

Ausgrid's Voice of Community Panel Handbook




February–June 2022



Our Challenge

Ausgrid manages the poles and wires in your community.

The energy industry is at a critical point, with a growing focus on a low carbon future and more extreme weather impacting the grid. Alongside that, customer needs and aspirations are rapidly changing. How we understand and respond to these issues has important implications for electricity bills and the reliability of electricity supply.

A large, illuminated sculpture of tangled power lines in a city square at night. The sculpture is made of many thin, glowing blue and white wires that are twisted and looped together, resembling a giant knot or a complex web. It is set on a paved plaza. In the background, there are city buildings with lit windows and streetlights. A blue rectangular box with white text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

**How should
Ausgrid look
to the future
while being
fair to today's
customers?**



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Acknowledgement

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands on which Ausgrid serves, and we pay our respects to the elders past, present and future.

We hope that the path towards reconciliation continues to be embraced.

Welcome

Thank you for agreeing to be an Ausgrid Voice of Community Panellist.

Ausgrid manages the poles and wires delivering electricity to homes and businesses across Sydney, the Central Coast, and Newcastle and the Hunter. We strive to connect communities and empower lives through the services we provide.

By participating in this panel you have the opportunity to make a meaningful difference to the way we provide services to meet community expectations.

The handbook provides the practical information you need to be involved. You will also receive a background report that provides important information for you to consider. The background report will be available online and will be mailed to you following the panel's meet and greet session on the 22 February 2022.

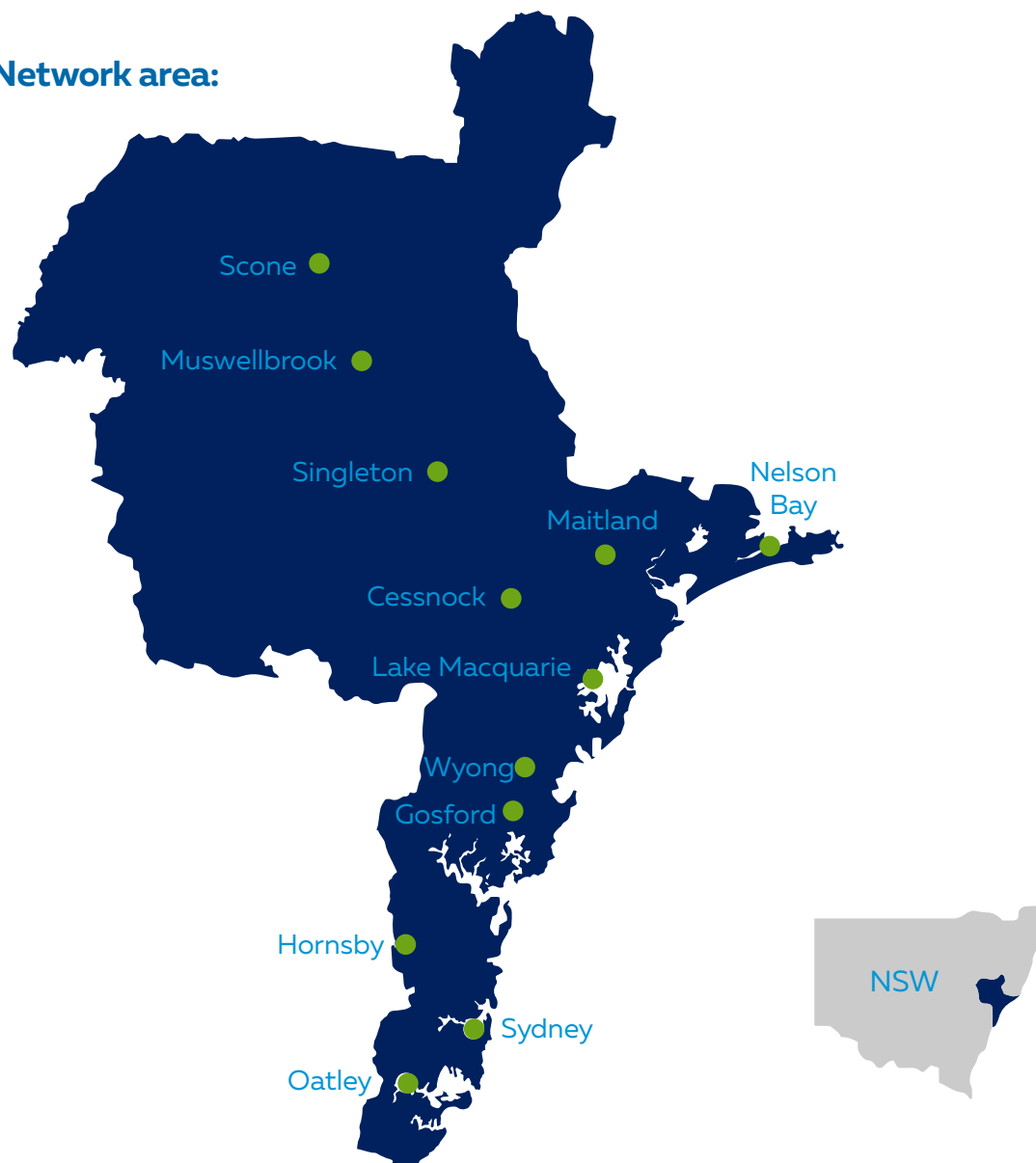


Who is Ausgrid?

Ausgrid is the electricity distributor for large parts of Sydney, the Central Coast, Newcastle and the Hunter. Our staff look after more than **500,000** electricity poles, which provide power to over **1,600,000** homes and **180,000** businesses, including hospitals and schools.

Over **4 million** people rely on us to keep electricity flowing safely and reliably through the network.

Our Network area:



The Voice of Community Panel

The Voice of Community Panel will shape the outcomes for households and small businesses.

The Voice of Community Panel will shape the electricity services we provide households and small businesses into the future. We will share with you different customer perspectives and options to meet community expectations. Your views will influence our Draft 2024-29 Plan.

Our Draft 2024-29 Plan will set out the services we will deliver and the cost of delivering those services. Your participation will help us deliver a future electricity network that works for everyone.



**The views of the Voice of
Community Panel will influence
our Draft 2024-2029 Plan.**

The scope of the panel

Negotiables – what the panel can influence

How we balance the level of customer service and reliability we should provide with the cost of delivering different levels of customer service and reliability.

How fast we make changes to what we deliver for customers i.e. what steps we take in 2024-2029 and what is left for the subsequent periods.

How we are rewarded for finding cost savings or delivering better service; but also penalised for poor performance.

During an unexpected power outage, what Ausgrid should prioritise and how we should respond to customers.

Where there is flexibility, how we meet various laws and rules to support the best interests of our customers.

Who the panel need to hear from, and what information you need, to form a view on an issue.

Non negotiables – what the panel can't influence

The total revenue we can earn, this is determined by the regulator.

Whether we can generate electricity ourselves, or become an energy retailer.

Where the electricity comes from i.e. coal versus renewable.

The geographic areas Ausgrid services.

The actual rules and laws that we need to comply with.

The structure of the process itself, for example the number of meetings and the question for deliberation.

About community panels

A community panel is a 'deliberative' community engagement process that puts the community affected by a decision at the heart of that decision. It brings the community closer to decision-makers.

A community panel is built around a number of principles:

- A random group of everyday citizens affected by the decision are selected to participate.
- Participants are provided with detailed information from a range of sources that helps them to understand the issues and options associated with the final recommendation.
- Participants are given time and the support they need to consider and discuss information and ideas, weigh up issues and options and agree on recommendations.
- Participants write their own report, which is then presented directly to decision makers: in this case the Board of Ausgrid.
- Recommendations in the report will be influential and incorporated to the maximum extent possible.

The panel has a clear scope, in the case of the Ausgrid Voice of Community Panel it's to answer the question:

Ausgrid manages the poles and wires in your community. The energy industry is at a critical point, with a growing focus on a low carbon future and more extreme weather impacting the grid. Alongside that, customer needs and aspirations are rapidly changing. How we understand and respond to these issues has important implications for electricity bills and the reliability of electricity supply.

How should Ausgrid look to the future while being fair to today's customers?

Often, a deliberative process is supported by broader community engagement, where everyone affected by or interested in the issue is able to make a contribution. The results of this engagement are then provided to the panel for consideration.

Community panels can also be called citizen's juries or citizen assemblies.

How you were selected

The Voice of Community Panel was selected by Sortition Foundation, an independent recruitment organisation.

Sortition Foundation sent 24,000 invitations to randomly selected addresses across the Ausgrid network areas in the Hunter Valley, Newcastle, Central Coast and Greater Sydney.

The people who registered their interest were placed in a 'pool'. A random group was selected from this pool to form the final panel of 60. 20 from the Hunter / Newcastle region, 20 from Central Coast and 20 from Greater Sydney.

The panel is representative of the communities Ausgrid serve.



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Roles and responsibilities

Ausgrid, and your facilitators from MosaicLab, are committed to making sure that the experience is as enjoyable as possible for all involved.

As part of this commitment, it is expected that everyone – including the facilitators, Ausgrid staff, speakers and panellists – are respectful of each other and protected from emotional or psychological harm.

Discussion will be focused on the remit of the panel, which is:

Ausgrid manages the poles and wires in your community. The energy industry is at a critical point, with a growing focus on a low carbon future and more extreme weather impacting the grid. Alongside that, customer needs and aspirations are rapidly changing. How we understand and respond to these issues has important implications for electricity bills and the reliability of electricity supply.



How should Ausgrid look to the future while being fair to today's customers?

Role of panellists

- You don't need to be an expert in electricity to participate. You just need to be a member of a household or small business that uses electricity and therefore pays an electricity bill.
- You will have access to a range of information and expertise on how the electricity system works.
- You will hear from speakers and have the chance to request additional information.
- Your role includes both listening and contributing. You will discuss the issues and ideas with your fellow panellists and weigh up all the evidence and information presented.

Remember, the panel has 60 people to represent our 1,600,000 household customers and 180,000 small businesses. So all the differing views you have are important to the conversation.

The panel will come together as a whole, and in your regional groups of:

- Hunter Valley and Newcastle
- Central Coast
- Greater Sydney

You will also have discussions in small groups which will help you to have deeper conversations, share your views and learn more about other people's perspectives.

At the final session at the end of the panel process, the panel will review and agree on its final recommendations and write a report to be presented to members of the Ausgrid Board and Executive team.

There will be some reading, the occasional survey, or other work between sessions. We don't expect it to be too onerous, most of the work will be done together.

The community panel will meet across 8 sessions **(approximately 44 hours commitment)**

Throughout the process you will be supported by independent professional facilitators, whom you will meet at the introductory session.

Different views and healthy disagreement related to the panels remit are encouraged and welcomed as part of the process.

However, any behaviour that could cause distress to others, may result in that person being asked to leave the meeting or the panel.

The panel will discuss and agree on their own more detailed working arrangements at the introductory Meet and Greet session.

Role of Ausgrid

Ausgrid will host the panel process. Our role is to:

- Observe the deliberations
- Organise logistics for all sessions
- Provide relevant and useful information that will assist you in responding to the remit
- Respond to your questions and requests for further information
- Approach speakers that you select to hear from
- Receive and respond to your report

Our promise to you is that we will use your recommendations to shape our 2024-2029 Plan to the fullest extent we can and where we can't, we will explain to you why.

Below are a few of the Ausgrid team that will support the process and be following progress carefully.

The Ausgrid team that will be supporting the process will be:



Rob Amphlett Lewis
Chief Customer Officer



Alex McPherson
Head of Regulation



Karthik Venkataraman
Head of Customer and
Partner Experience



Kate Hawke
Customer
Engagement Manager,
Regulation

Feel free to ask us questions or ask for support throughout the process.

Role of the facilitators, MosaicLab

MosaicLab is a team of facilitators dedicated to bringing diverse groups of people together to solve complex problems.

MosaicLab's role is to support the community panel members in your discussions. This includes promoting informed discussions, enabling everyone to have a chance to participate and contribute, remaining neutral and, therefore, not having a stake or interest in the content or outcome, and responding and adapting to the group's needs. The MosaicLab facilitators will aim to guide the process in a way that helps you to do your work as effectively as possible within the time that we have together.

The facilitators working with you will be:



Nicole Hunter
Director and
Co-Founder



Scott Newton
Facilitator; Gauge
Consulting



Noa Levin
Facilitator

For more information, visit www.mosaiclab.com.au.

Working together online

Some of the sessions will be held online via Zoom

Here are some tips to help you get online.

More information about how to use Zoom is provided in this section.

The basic requirements for using Zoom are:



Accessibility: An internet connection of at least 5 mbps speed upload and download. To test your connection speed, visit: www.speedtest.net.



Full engagement: Please have both your video and audio on through your computer or laptop, and have headphones/camera/microphone.



End-to-end attendance: Please be prepared to be present from beginning to end.



Be stationary: Please be prepared to participate from a stationary spot. Participation from a moving vehicle, while on a walk, etc. is not ideal for this type of experience.



Be fully present: Please eliminate notifications, distractions, or anything that will take your attention from the experience.

If you have any issues with accessing the internet or a laptop please let us know on register@mosaiclab.com.au and we will make sure you can participate fully during these online sessions.

Tech support sessions

Technical support will be provided to ensure everyone can participate, even if you are not very experienced working online. If you don't have a computer or internet access at home, the team will make arrangements to ensure you can participate.

MosaicLab can provide support before the online sessions begin to check that your laptop or computer is working with Zoom to the standards it needs to. It may be helpful to ask someone in your home to help you with the checks if you need assistance.

If you would like some help from us in advance of the session to check your Zoom connection and assist you with the basics of using Zoom, please book in for one of the sessions below by sending an email with your preferred time to register@mosaiclab.com.au.

During the tech support session you will get help to do Zoom basics, including:

- Turn your microphone on and off (mute)
- Turn your video on and off
- Use the chat line
- Share your screen and change between Gallery and Speaker view

Dates

Tuesday 15 February 2022 4:30pm

Wednesday 16 February 2022 4:30pm

Please book in by sending an email with your preferred time to register@mosaiclab.com.au.



Online portal

A private online portal for members of the community panel has been set up on yoursay.ausgrid.com.au, where all supporting information, background materials, forms and online discussion forums will be available.

Panel members will receive an email from MosaicLab containing a link to the portal and an invitation to log on to the portal and set up a password.

Observers

Observers are an important part of any deliberative process as they provide an opportunity for people to view the panel and process in action.

Having observers in attendance helps to build understanding and enhance the transparency of the process.

We will always introduce observers to the panel, so that the panel knows who they are and what organisation they come from.

Observers are provided with a set of rules and are not able to participate in the panel or disrupt the panel process.

An important set of observers will be members of Ausgrid's Reset Customer Panel (RCP).

The RCP has been formed as a panel of independent customer advocates, with a range of deep industry expertise and skills, to challenge Ausgrid through the process of developing our 2024-2029 Plan.

The RCP, have advised and worked closely with Ausgrid in planning how we will engage with our customers and stakeholders, and they are very interested in the Ausgrid Voice of Community Panel.

Panel use of media and social media guidelines

You are welcome to speak about the process and your experience as a panellist. However, it is important that you do not pre-empt or forecast recommendations made by the panel, as you will not know what these final, agreed recommendations are until the final session.

Anything said to a journalist, submitted to a media organisation or posted online on social media is a public comment. Please be polite and respectful of others and their opinions if making public comment. Don't reference specific individuals, and only speak from your perspective – not on behalf of the group.

If you use social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc) to post about your experiences during the process, we encourage you to use the hashtag:

#AusgridVoiceofCommunityPanel

Or **tag us @Ausgrid**

Ausgrid will also be documenting the process and sharing with the broader Ausgrid customer base via social media and our websites.

Ausgrid may proactively share information on the engagement process with media. This includes opportunities for panel members to be interviewed about their role and experience of the process. Let us know if you'd like to take part.



Filming and photography

Parts of the process will also be documented via film and photography. Please complete, sign and return the video and photo permission form that will be given to you at the introductory session.

If you do not wish to be filmed or photographed, please let the MosaicLab facilitators know before the session.



Meeting locations and logistics

Meet & Greet	Full Panel	Tuesday, February 22	6pm – 9pm	Online
Day 1	Full Panel	Sunday, February 27	9am – 5pm	Online
Day 2	Hunter Valley Regional Session	Tuesday, March 15	6pm – 9pm	Online
	Central Coast Regional Session	Wednesday, March 16	6pm – 9pm	Online
	Sydney Regional Session	Thursday, March 17	6pm – 9pm	Online
Day 3	Sydney Regional Session	Tuesday, March 22	6pm – 9pm	Online
	Hunter Valley Regional Session	Wednesday, March 23	6pm – 9pm	Online
	Central Coast Regional Session	Thursday, March 24	6pm – 9pm	Online
Day 4	Full Panel	Saturday, April 30	9am – 5pm	Face to Face
Day 5	Full Panel	Saturday, May 14	9am – 5pm	Face to Face
Day 6	Hunter Valley Regional Session	Tuesday, May 24	6pm – 9pm	Online
	Central Coast Regional Session	Wednesday, May 25	6pm – 9pm	Online
	Sydney Regional Session	Thursday, May 26	6pm – 9pm	Online
Day 7	Full Panel	Saturday, June 4	9am – 5pm	Face to Face

Venue

Rydges World Square:

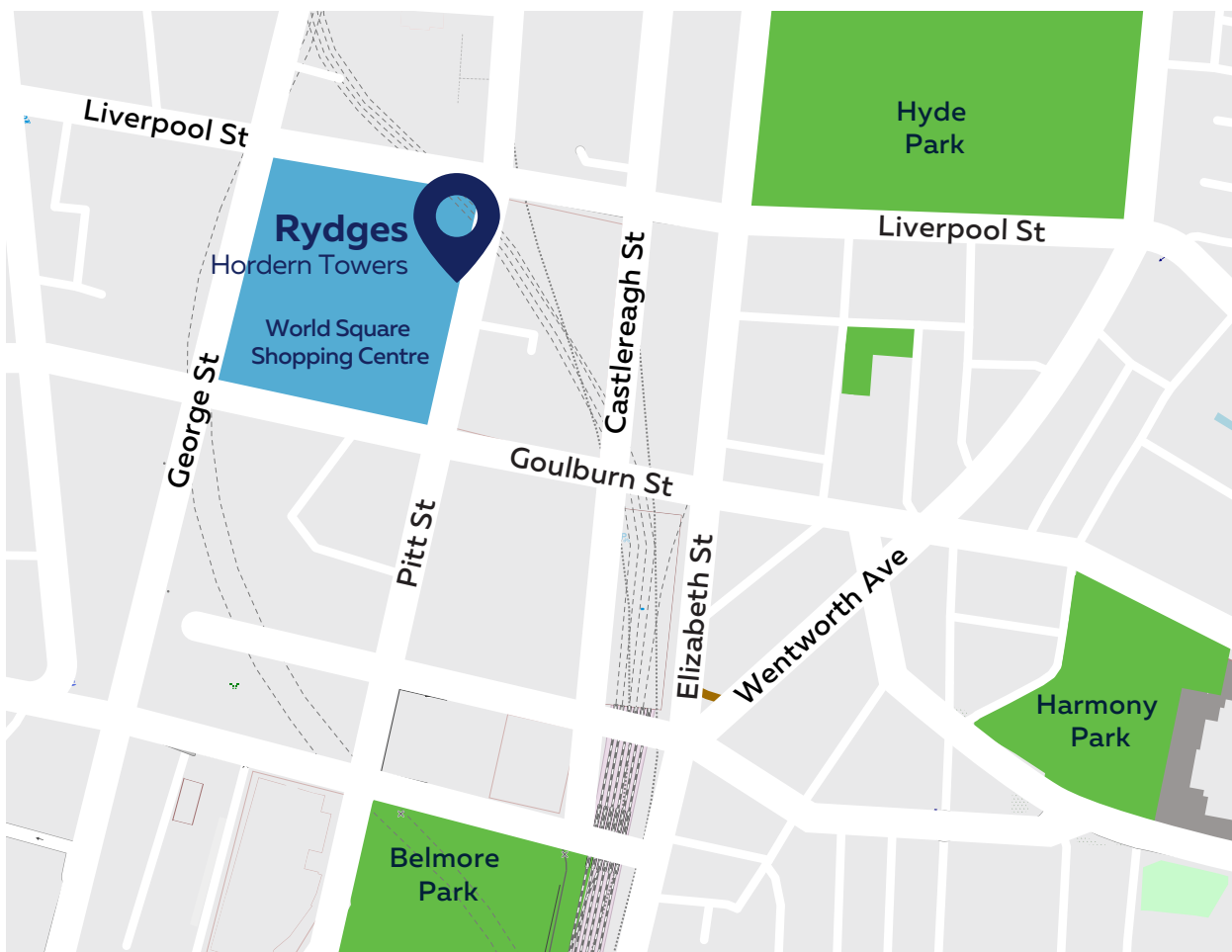
389 Pitt St Sydney, NSW 2000
Ph: **(02) 8268 1888**

Transport / parking:

The Rydges World Square Hotel is close to Darling Harbour. Town Hall and Museum stations are a short walk away from the hotel.

Self car parking is available at the Hotel for \$50 per day.

Please contact the hotel on **(02) 8268 1888** to reserve a car space as spots are limited.



Food

Arrival tea & coffee, morning tea with tea & coffee, gourmet buffet lunch, afternoon tea with tea & coffee will be provided, please let us know if you have any dietary requirements through the registration email: register@mosaiclab.com.au.

Payments

The community panel will meet across 8 sessions (**approximately 44 hours commitment**) outside of business hours and make a significant commitment in representing their community.

Community panel members who attend all 8 sessions will receive \$1,000 as recognition of costs associated with attendance, and in gratitude for their commitment.

Ausgrid will provide payment to panellists following the conclusion of the final session in June 2022.

Key contacts

RSVPs, attendance, and general enquiries

Please send Community Panel correspondence regarding attendance and general enquiries to register@mosaiclab.com.au

Media enquiries

News and Media Enquires: (02) 9966 7985 | news@ausgrid.com.au



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