
21	NEW	New	Cumulative impacts and regional coordination	Demonstrate active collaboration with other proponents, government, and local and regional communities to coordinate and manage cumulative impacts. This falls within each organisation's sphere of influence and recognises that broader regional outcomes depend on the actions of multiple collaborators to deliver (i) better understanding, assessment and management of cumulative impacts and community priorities, (ii) coordinated engagement where practical to reduce community burden and consultation fatigue, and (iii) maximised shared community benefits and long-term regional outcomes.
22	NEW	New	Contractor and workforce conduct	Ensure all staff and contractors are trained, accountable and compliant with clearly communicated, understood and agreed landholder protocols, including access, biosecurity and property management commitments, with consistent points of contact wherever practicable.

New PAs resulting from 2026 review.

