

ENGAGMENT REPORT

NOVEMBER 2024



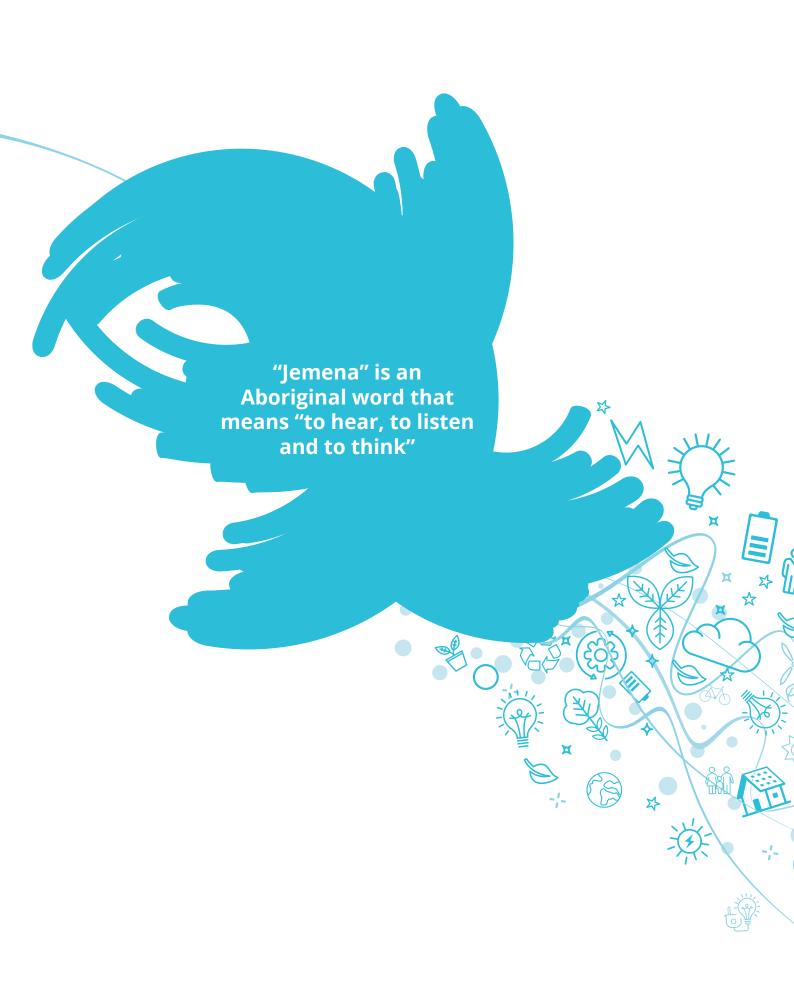


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"Continue to provide the tools to consumers to make informed decisions."

- Participant

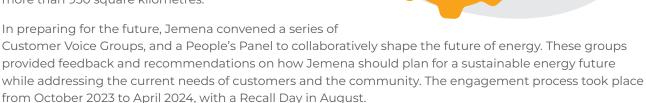


INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW

Jemena Electricity Network plays a vital role in Victoria's energy sector as one of the region's five key electricity distribution networks. It operates exclusively within the north-western area of Greater Melbourne, providing electricity to over 350,000 households and businesses.

Jemena's core responsibility is to ensure reliable power delivery when customers need it, which is facilitated by the construction and maintenance of infrastructure covering more than 950 square kilometres.



A further two extra Deep Dive sessions on the 19 and 25 November were delivered so that Jemena could target and further explore customer preferences on specific topics including customer education, network resilience, and an innovation fund.

KEY FINDINGS

Across the two deep dive sessions, Jemena presented a series of packages or options per topic for the customers to consider and the to put forward their preferred package with reasons as to why. We have outlined below the overall preference of the customers that participated in the sessions. For a detailed look at the results please see the deep dive results starting from page 7.

CUSTOMER EDUCATION

In response to the feedback and an understanding of customer needs, Jemena developed three distinct Customer Education packages to test with participants.

PACKAGE	OUTCOME
1 - Essential Education	Customers informed through resources available on Jemena channels to self-empower
2 - Education & Customer Empowerment	Customers empowered through education and broad awareness across all channels
3 - Education & Customer Empowerment PLUS	Customers empowered & communities engaged through hands-on education & broad awareness

Participants were asked to put forward their preferred package in groups. This required talking through the packages and weighing up the benefits for all customers. There were differing views, however overall, more groups preferred package two.

Based on feedback from the participants package 2 strikes a balance between accessibility and inclusivity, addressing the needs of diverse groups without overreaching like package three. By bridging the gap between basic information (Package One) and advanced resources (Package Three), it delivers relevant, actionable insights tailored to everyday electricity users, making it both impactful and a practical, cost-effective approach that facilitates efficient two-way communication.

There were some improvements noted, that focus on fostering collaboration and maximising long-term impact. Emphasis is placed on building lasting tools and infrastructure rather than rushing into implementation. Consolidating Package Two is seen as a foundation for eventual expansion into Package Three, with recommendations for Jemena to work closely with retailers to enhance customer support.

INNOVATION FUND

In response to the feedback and an understanding of customer needs, Jemena developed four distinct Innovation Fund packages to test with participants.

PACKAGE	OUTCOME
0 – Baseline Option	Jemena absorbs the baseline package over 5 years with minimal delivery.
1 - Innovation with Ingenuity	Jemena is able to support innovation & help to drive sustainability for customers and communities
2 - Innovation with Impact	Jemena is a genuine & active innovation partner to drive sustainability for customers and communities
3 - Innovation with Influence	Jemena is an innovation leader , partnering with others & help shape the national innovation agenda to drive sustainability for customers & communities

Participants were asked to put forward their preferred package in groups. This required talking through the packages and weighing up the benefits for all customers.

Based on feedback from the participants package 2 was chosen for its balance between innovation and affordability, addressing future needs while considering costs. The group emphasised the importance of collaboration, resourcing, and proactive investment in green energy, supported by government and third-party funding, to ensure benefits for future generations.

Jemena could enhance package two by incorporating battery disposal and recycling, carefully evaluating costs to ensure efficient investments as a newcomer to innovation. Partnerships should be prioritised for accountability, with clear milestones and revision points to allow flexibility over the five-year plan. The "use it or lose it" funding structure should be avoided to prevent inefficient investments, and the plan must be adaptable to address future uncertainties, particularly regarding electric vehicle (EV) adoption.

NETWORK RESILIENCE

In response to the feedback and an understanding of customer needs, Jemena developed three distinct Network Resilience packages to test with participants.

PACKAGE	OUTCOME
1 - Essential Resilience	Enhancing resilience preparation and response for all customers across the network
2 - Equitable Resilience	Enhancing network resilience, including along the Maribyrnong River, & creating equity of network resilience for customers, along with improvements to our resilience preparation and response for all customers
3 – Strengthening Resilience	Enhancing network resilience, including along the Maribyrnong River, West Footscray and Heidelberg, along with improvements to our resilience preparation and response for all customers

Participants were asked to put forward their preferred package in groups. This required talking through the packages and weighing up the benefits for all customers.

Based on feedback from the participants the preferred package two after discussions, viewing it as a balanced and pragmatic investment. The groups appreciated the package's targeted approach, believing Jemena has sufficient expertise to assess and manage network risks effectively. Participants saw this option as offering robust resilience outcomes at a reasonable cost, providing a middle-ground solution that prevents reactive responses while maintaining financial prudence. The strategic flexibility of potentially deferring some decommissioning work and the focused funding approach were key attractions, with the group valuing a measured response that addresses network vulnerabilities without overcommitting resources.

Participants recommended improved governance and strategic planning for network investments. They advocated for increased customer oversight in asset selection processes, emphasising the importance of external perspectives in decision-making. The group suggested integrating decommissioning work into the broader capital expenditure plan, rather than treating it as a separate network resilience initiative. They also highlighted the significance of carefully considering the timing and pace of infrastructure investments.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

The recall 'Deep Dive' sessions allowed customers to hear directly from Jemena about the progress of their draft plan. Participants were also invited to share reflections and preferences on Jemena's draft packages regarding customer education, network resilience, and the innovation fund.

This report provides a summary of the outputs, reflections, and preferences shared by customers during these sessions.



SESSION PURPOSE

The purpose of the two Deep Dive sessions were:

- Reconnect the People's Panel and Customer Voice Group with Jemena.
- Update participants on how feedback from the engagement process has influenced the Draft Plan.
- Understand how Jemena have addressed the priority of affordability
- Obtain insights on customer preferences for the customer education package, network resilience package and the Jemena Electricity Networks innovation fund outlined in the Initial Proposal.

ATTENDEES

A total of 35 customers from the Customer Voice Groups and the People's Panel attended the sessions - 35 in session one and 33 in session two. There was a good representation of customers from across all past engagement experiences. Additionally, ten Jemena representatives took part in the sessions. The list of Jemena representatives is provided below.

Attendees workshop

Shaun Reardon, Executive General Manager

Ana Dijanosic, General Manager Regulation

Sandra Centofanti, Group Customer Experience Manager

Matthew Serpell, Project Director

Lisa Mannix, Group Customer Experience Manager (Session one only)

Louise Baring, Customer Engagement Lead

Raquel Wyatt, Senior Comms Advisor

Deb Capicchiano, Project Manager

Isabell Powell (Session two only)

Chloe Finn, Regulatory Advisor (Session two only)

Observers

Robyn Robinson, CCP Member (JEN Price Reset Lead)

David Prins, CCP Member

Lynley Jorgensen, AER Director. (Session one only)

Gus Mandigora AER (Session two only)

WORKSHOP AGENDA SESSION ONE - 19 NOVEMBER

TIME	AGENDA ITEM	WHO?
5.30PM	Welcome, acknowledgement & purpose Acknowledgement of Country Session purpose, agenda Connecting with each other	MosaicLab
5.45PM	Context and purpose of the deep dives Shaun Reardon to provide context of deep dives	Shaun Reardon, Executive General Manager Jemena Networks
5.55PM	Customer feedback on the Draft Plan Matthew Serpell will share how Jemena is responding to the customer feedback from the recall day in August and the draft plan engagement. Building up knowledge on affordability and customer education and the packages available	Matthew Serpell, Electricity Regulation Manager
6.20PM	Customer Conversations Affordability was important to you as customers. We will check in on your initial thoughts about Jemena's response and think about the important things to keep in mind.	MosaicLab
6.50PM	BREAK (15 mins)	
7.05PM	Customer education – learning about the packages We will start to go into more information about the first deep dive on customer education. Jemena will share three different packages and talk through what it means for customers and the impact on affordability.	Sandra Centofanti, General Manager Customer & Commercial
7.25PM	Deep dives – customer education Based on what you've heard so far, let's unpack each of the packages. Each group will deep dive into one package and explore what it might mean for them as a customer from a service perspective and affordability. We will share what we have learnt, compare notes on the packages and in small groups put forward our preferences and reasons why.	MosaicLab
8.20PM	Final reflections Final reflections and next steps from Jemena. See you again online Monday 25 November from 5.15pm for a 5.30pm start.	Shaun Reardon & MosaicLab
8.30PM	CLOSE	

WORKSHOP AGENDA SESSION TWO - 25 NOVEMBER

TIME	AGENDA ITEM	WHO?
5.30PM	Welcome, acknowledgement & purpose Acknowledgement of Country Session purpose, agenda Connecting with each other	MosaicLab
5.45PM	Context and purpose of the deep dives Shaun Reardon to provide context of the deep dives.	Shaun Reardon, Executive General Manager Jemena Networks
5.50PM	Refresher - bill impacts & where there is discretionary spend Ana Dijanosic will refresh our minds about the impacts on the customer bill and where there is flexible spend available.	Matthew Serpell, Electricity Regulation Manager
6.00PM	Innovation Fund - packages & projects Jemena will reflect what they have heard from customers to date on innovation and what's included in the Draft Plan. We will hear more about the Innovation Fund and an example that is already in place elsewhere and find about the packages Jemena is considering and wanting customer feedback on.	Isabella Powell, Business Development Manager, Future Networks
6.20PM	Customer preference on Innovation Fund packages We will work with the packages to better understand what Jemena is putting forward and talk through what it might mean to choose one package over another. In small groups you will put forward a preferred package and reasons why.	MosaicLab
7.05PM	15 minute break	
7.20PM	Network resilience – packages to support Network Resilience Jemena will reflect what they have heard from customers to date on network resilience and provide context on their obligations. Building on the work from the Recall Day in August, Jemena will test different options (packages) highlighting what is included, overall \$ and bill impact.	Chloe Finn, Regulatory Advisor Jemena
7.40PM	Customer preference on Network resilience packages In our last session in the deep dive sessions, we will explore the packages put forward by Jemena and provide an opportunity for small groups to put forward their preference with reasoning to support their choice.	MosaicLab
8.20PM	Final words and next steps Host reflections and next steps	Shaun Reardon
8.30PM	CLOSE	

WORKSHOP ONE RESULTS

PRIORITY OF AFFORDABILITY

Matt Serpell, Electricity Regulation Manager at Jemena, outlined Jemena's approach to prioritising affordability in their draft plan.

In small groups, participants reflected on this presentation and captured their initial thoughts on Jemena's approach to affordability.

The specific questions posed, along with participants' direct responses, summary and key themes are outlined below.

Summary of Customer Reflections - What are your initial reflections

Customers expressed satisfaction with Jemena's responsiveness and cost-cutting efforts, though concerns remain about the scale of savings, equitable cost structures, and long-term sustainability. Transparency on savings strategies, management accountability, and the impact of software project cuts are areas of focus. Confidence in Jemena's expertise has improved, but customers seek clarity on how their feedback translates into meaningful, future-proof actions.

The key themes captured from the customers responses included:

1. Cost Reductions and Affordability

Appreciation for Jemena's efforts in reducing costs.

Questions raised about the impact of population density on grid efficiency and costs.

Mixed feelings about the significance of \$15 annual savings, but acknowledgment that any reduction is positive.

2. Customer Confidence and Feedback

Renewed confidence that Jemena is listening and respects customer feedback.

Positive reception to Jemena's efforts to keep costs steady over the years.

3. Transparency and Communication

Desire for clearer communication on how savings will be achieved and the rationale behind cost reductions.

Calls for Jemena to show past savings as a customer dividend.

4. Equitable Costs and Profit Projections

Concerns about equitable costs for different customer groups, particularly the unemployed.

Interest in understanding how cost reductions align with Jemena's profit goals.

5. Short-Term vs. Long-Term Focus

Scepticism about whether cost-cutting, including in software projects, is short-sighted and might have future consequences.

Discussions on balancing quick relief with sustainable, long-term strategies.

6. Management Accountability

Questions about management costs and pay rises in relation to inflation.

Suggestions for leadership to consider pay cuts to help reduce costs for customers.

7. Technology and Innovation

Optimism that new technology could help lower costs in the future.

Summary of Customer Reflections - What do we need to keep in mind on affordability

The discussion focuses on balancing affordability and reliability while maintaining efficiency and addressing climate change. Customers emphasise the need for equity in pricing across diverse profiles and request transparency on how savings translate into benefits for consumers. Long-term sustainability and efficient operations are preferred over short-term cost-cutting. There is a call for Jemena to act responsibly, particularly in light of its environmental and regulatory responsibilities, while continuing to foster trust through clear communication.

The key themes captured from the customers responses included:

1. Affordability and Reliability

Affordability is not solely about cost-cutting but also maintaining consistent and reliable service.

Balancing affordability with essential priorities like digitization, sustainability, and climate change mitigation.

2. Efficiency as a Path to Savings

Emphasis on improving efficiency as a means to achieve affordability.

Savings can result from smarter operations rather than direct cost-cutting.

3. Customer-Centric Equity

Differentiated impact of costs on customer types (e.g. homeowners vs. renters, large vs. small customers). Importance of equitable pricing and addressing diverse customer profiles.

4. Long-Term vs. Short-Term Decisions

Concerns about trade-offs between affordability and long-term grid reliability.

Highlighting the necessity of forward planning (e.g., investments in substations and climate resilience).

5. Profitability and Transparency

Acknowledgment of Jemena's right to make profits but emphasis on responsible spending.

Requests for clarity on how cost savings are passed on to consumers.

6. Environmental Responsibility

Climate change as a priority requiring action despite potential short-term cost increases.

Balancing environmental goals with affordability.

7. Consumer Trust

Jemena's approach to affordability and efficiency should be communicated to gain goodwill.

Providing context on challenges (e.g., insurance costs driven by climate change).

CUSTOMER EDUCATION

Sandra Centofanti, General Manager of Customer & Commercial at Jemena, shared customer insights and needs regarding customer education, summarised below.

Customers require accessible, tailored information in multiple languages to make informed decisions about energy usage, reduce costs, and invest in renewable resources. Such information empowers them, enhances energy literacy, and influences behaviour and investment choices that contribute to grid stability with minimal infrastructure upgrades. However, current barriers include a lack of easily available information that accommodates disabilities, low literacy rates, and non-English speakers

In response to customer feedback, Jemena developed three distinct **Customer Education** packages to test with participants.

PACKAGE	COST, OVER 5 YEARS	COST PER YEAR FOR EACH RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMER	OUTCOME
1 - Essential Education	\$5.4 million	\$1.15	Customers informed through resources available on Jemena channels to self-empower
2 - Education & Customer Empowerment	\$8.2 million	\$1.75	Customers empowered through education &broad awareness across all channels
3 - Education & Customer Empowerment PLUS	\$10.2 million	\$2.18	Customers empowered & communities engaged through hands-on education & broad awareness



CUSTOMER FEEDBACK:

In small groups, the participants spent time deep diving into the data, discussing one package per group and gathering their insights.

In new groups, the participants educated each other on the content of all the Customer education packages. They spent time discussing and capturing their top overall insights from the packages.

Summary of Package one Customer Reflections - Essential Education

The baseline package is recognised as a solid foundation, but customers engaged suggest broader industry collaboration for higher-tier solutions to enhance value. Concerns are raised about duplicated information, the cost burden on consumers, and whether Jemena's informational packages deliver unique or tangible benefits. The role of a consumer advocate is proposed to ensure ongoing accountability and influence over communication efforts. Customers seek more clarity on the return on investment and differentiation of Jemena's offerings from other available information sources.

PACKAGE ONE - ESSENTIAL EDUCATION

PARTICIPANT REFLECTIONS

Although this is a baseline package. I'd like to think this is a good starting point. And I'd like to see collaboration across all the other distributors for Package 2 and Package 3 type solutions. I'd like to see this as an industry education package and industry funded. i.e. shared across all distributors and distributors customers.

Is saving on those extra things defeating the purpose of investing in package

Is there a consumer advocate role already embedded within Jemena who can guide Jemena's BAU activities outside of these 5-year review cycles, and who can influence this information sharing activity rather than consumers having to pay for it?

Pretty much compiling information from other websites, government websites, may be duplicated information.

There is a return on investment for Jemena to provide the information across all three packages to end-customers so why is the cost of providing the information being passed to customers?

These packages are like us being informed in these Jemena sessions, has anyone received any cost benefit from this?

What is the point of difference between what information is being proposed to be provided by Jemena and what information is already being provided by retailers?

Summary of Package two Customer Reflections - Education & Customer Empowerment

Customers engaged value inclusivity and tools like digital calculators but question the necessity of additional services and the rationale for passing on associated costs. Package 2 is considered a reasonable option if resources are genuinely useful. Suggestions include greater collaboration with retailers to avoid duplicating efforts, with a focus on tracking ROI and ensuring customer education is a standard service, not an extra expense.

PACKAGE TWO - EDUCATION + CUSTOMER EMPOWERMENT

PARTICIPANT REFLECTIONS

Can reach customers in different languages.

Customers who are on life support, they may be able to benefit from this a lot.

Given SEC is being created, how does this have longevity?

Has digital calculator which will help to prevent surprises.

If we are going to pay for information, we would pay for portals and resources that we would use, so package two seems to be reasonable and represent middle ground.

Is this all even required to begin with? Maybe customers have not requested for this and therefore the costs shouldn't be passed on to them.

Jemena should work with Retailers and pass on more collective information by using existing resources.

Nice middle ground to begin with.

Retailers already provide all this information; we are secondary consumers of Jemena. Why do the distributor need to supply this?

ROI - how is that going to be tracked?

Shouldn't Jemena already be doing all this? Customer education and advocacy should already be a part and not something given to us as a service and consumers be made to pay extra.

Summary of Package three Customer Reflections - Education & Customer Empowerment PLUS

Customers engaged stress the need for Jemena to take on advocacy and education roles as part of its responsibilities, ensuring accessible and multicultural resources to support customer education. Concerns are raised about older customers' ability to access technological resources and the overall value of costly packages when savings are minimal. The return on investment for residential customers is questioned but seen as an opportunity to enhance trust and engagement. There is scepticism about whether the services offer new value beyond what is already freely available.

PACKAGE THREE - EDUCATION + CUSTOMER EMPOWERMENT PLUS



Dedicated customer advocacy/education role sounds like something that should already exist.

Given the importance we placed on education during our in-person sessions, think this is important to educate so customers can make informed decisions.

In-language video etc. should already be built in, especially in such a multicultural area, not highest level of customer investment.

Information can come from human it is more inclusive.

Is this too much to begin with?

Like that it covers different preferences for learning - age, language etc.

Most expensive package.

Not targeted to older customers who may wanting this information (lack of technology).

ROI for residential customers here is hard to track with a number, but should result in increased trust, empowerment, engagement, etc.

Surely all of this information is already out there if you're looking for it.

The cost savings are not huge so it.

The cost savings are not huge so it's not going to make too big a difference with package 3.

Why does the customer have to pay to have access to this information?

Why should older people be paying for something they may not have access to use.

CUSTOMER EDUCATION - PREFERRED PACKAGE

In new groups, participants discussed and as a group, selected their preferred 'Customer Education' package. They were then asked to provide their rationale for choosing the package, note any differing opinions within the group, and suggest ways to enhance the package. Participants had varied preferences, and the results of this process are shown below.

Summary of the overall preferred package – Education and Customer Empowerment

Participants were asked to put forward their preferred package in groups. This required talking through the packages and weighing up the benefits for all customers. There were differing views, however overall, more groups preferred package two.

Package two strikes a balance between accessibility and inclusivity, addressing the needs of diverse groups without overreaching like package three. By bridging the gap between basic information (package one) and advanced resources (package three), it delivers relevant, actionable insights tailored to everyday electricity users, making it both impactful and a practical, cost-effective approach that facilitates efficient two-way communication.

There were some improvements noted, that focus on fostering collaboration and maximising long-term impact. Emphasis is placed on building lasting tools and infrastructure rather than rushing into implementation. Consolidating package two is seen as a foundation for eventual expansion into package three, with recommendations for Jemena to work closely with retailers to enhance customer support.

All group reflections on the preferred package

CUSTOMER EDUCATION PACKAGES

PREFERRED PACKAGE	WHY DID YOU CHOOSE THIS PACKAGE?	WAS THERE ANY DIFFERENT THINKING IN THE GROUP?	ANY ADVICE TO JEMENA TO IMPROVE THE PACKAGE?
Package 1 - Essential Education	Most customer interactions are with the retailer not the distributer. Don't think many people will use the information provided. Would prefer zero spend over package 1.	One participant voted for package 3: Jemena (the distributer) is a very important part of our electricity bill. It provides support for people that need additional support.	A feedback loop that measures customer interaction with the information provided, so that the extra interaction provided isn't automatically rolled into future price reviews unless it meets a high level of cost-benefit.

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PREFERRED PACKAGE	WHY DID YOU CHOOSE THIS PACKAGE?	WAS THERE ANY DIFFERENT THINKING IN THE GROUP?	ANY ADVICE TO JEMENA TO IMPROVE THE PACKAGE?
Package 2 - Education & Customer Empowerment	Encompasses importance of access for people. Does more than package one (doesn't ignore groups) but package three feels like too much. This feels like a happy medium. The package three would only benefit a smaller group and didn't feel it could be justified. Package three could be something undertaken by all the distributors together to produce resources.	Quite a lot of consensus.	Package three should really be a point to unify the distributors (not taken on by Jemena solely). Consider getting these resources into schools to start educating future consumers.
	We prefer it is cost effective and has pushpull communication topology. We chose this because this was the middle path with easy communication flows.	We'd like to see collaboration across all distributors for Package 3 type outcomes.	We question how effective place based solutions are in the modern digital age. Does the reach justify the cost of such a solution? Prioritising reach and access is our preference.
	Gives purpose to the information provided in package 1 by bringing it to consumers. also consolidates and applies information in a way that is useful and relevant to consumers' day-to-day electricity users.	How the Customer Education and Advocacy Specialist should be prioritised.	As above and focusing on building long-lasting tools and infrastructure rather than rolling out as quickly as possible. Could be easy to expand into package 3 when package 2 has been consolidated. Jemena should collaborate with retailers to provide customer support.
Package 3 - Education & Customer Empowerment PLUS	Customer friendly.	Yep, there were few leaning towards package 1 as well	We want package 3 on package 1 price!!

...comtinued overleaf

PREFERRED PACKAGE	WHY DID YOU CHOOSE THIS PACKAGE?	WAS THERE ANY DIFFERENT THINKING IN THE GROUP?	ANY ADVICE TO JEMENA TO IMPROVE THE PACKAGE?
Package 3 - Education & Customer Empowerment PLUS	Without 1 & 2 Or No package at all. Info from retailer/gov websites duplication of information.	No package.	Duplication of info a lot of this is digital - older customers and English speaking wouldn't even be on digital channels, Otherwise they can use google translate/google lens Maybe package 3 by itself, because customers can deal with people in person if they struggle with digital channels Cost benefit analysis, are any of the packages worth the cost, can customers save from this compared to using energy compare VIC.
50% for package 3, 50% for no package	Two people adamant that package 3 is the best, two cannot understand the need to duplicate information already available.	Yes, polarised opinions on the packages, are they really useful or needed or not needed.	Do not have any packages (from two of the group).
No Package	Saw no extra value than what the retailers were already providing. We as an end consumer do not deal directly with Jemena We do not prefer any packages as end consumer contacts the retailer and not the distributor. This information is already available on other websites likes Sustainability Vic, Solar Vic etc. There's no extra benefit and we are adding to the clutter on the web.		This is more than what is required of a distributor.

WORKSHOP TWO OUTPUTS

INNOVATION FUND

Isabella Powell, Business Development Manager, Future Networks at Jemena, shared customer insights on innovation needs. Summarised below.

Customers see Jemena as seen playing a pivotal role in driving sustainability targets and fostering a sustainable energy future. It's crucial for customers to be empowered and incentivised to adopt consumer energy resources such as electric vehicles (EVs) and batteries. To facilitate this energy transition, customer believe Jemena must continue leading in renewable energy and innovation, ensuring that no customer is left behind.

In response to customer feedback, Jemena developed four distinct **Innovation Fund** packages to test with participants.

PACKAGE	COST, OVER 5 YEARS	COST PER YEAR FOR EACH RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMER	OUTCOME
0 – Baseline Option	n/a - absorbed by Jemena	\$0.00	Jemena absorbs the baseline package over 5 years with minimal delivery.
1 - Innovation with Ingenuity	\$3.9 million	\$0.67	Jemena is able to support innovation & help to drive sustainability for customers and communities
2 – Innovation with Impact	\$8.15 million	\$1.39	Jemena is a genuine & active innovation partner to drive sustainability for customers and communities
3 - Innovation with Influence	\$13.05 million	\$2.23	Jemena is an i nnovation leader, partnering with others & help shape the national innovation agenda to drive sustainability for customers & communities

CUSTOMER FEEDBACK:

In small groups, the participants discussed and captured their initial reflections to the innovation Fund Packages.

Summary of Package zero Customer Reflections - Baseline

Community batteries are seen as vital for supporting renters and low-income groups unable to afford renewables or EVs. Criticism targets Jemena for lagging in innovation, passing costs onto customers, and duplicating government initiatives. Calls are made for Jemena to prioritise research and development over EVs, address inequities in clean energy access that favour the wealthy and ensure financial fairness for those not using EVs or solar power.

PACKAGE ZERO - BASELINE

PARTICIPANT REFLECTIONS

Community batteries that mean renters or low-income people don't have money to purchase batteries, or other renewables can still receive the benefits.

Good for low-income earners who cannot afford to pay extra.

Jemena are, by their own admission, behind in the innovation/electrification space and it seems like they are passing the catch-up costs onto the end customers. Not to mention, the inclusions in each of the packages are doubling-up a lot of what is offered/being explored by council, state and federal governments.

Jemena as a good corporate citizen should be putting money away for its own R & D and innovation. The emphasis on EV's is wrong.

No opportunities for community or individuals to participate in future CER (e.g. only rich people can benefit off EVs in the future, even if the EVs become cheaper, they would need to pay for charging and battery cost upfront).

People with no money aren't getting any benefits from innovation really because they can't afford things like EVs any way so it's like them paying for rich guys to drive around EVs while they struggle to afford bills.

Seems fairer for people who don't use solar or EV and have less ability to pay.

Summary of Package one Customer Reflections – Innovation with Ingenuity

Support exists for community batteries and integrating EVs and batteries into the grid, particularly to benefit low-income groups. The group favours package one but expresses concerns about public funding for large-scale projects and potential cost increases with minimal returns.

PACKAGE ONE - INNOVATION WITH INGENUITY

PARTICIPANT REFLECTIONS

3 of 3 for package 1.

A good foot in the door, but not too deep.

Aid network stability and resilience cost

Allow EVs as an option to those renting and on those on lower incomes.

Community battery sitting across all three packages is a great thing.

Integrating batteries and EVs to our grid.

It focuses a lot on research.

Most of our group is for package 1.

Support for integrating batteries into the grid.

This feels like a crowdfunding for university research.

Usage of large-scale batteries and if that should be up for public funding.

We don't want to have increased costs for what may be negligible return for our group.

Summary of Package two Customer Reflections – Innovation with Impact

Support focuses on advancing renewable energy, improving battery reliability, prioritising research and development, ensuring fairness in cost distribution, and leveraging external funding for innovation and battery lifespan improvements.

PACKAGE TWO - INNOVATION WITH IMPACT

PARTICIPANT REFLECTIONS

Agreed - better option.

Avoids stagnant participation in the renewable energy future. Packages 2 or 3 sit right from a moral standpoint.

Batteries to help with reliability and community load during peak and offpeak hours.

Lot more focus on R&D.

Nor equitable or fair for residential customers to pay for business upgrades.

Putting our foot in the door for innovation and opportunities from 3rd party investors and/or government grants.

Research to increase lifespan of batteries.

Summary of Package three Customer Reflections – Innovation with Influence

Transitioning from fossil fuels to renewable energy reduces dependency on foreign authoritarian regimes, stabilizes costs, and fosters future economic and technological growth. While innovation and CER leadership are critical, concerns include affordability, battery safety and disposal, and the fairness of cost distribution, with a preference for wealthier beneficiaries bearing more of the burden. Package 3 is opposed due to high costs, uncertain returns, and excessive focus on EVs and solar users over affordability. Suggestions include leveraging government co-funding, enhancing mobile energy storage, and prioritizing equitable innovation that benefits all socioeconomic groups.

PACKAGE THREE - INNOVATION WITH INFLUENCE

PARTICIPANT REFLECTIONS

Also, in theory it will reduce costs over time when we need fossil fuel technology less and less, we would also be much more energy protected because we wouldn't rely on foreign countries for fuel and those foreign countries are often authoritarian so we would be more energy independent going all in on innovating the network to rely less on fossil fuels. We wouldn't have all the price spikes, and we would be innovating our technology for the future, the benefits of which also go to us in terms of our expertise and the future economy.

Being a market leader for CER and innovation.

co-funding is mostly from government (i.e. taxpayers) so we are paying.

Could provide a good opportunity to put Australia at the forefront of energy-related innovation and collaboration.

I don't like batteries because they can be a fire risk and how to we dispose of them at the end of their life. I won't support package 3

In general, it should be good for our feature and our kids feature

Our group is not for package 3, too much money for an uncertain return.

Too much focus on EV and solar owners, too little focus on affordability.

Innovation is critical and securing available \$ from funding organisation seems to rely on allocating internal funds BUT must collaborate NOT compete with other organisations.

Using mobile energy storage would create wide acceptance in industrial and commercial areas of higher consumption - greater impact.

For me it's about the climate because I don't think people are aware of how dire the situation is and unfortunately, we haven't taken action until 20 years too late and we're talking about a like maybe a \$1.50 per customer to protect all of humanity. But for something like innovation particularly it probably makes a lot more sense for the burden of these costs to be weighted to the top end who gain the tangible benefits of this policy because they are the ones who can afford EVs and stuff and the poor are just paying this extra money for things they can't even use, the only benefits to them are the climate benefits. So, I think it makes more sense to weight this to the higher end to those who can most afford it.

Very new and innovative charging infrastructure such as solar roads.

We support innovations and need to be ahead, but at the same time we want it to fair.

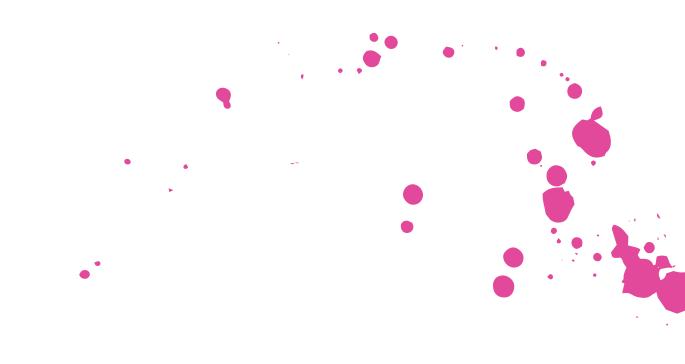
Will it our bills that we are paying that much for innovation.

Summary of the overall preferred package – Innovation with impact

Participants were asked to put forward their preferred package in groups. This required talking through the packages and weighing up the benefits for all customers.

Package two was chosen for its balance between innovation and affordability, addressing future needs while considering costs. The group emphasised the importance of collaboration, resourcing, and proactive investment in green energy, supported by government and third-party funding, to ensure benefits for future generations.

Jemena could enhance package two by incorporating battery disposal and recycling, carefully evaluating costs to ensure efficient investments as a newcomer to innovation. Partnerships should be prioritised for accountability, with clear milestones and revision points to allow flexibility over the five-year plan. The "use it or lose it" funding structure should be avoided to prevent inefficient investments, and the plan must be adaptable to address future uncertainties, particularly regarding electric vehicle (EV) adoption.



All group reflections on the preferred package

PACKAGE	WHY DID YOU CHOOSE THIS PACKAGE?	WAS THERE ANY DIFFERENT THINKING IN THE GROUP?	ANY ADVICE TO JEMENA TO IMPROVE THIS PACKAGE?
Package 2 Innovation with Impact	It offers more innovation than package 1. Covers research and innovation.	Yes, some of the group feel that option 3 would be best however we are not sure the increase in spend is fair to everyone. Feel recycling batteries are very important.	We'd like to see package 2 incorporate battery disposal / recycling.
Package 2 Innovation with Impact	Innovation is needed for the future and it needs to be invested. On the other hand, affordability and costing is other issues. Therefore, our group members decided to go with Package 2 which is a great balance between these two, provided the costing of the packages were a bit point of concern for us.	No.	As a newcomer in innovation and high investment in it, we suggest Jemena to consider their initiatives and decisions more consciously and have a sharp look at the cost.
Package 2 Innovation with Impact	Partnering. No one can do it all on their own. Here, the experience is shared. Helps with resourcing. Helps with funding. Strongly felt that we need to be active about the future and not just passive. The group didn't feel okay just being passive (even if that meant a cheaper bill).	Initially there was difference, but then we started agreeing on what we liked and what we didn't like - and why - then it was easier to come to a consensus.	Partnering was the option because it offers some accountability. But as this is a five-year plan, where are the milestones and revision points? We feel uncomfortable deciding on this plan without that. We also don't know what will happen in the next 5 years, so it feels hard to put all our eggs in one basket, especially regarding EVs. There needs to be space for change.
Package 2 Innovation with Impact	2/3 people in our group chose this option because it was a balanced option which offered benefits for future generations.	The other 1 person was of the opinion that this proposed spending is a double-up of what's already spent by local council, state and federal government.	
Package 2 Innovation with Impact	We really need to contribute towards innovation and obtain support from gov and 3rd party investments to show that we are invested into a green energy future.	Some thoughts about going for package 3 but decided to keep with 2 due to cost.	AusNet structure quite explicit and defined, we did not like the guardrails of use funds or lose them as they might result in inefficient and/or bad value investments.
Package 3 Innovation with Influence	We had some interest in a couple of items in package 2 and one item in package 3 but there isn't enough detail to justify voting for them.	Yes. Some in package 2.	

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PACKAGE	WHY DID YOU CHOOSE THIS PACKAGE?	WAS THERE ANY DIFFERENT THINKING IN THE GROUP?	ANY ADVICE TO JEMENA TO IMPROVE THIS PACKAGE?
Package 3 Innovation with Influence	Overall is our favourite, research about batteries, increasing their lives, their affordability and recycling is important and involving battery manufacturers in the research is crucial, ensuring the equity is fulfilled, and the needs of the less advantaged population are addressed.	Yes, everything goes up and I wonder how they can predict the cost each year of these packages for customers? supporting package one.	Hopping to make the future more affordable to the next generation. and show the results sooner than later.
Package 3 Innovation with Influence	Chose this package as there was opportunity for future research and collaboration, with possibility to increase equitable benefits.	Yes, relating to equity in benefits from the outcomes of each package vs financial input per customer.	More of a focus on improving equitable outcomes for those with less control over their electricity connection/usage.
Package 3 Innovation with Influence	Ultimately these packages come to how much we want to pay on a scale of innovation, we turn package 3 because climate change is a really big deal we're talking about fundamentally tipping the balance of Earth's natural systems so that they fall out of line with a climate conducive to human activities and we are very late on innovating. Even if that's not the case innovating the grid to be less reliant on fossil fuels means more energy sovereignty and also the life cycle of batteries disposal which will be a massive thing in the future needs to be resolved and be an industry in itself with huge growth potential in the future. Having more energy sovereignty means not relying on other countries for fossil fuels which can lead to price spikes and fund authoritarian regimes like Russia. This policy also builds for the future of the global economy and world in the high-tech industry where Australia can be competitive with resources like as Lithium that we also produce here sparking local manufacturing jobs. Over time costs should be much less than fossil fuels if we are producing our own energy renewably and using that energy to fuel our society. And honestly all these benefits are only costing customers maybe like a \$1.50 extra per customer with massive benefits and is much rather reduce costs on things we talked last week like customer service than the physical infrastructure of the grid and its future potential if so much can be achieved with a few \$ per customer hopefully skewed towards the higher end though.	This package is skewed towards businesses or higher income customers, and we'd like those customers to pay more into innovation than poorer customers who don't receive the direct tangible benefits but receive the long term benefits and the climate change benefits. I.e. they don't directly benefit from this policy right away like higher end customers. It seems unfair for these poorer customers to pay for many of these things. Part of a more equitable payment model. Keep in mind usage doesn't always equal how much people can afford as the unemployed have less money but stay at home longer using more power and paying more but can't afford to.	
Package 3 2 people; Package 0 - 1 person	2 people agree, to keep it resilient, end of battery life problems addressed.	One person supported package 0.	It did not speak enough non-homeowners.

NETWORK RESILIENCE PACKAGES

Chloe Finn, Regulatory Advisor at Jemena, provided an updated on the developments since the last customer discussions on Network Resilience. The three key areas Jemena revisited since the last recall session where:

- Refined cost estimates
- Bundling projects to reduce costs
- Examining internal processes to absorb costs where possible.

After reviewing the above areas, Jemena developed three distinct Network Resilience packages to test with participants.

PACKAGE	COST, OVER 5 YEARS	COST PER YEAR FOR EACH RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMER	OUTCOME
1 - Essential Resilience	\$6.9 million	\$1.34	Enhancing resilience preparation and response for all customers across the network
2 - Equitable Resilience	\$23.5 million	\$1.68	Enhancing network resilience, including along the Maribyrnong River, & creating equity of network resilience for customers, along with improvements to our resilience preparation and response for all customers
3 – Strengthening Resilience	\$40 million	\$2.02	Enhancing network resilience, including along the Maribyrnong River, West Footscray and Heidelberg, along with improvements to our resilience preparation and response for all customers

CUSTOMER FEEDBACK:

In small groups, participants spent time exploring the packages, and were asked to capture their initial reflections.

Summary of Package one Customer Reflections – Essential Resilience

The minimal investment package is predominantly viewed as a cost-saving approach during high inflation, with stakeholders recognising it as the "bare minimum" reactive strategy. Participants suggest personal and community preparedness can compensate for limited infrastructure investment, believing most people can manage a few hours without electricity. While some appreciate the budget-friendly nature, there's a shared understanding that avoiding proactive prevention may ultimately lead to higher reactive costs during future disaster events, making this approach potentially short-sighted and financially risky in the long term.

PACKAGE ONE - ESSENTIAL RESILIENCE

PARTICIPANT REFLECTIONS

Could save extra money for those doing it tough.

Doesn't have any preventative measures - just maintaining - some preventative measures need to be taken.

Good baseline, these are all useful things to spend money on.

I was sort of for I because I think this is a less important area for me compared to other areas and there's potential that people can be personally resilient such as in Scandinavian countries where government is sending pamphlets to every one for ways to prepare for war and nuclear strikes as part of total defence to be ready for a major even such as a war or just a major natural disaster where u may need resources of your own for a few weeks so feel like there is something to learn from this and I think as long as government provides resources and there's insurances and there safety zones and all the things we have now I think this is the area to save costs with the high inflation etc.

If we don't fund for prevention, then we will inevitably fund reactively when an event occurs (regardless of where we are).

No mismatch/wasted investment everyone at risk.

Responding to events, passively.

This package is a lot more reactive and more like the least they can do.

This package is the bare minimum. It is focused on maintaining and not preventing.

Use the mobile response vehicles for promotions, social activation workshops, multipurpose usage of vehicles should be encouraged

Would be sufficient. We can all survive for a couple of hours without power.

Summary of Package two Customer Reflections – Equitable Resilience

Package two emerges as a balanced investment strategy, particularly resonating with communities in flood-prone areas like Maribyrnong River. Participants see this approach as a pragmatic middle-ground that provides comprehensive resilience measures while offering strategic flexibility for phased implementation. The package is critically examined for its timing, with participants questioning whether immediate asset replacement is necessary or could be strategically delayed. Despite these considerations, the moderate investment option is generally perceived as a sensible approach that addresses network vulnerabilities without overcommitting financial resources.

PACKAGE TWO - EQUITABLE RESILIENCE

PARTICIPANT REFLECTIONS

Good middle ground to invest in the resilience of the network.

Important to be prepared for outages.

Package 2 covers off most of what is in 3, the additional decommissioning work could be done over a longer timeframe.

Seems likely these assets will need to be replaced eventually, but unclear whether it's money that we need to spend right now (or can we delay this asset replacement).

This package covers it all off and is more feasible to do other work (outlined in package 3 later down the track).

This package for those in the Maribyrnong River flood impacted area is a necessity.

To avoid the damage, we need to invest now.

What was repaired since the 2022 Maribyrnong floods? Would choosing this package remove the benefits off the repairs.

What would doing this in 5 years compare to 10.

Summary of Package three Customer Reflections – Strengthening Resilience

The comprehensive investment package is characterised by its proactive approach to network resilience, targeting specific high-risk suburbs with a strategy of preparedness and reliability enhancement. Stakeholders recognise the package's potential for significant impact, noting that the additional cost appears relatively low compared to potential benefits. However, concerns persist about the limited geographical scope, with the package covering only two out of five suburbs, and underlying affordability issues for broader community segments. The approach is seen as forward-thinking but potentially challenging to implement equitably across different socioeconomic groups.

PACKAGE THREE - STRENGTHENING RESILIENCE

PARTICIPANT REFLECTIONS

Being proactive and preparing.

Can see the benefits, however thinking of everyone from an affordability point of view.

Enhance reliability and resilience.

Only 2 suburbs out of the 5, it's a gamble on insurance.

Package 3 is ripe for mismatching of funding, for areas that may not be affected.

Same question as package 2: is this the right time to undertake this investment?

Small additional cost for much greater impact benefits for our area of the network.

The cost is relatively low, and we are happy to pay this to support the resilience of the network.

The suburbs at high risk should be identified by diff water jurisdictions - Great Western Water, Melbourne Water and Yarra Valley Water.

Summary of the overall preferred package – Equitable Resilience

The majority of participants preferred package two after discussions, viewing it as a balanced and pragmatic investment. The groups appreciated the package's targeted approach, believing Jemena has sufficient expertise to assess and manage network risks effectively. Participants saw this option as offering robust resilience outcomes at a reasonable cost, providing a middle-ground solution that prevents reactive responses while maintaining financial prudence. The strategic flexibility of potentially deferring some decommissioning work and the focused funding approach were key attractions, with the group valuing a measured response that addresses network vulnerabilities without overcommitting resources.

Participants recommended improved governance and strategic planning for network investments. They advocated for increased customer oversight in asset selection processes, emphasising the importance of external perspectives in decision-making. The group suggested integrating decommissioning work into the broader capital expenditure plan, rather than treating it as a separate network resilience initiative. They also highlighted the significance of carefully considering the timing and pace of infrastructure investments.

All group reflections on the preferred package

PACKAGE	WHY DID YOU CHOOSE THIS PACKAGE?	WAS THERE ANY DIFFERENT THINKING IN THE GROUP?	ANY ADVICE TO JEMENA TO IMPROVE THIS PACKAGE?
Package 1	Don't want to spend extra on what-ifs, prefer to wait until we know what is needed.	Some group members were in between package 1 and 2.	We would like to know what happened to the Maribyrnong assets after the 2022 floods.
Package 2	An initial split vote was reconciled back to Package 2 as it offered strong enough outcomes for a smaller individual cost - not greatly dissimilar to Pack. 3. We assume that Jemena has adequate qualified persons to assess risk and make sound targeted investment decisions.	Yes - a personal plan/ resilience should be in place for those at risk rather than waiting for outside assistance. People having their own plan for their own risk exposure. One panel member exited the conversation.	
	Middle ground on investment to the network and cost to customers is fair.	Yes, some of the group like the idea of package 3 and planning for possible impactful events. Understand that this may not be affordable to those on fixed incomes. One was leaning towards 1, believe Jemena is doing more than what is required, focus should be on getting the power back on (specifically those with medical / life saving devices).	More comfortable with the explanation of each package.

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PACKAGE	WHY DID YOU CHOOSE THIS PACKAGE?	WAS THERE ANY DIFFERENT THINKING IN THE GROUP?	ANY ADVICE TO JEMENA TO IMPROVE THIS PACKAGE?
Package 2continued	Balanced approach that we are not solely reacting to events and we are preventing some risk of flooding through the network.	Package 3 - due to concerns around Heidelberg being maintained due to some risk in that area, also due to gov encouraging ppl to move from gas to electricity, we want the system to be more resilient and reliable; want more maintenance on the network so outages are only for a short time.	Oversight on spending and making choices by external customer groups and how they were spending it instead of choosing assets in general. Timing and pace.
	We chose this package as it covers off all resilience issues and some of the decommissioning work could be completed in a longer timeframe. We chose package 2 because the funding was well focused on targeting an area of concern. Package 3 may have been a better option if the additional funding (above package 2) was held as an emergency fund and allocated as/when needed.	No (we came to consensus pretty quickly).	Possibility of building decommissioning work into the CapEx plan rather than Network Resilience.
Package 3	It made the most economical sense long term.	The package I seem to prepare for the reoccurring events/outages and information. Awareness should be in incorporation with local governments.	Communication in media to the public regarding how much it will all cost and what Jemena does to improve the system and the network resilience.
	To address all high suburbs and equitable risk resilience.	No.	Don't put assets in flood areas. We would also like some relief for people facing financial hardship - to be taken into consideration when billing happens.

HEAD HEART HANDS

Participants were asked to reflect on the workshop in the form of one thing they learnt, one thing Jemena is doing that inspired them and one final piece of advice for Jemena. Their reflections are captured below:



ONE THING I

HAVE LEARNT

About Jemena.

Difference between resilience and reliability.

Electricity distribution is a lucrative business.

How electricity distributors contribute to keeping our lights on and appliances running.

How much I don't know.

It is not an easy thing to deliver electricity to homes, a lot of things and thinking comes along.

Participating in public interest topics.

So much new knowledge is inspiring to dig deeper.

Such an interesting group of people to listen to and learn from. I've learnt that a lot goes into keeping the network running and we are lucky to live in Australia and Jemena's network.

Surprised how little people knew about the electrical system at the start of the process.

That customers can get a compensation payment after prolonged outages.

That some people are still not understanding of the economic situations that people find themselves in through unexpected circumstances.

The amount of thinking and engagement that Jemena have put into place for this submission.

The power industry is very complex... BUT, I feel I know quite a lot more than I did before. A great experience. Very well organised and delivered.

The power of perspective.

The process is complex.



ONE THING
JEMENA IS DOING
THAT INSPIRED
ME

Allowing the voice to such a diverse group.

Consulting with its constituents...and valuing their inputs. I definitely feel heard and hopefully added some level of valued input.

Due diligence - and commitment to providing options.

Focus on customers and our future.

Great work finding \$56m savings, I'm sure that was a lot of work and it's really appreciated from an affordability perspective.

Jemena have listened to feedback that's been provided.

Keeping customers in the forefront of their minds.

Keeping customers in the loop and actually listening to the feedback.

Love the innovation fund and the proposed oversight by a customer steering committee.

Optimistic for a solar and EV driven world! Let's go greennnn!

Organised effort to work on a draft project.

Really engaging their customers in such important discussions.

The amount of thinking and engagement that Jemena have put into place for this submission. Really great to see.

The effort in engaging a diverse cohort of their customer base and incorporating their views.

The feeling that our ideas were taken on board.



ONE FINAL PIECE OF ADVICE FOR JEMENA

Affordability and reliability.

Affordability and reliability, especially for those on lower incomes.

Affordability, affordability, affordability.

Always keep the affordability for the customers in mind while taking any decision.

Consider how to combat the existing inequities in the electricity grid.

Cost and sharing knowledge, keep it up.

Electricity is an essential service, let's keep that in mind when looking at increasing profit margins.

Equity and resilience.

Focus on value creation for each of the customer profiles.

Hopefully a balance can be found between the want for proactivity and innovation, and for affordability above all. It will be a difficult line to walk.

I feel like the equity perspective pushed during the youth discussions is still being sidelines. Keeping an eye on the plan for continuous improvement/ corrections with engaging initiatives.

Please be responsible and think of the customers.

Please try and collaborate reaching out, up, and across the industry... the power generators and retailers could take a leaf from your book!

To ensure that electricity remains a right, not a privilege, and you continue to communicate with customers.

To think a bit more about nonhome owners e.g.: retirement villages, strata managed properties, rentals etc.

When it came to these sessions we kind of looked at each thing one at a time but it was like it could have been like here's the costs, here are all the different areas and the costs to keep the same or improve so we could sort of quantify the addition of all these as a whole and whether there's still a cost saving at the end and how much.





- The report will be shared with Jemena and the participants of the 'Deep Dive' sessions.
- Jemena will review and consider the feedback on customer education, innovation fund, and network resilience packages in relation to their Draft Plan.



