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**Customer Engagement Guideline**

**Informal Feedback on Guideline Development**

* The objective of the guideline should be clear and include that it is designed to encourage continuous improvement in consumer engagement activities and processes in network businesses
* The draft and final guideline should:
	+ be aligned with consumer engagement best practice principles such as being inclusive, accessible, transparent and collaborative
	+ clear in scope and about the consumers (or classes of consumers) with which it is designed to promote engagement. This will involve explaining the current direct and indirect customers of NSPs;
	+ be based upon identifying principles to guide engagement rather than prescriptive or a compliance driven approach.
	+ identify and address the differences between potential consumer engagement options for transmission and distribution businesses;
	+ provide practical examples of meaningful consumer engagement methods/techniques, including methods already demonstrated by members of industry;
	+ acknowledge and address the difference between community consultation for capital projects and consumer engagement for the regulatory process.

For example, the processes for engagement in determinations, planning processes, consideration of local non-network solutions (DSP),  etc. will differ in terms of who needs to be engaged and how this engagement takes place.

* + account for varying starting positions and existing practices (e.g research, knowledge base, engagement practices) of organisations but also differing customer bases.
	+ note that engagement strategies are about demonstrating a path/roadmap to improvement that is suited to each network’s (transmission and distribution) specific challenges, acknowledging the realities of achieving change in the short-term
* The guideline needs to take into account that it is being drafted in the context of other policy related developments, such as the commencement of the Consumer Challenge Panel, and the possible implementation of a National Consumer Advocacy Body.
* ENA suggests that this means that the guideline may need to be re-examined through time to clarify how these elements impact on the AER’s application of the guidelines principles in the NER context.