

National Customer Code

*Energy Brokers,
Consultants & Retailers*

2022-24

Customer Code

Reviewed June 2022



This Customer Code has been put together through the collaboration of energy brokers, consultants, retailers and customer representatives supported by the Energy Charter as a [#BetterTogether initiative](#)



**National
Customer Code**

**Energy Brokers,
Consultants & Retailers**

Proudly supported by the Energy Charter



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Objectives of this Customer Code

The objective of the National Customer Code for Energy Brokers, Consultants and Retailers (this Customer Code) is to give you, our large energy customers, confidence that we are working together in your best interests and delivering value. This Customer Code aims to raise standards of practice, strengthen trust and confidence and deliver better outcomes for you. The intention of this Customer Code is to address some of the concerns about third party intermediaries' selling practices raised in the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) Retail Electricity Pricing Inquiry Report 2018. As it is not a mandatory Code, this Customer Code is unable to incorporate all of the ACCC's recommendations.

When we refer to "you" we are referring to our Customers. When we refer to "we" we are referring to signatories of this Customer Code.

Part

A

Sets out our key commitments in more detail and defines key terms.

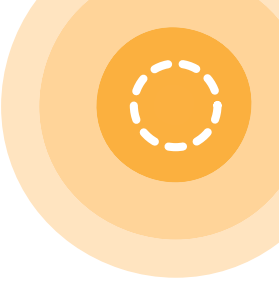
Part

B

Sets out how this Customer Code is signed up to, governed and administered.

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Part A: Our commitments

Our commitments to you

Our key commitments made under this Customer Code are to:

1	2	3	4
Customer centricity	Transparency	Fit for purpose	Accountability
Put you at the centre of our business and make decisions aligned with driving positive outcomes for you.	Provide clear, accurate and relevant information to help you make informed choices.	Offer responsible and accurate products and services that are driven by your needs and preferences.	Be responsive to your needs and take prompt, appropriate action if you make a complaint or enquiries to ensure continuous improvement.

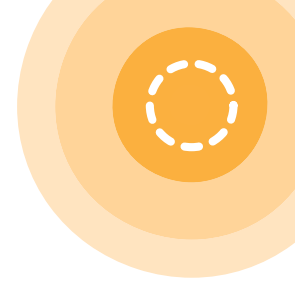
1. Customer centricity

In putting you at the centre of our business and making decisions aligned with driving positive customer outcomes, we should:

- 1.1 Exhibit a culture of 'customer at the centre' and collaboration for positive customer outcomes.
- 1.2 Enable you to get fair outcomes in energy products and services, regardless of your ability or desire to participate in the energy market.
- 1.3 Have robust practices to determine your current and future energy needs and preferences, by listening and understanding.

2. Transparency

- 2.1 We should:
 - a. Make sure all our communications including energy offers are clear, in plain terms, accessible and understandable.
 - b. Provide a clear understanding of the processes and timeframes involved (including Letters of Authority, Metering Request Forms, data requests and billing).
 - c. Provide insightful and useful information (such as communications material on how the energy market works) and accessible tools.
 - d. Streamline access to, and portability of, your energy data within specified timeframes.



- 2.2 Our contractual terms should be fair and accessible, and available on request.
- 2.3 Brokers and consultants should clearly communicate to you:
 - a. The presence of any applicable commercial arrangements between brokers, consultants and retailers
 - b. All retailers from whom we have sought offers for you and which retailers are participating in the energy offers
 - c. All energy offers in a simple, unbiased and comparable way
 - d. Our costs, commissions and fee structures, including ongoing fees and terms
 - e. The key terms of the broker, retailer, consultant and metering contracts, including the length of our service contract, the metering contract and the energy retail contract, key contestable and non-contestable charges and any termination fees or their methodology for calculation.
- 2.4 We respect your choice to receive offers through brokers or consultants and/or directly by retailers.

3. Fit for Purpose

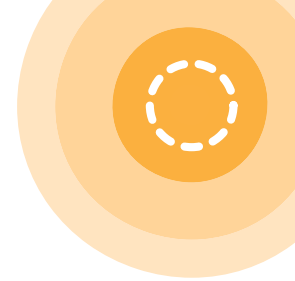
In offering you responsible and accurate products and services that are driven by your needs and preferences, we should:

- 3.1 Have robust practices to understand your needs and preferences, now and into the future.
- 3.2 Tell you about the energy products and services we offer and be open and transparent when we cannot help you.
- 3.3 Offer you energy products and services that best meet your needs and preferences, supported by effective tools and incentives for you to manage energy use and cost.
- 3.4 Ensure you can easily compare energy products and services and see how they meet your needs and preferences.
- 3.5 Ensure that any applicable rules under the Consumer Data Right are followed.
- 3.6 Explain the process for taking up energy products and services and help you to manage the contract throughout its lifetime.
- 3.7 Get you complete and accurate bills on time.
- 3.8 Prior to the end of your energy contract for products and services, give you reasonable notice of its end date and the steps that you can take.

4. Accountability

We encourage your feedback and will ensure that it is taken on board to ensure continuous improvement for the benefit of customers.

- 4.1 If we do not meet our commitments under this Customer Code, we will clearly communicate with you and tell you how we will address the issue/s in a timely manner.
- 4.2 We will have a clear, effective and accessible dispute resolution processes to resolve your complaints.
- 4.3 If we do not resolve the complaint, we will provide with information on the appropriate jurisdictional body and notify the Administrator of complaints related to this Customer Code.
- 4.4 We will stay up to date with material developments (including regulatory) in the energy market that may impact you.



Definitions

Brokers and Consultants are firms who offer a service to Customers to assist them to choose an electricity retailer and other energy products and services and assist them with signing the Customer up with a new Energy Retailer¹.

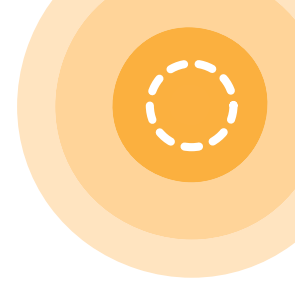
Customers are commercial and industrial customers. This Customer Code does not apply to residential or small business customers as defined under the National Energy Retail Law (NERL) unless specifically referred to².

Energy retailers are retailers of electricity and gas as defined in the NERL.

Suppliers are businesses such as metering service providers and energy distribution companies.

1. As defined in the ACCC Report footnote 611.

2. The NERL defines a small business customer as a customer that consumes less than 100 MWh per year. This threshold varies between jurisdictions by local derogation, with a limit of 40 MWh in Victoria, 150 MWh in Tasmania, and 160 MWh in South Australia.



Part B: Signatories, governance framework and administration

1. Signatories

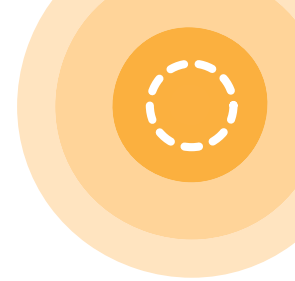
- 1.1 Signing up to this Customer Code is voluntary. Signatories can include Brokers, Consultants, Energy Retailers and/or Suppliers.
- 1.2 Signatories will provide a copy of this Customer Code to you and promote its benefits, including through prominent links to or a display of this Code on their online presence.
- 1.3 Signatories will comply with this Customer Code and the governance framework.
- 1.4 Signatories will co-operate with the Administrator and Customer Code Council in their exercise of the responsibilities under this Customer Code.

2. Governance Framework

- 2.1 This Customer Code is governed and administered by:
 - a. The Customer Code Council which will comprise representatives of key stakeholders including brokers, consultants, retailers, customer representative bodies and an independent Chair
 - b. The Administrator appointed by the Customer Code Council and responsible for day to day administration of this Customer Code.
- 2.2 The Customer Code Council has entered a Memorandum of Understanding expanding upon the role of the Customer Code Council and the Administrator. This may be revised from time to time, following consultation with stakeholders.
- 2.3 The Customer Code Council has appointed an Administrator for an initial period of 12 months, followed by 3 yearly appointment periods from then on, for an agreed fee.
- 2.4 The Customer Code Council and the Administrator must promote the benefits of this Customer Code to you, other industry participants and to relevant stakeholders.
- 2.5 The Customer Code Council and the Administrator will review this Customer Code after the initial period of 12 months of operation, followed by every 3 years from then on.

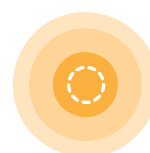
3. Administration

- 3.1 The Administrator is independent of the signatories and Customer Code Council and is responsible for the day-to-day administration and monitoring of this Code.



- 3.2 The Administrator is responsible for developing application and renewal processes for signatories:
 - a. Where an application is made, the Administrator will assess whether to admit the applicant as a signatory, taking into account whether their approach, processes and documents are sufficient to support the signatory meeting the standards of this Customer Code.
 - b. Where a signatory applies to renew their status as a signatory, the Administrator may take into account any complaints that have been made about the signatory, whether the signatory has co-operated with the Administrator in carrying out its responsibilities and any other relevant factors.
 - c. In either case, acceptance of a signatory will not be unreasonably withheld.
- 3.3 The Administrator will review the fees payable by signatories yearly, with a view to cost recovery only. As part of its annual budgeting process, the Administrator will propose a schedule of fees and contributions to the Customer Code Council for approval, at least 3 months prior to the intended date of effect.
- 3.4 The Administrator will publish on its website:
 - a. Copies and accessible information about this Customer Code.
 - b. Easily accessible list of signatories on the Customer Code website.
 - c. Information to assist signatories to meet the expectations of this Customer Code. These may include consumer information, checklists, templates, guides or training material.
 - d. Customer Code brand mark guidelines for signatories.
 - e. Details of fees on the Customer Code website. Fees may vary by classes of signatories. A change in fees is not effective until at least 3 months after publication of the new fee on the Customer Code website.
 - d. The Administrator will develop a brief annual report to Signatories and other stakeholders highlighting benefits and outcomes, systemic issues and recommendations where improvements could be made on the Customer Code.

theenergycharter.com.au/national-customer-code



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NATIONAL CUSTOMER CODE

Energy Brokers, Consultants and Retailers

WHAT'S THE CODE?

The aim of the National Customer Code for Energy Brokers, Consultants and Retailers is to give large customers confidence that we are working together in their best interests and delivering value to them. The intention of the Customer Code is to address some of the concerns about third party intermediaries' selling practices raised in the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) Retail Electricity Pricing Inquiry Report 2018.

WHAT'S THE CUSTOMER BENEFIT?

If you're a large customer of an energy broker or consultant, then the Code provides you with more confidence and peace of mind that your energy broker, consultant and retailer are:

- Putting you at the centre of what they do
- Acting in your best interests with honesty and integrity
- Committing to being knowledgeable, transparent and professional
- Providing you with fit-for-purpose advice based on accurate and complete information
- Meeting industry best practice standards
- Understanding the energy market and has the requisite knowledge to help you
- Growing trust and reputation across the industry
- Collaborating across the energy industry to work better together

WHY SHOULD I SIGN UP?

Signing up the Code is voluntary. The more signatories, the better for customers and growing trust and reputation in the industry. If you're an energy broker, consultant or retailer, the benefits of the Code may include:

- Differentiating yourself by publicly committing to "doing the right thing by your customers"
- Demonstrating practically that you are working in the best interests of your customers
- Increasing your accountability to customers and partners to do the right thing
- Ensuring best practice within your business

- Improving your reputation and standing
- Lifting the standards of the industry to meet customer and community expectations
- Being part of a cohort who are aligned in their values and having a voice to call out actions which go against the principles of the Code
- Networking with other signatories, partners and supporters
- Access to customers insights and consistent customer facing information
- An opportunity to shape the future of the market

HOW DOES IT WORK?

The Code is voluntary, and all energy brokers, consultants and retailers are welcome to sign up. In signing up to the Code, they are committing to:

1. **Customer centricity** - putting customers at the centre of their business and making decisions based on what is in the customers' best interests.
2. **Transparency** - providing clear, accurate and relevant information to help customers make informed choices.
3. **Fit for purpose** - ensuring that products and services are responsible, accurate and meet customer expectations.
4. **Accountability** - being responsive to customer needs and taking prompt, appropriate action if a customer makes a complaint to ensure continuous improvement.

An independent Administrator will run the day-to-day activities of the Code and the Code is overseen by a Code Council made up of representatives of energy brokers, consultants, retailers and customers.