



**Volt**advisorygroup  
Lvl 7 757 Ann Street FOR UDE VALLEY QLD 4006

Volt Advisory Group Pty Ltd  
Lvl 7 757 Ann Street  
Fortitude Valley QLD 4006  
Australia

20 January 2023

Attention: Ms Sarah Pinchuk  
Australian Energy Regulator  
35/360 Elizabeth Street  
MELBOURNE VIC 3000  
Email: AERexemptions@aer.gov.au

Dear Ms Pinchuk

**National Energy Retail Law (NERL) – Section 110 – Individual Exemption Application –  
Daintree Community electricity supply (Daintree Renewable Microgrid)**

Volt Advisory Group Pty Ltd (ABN 40 637 282 047) (the Applicant) is applying for an exemption from the requirement to hold a retailer authorisation, in respect of the sale of electricity, to business and residential members of the Daintree community.

The Applicant is intending to build, own and operate a fully renewable microgrid to supply renewable electricity to the Daintree community including underground cable network connecting customers to an 8MW solar, 20MWh battery and 1MW hydrogen storage system with backup capability (the Daintree Renewable Microgrid). Residents and businesses in the Daintree community are not currently connected to the national electricity market (NEM) or any distribution supply system.

This letter sets out the information required for the individual exemption as per the AER's requirements. We have also attached the checklist (Attachment A) required by the AER to this letter which includes the following:

- A site map of the Daintree community and the footprint of the Daintree Renewable Microgrid
- A proposed sample energy bill
- An overview of the key terms of the proposed energy sales agreement
- The proposed dispute resolution policy
- The proposed hardship policy
- A copy of the Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland (EWOQ) completed application form and application receipt email.



In support of our application, we have also attached letters from:

- Douglas Shire Council
- Jabalbina Yalanji Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC



### **Background**

The Daintree region in Far North Queensland is a coastal lowland area between the Daintree River and Cape Tribulation which comprises a small and unique local population that includes indigenous communities, tourist operators and a range of residents and business owners.

The Daintree community has been excluded from Ergon Energy's Distribution Authority and is not connected to the NEM or any distribution supply system. Ergon Energy Corporation does not have a legal obligation, and is not authorised, to extend its existing network to the region. Consequently, residents and businesses currently rely primarily on liquid fuels and standalone generators to supply their own generation and have shown strong interest at numerous community forums to connect to a renewable energy system.

The Applicant has, with the support of the Federal Government, collaborated with the community over the last five years and designed a microgrid system for the communities of Cow Bay, Diwan and Cape Tribulation which supports the principles of equity, reliability, affordability and sustainability.

The Daintree Renewable Microgrid will be primarily installed to support operation of the approximately [REDACTED] commercial and government businesses within the Daintree Community who currently rely heavily on diesel fuel. However, the Applicant has also agreed to sell electricity to approximately [REDACTED] residential customers. The sale of electricity through the Daintree Renewable Microgrid will be optional for all customers (i.e. opt-in) and will only occur with a customer's explicit informed consent.

The Applicant has engaged with the Queensland Department of Energy and Public Works and will apply for a Special Approval under the *Electricity Act 1994* for generation activities.



### **Requirements to hold an individual exemption**

The Applicant considers its application for an individual exemption is consistent with the National Energy Retail Objective. It is also consistent with the exempt policy principles, exempt seller related factors and customer related factors specified in the NERL and outlined in Appendix E of the AER's Final Retail Exempt Selling Guideline of July 2022. In particular:

- The exemption is in the long-term interests of energy consumers. It enables the provision of renewable energy to customers in the Daintree community who currently have limited energy options and no connection to the national electricity grid in the microgrid footprint. Businesses and residents are currently required supply their own expensive, unreliable and inefficient power supply which is often diesel generation.
- Customers will be able to opt out of the arrangement and opting in will be based on explicit informed consent. Customers who opt out will be able to rely upon their existing method of diesel (or other) generation.
- There is no local area retailer and no access to the notified price for customers in the Daintree community. Pricing within the Daintree Renewable Microgrid will be underpinned by the principles of equity, reliability, affordability and sustainability and the Applicant is happy to provide the AER with transparency regarding the process of price setting should the AER wish, including comparison to the notified price. Customers will also be afforded hardship protections and flexible payment options for those identifying themselves as experiencing financial difficulty.
- The cost of obtaining a retailer authorisation and of ongoing compliance with the NERL is likely to be substantial and will outweigh the benefits to customers.
- The Applicant lacks the economies of scale and scope from which retailers' benefit. The Applicant is only intending to serve the Daintree community and has been supported by the Federal Government with an \$18.75m grant to enable the financial viability of the generation and sale of energy to customers at the Daintree.<sup>1</sup>
- The Applicant's business is not exclusively focused on the sale of energy but includes the sale of broadband internet and carbon credits.

### **The Applicant will offer customers the standard exemption conditions unless they do not apply to the circumstances of the Daintree Microgrid System**

Under the National Energy Retail Rules, the AER may impose conditions in relation to the sale of energy by an exempt seller or class of exempt sellers to exempt customers. Further,

---

<sup>1</sup> Commonwealth Government, Industry Research and Development (Daintree Microgrid Program) Instrument 2021, at [Industry Research and Development \(Daintree Microgrid Program\) Instrument 2021 \(legislation.gov.au\)](https://www.legislation.gov.au/australian-legal-terminology/industry-research-and-development-daintree-microgrid-program-instrument-2021)



we understand the conditions vary according to the nature of the energy sale (including scale and scope) and the seller-customer relationship.

We accept the conditions outlined in Appendix A-2 of the Final Retail Exempt Selling Guideline with the exception of the following conditions that do not apply to the circumstances of the Daintree Microgrid System:

#### 1. Condition 1 – Obligation to supply

While the Applicant is intending to supply customers in the Daintree, it is limited in its generation capacity. The Applicant is concerned about its ability to meet increased demand. To this end, the Applicant requests that the obligation to supply does not apply to new customers or existing customers who seek to significantly increase their electricity load. This is consistent with the exemptions granted to the Weipa township in comparable circumstances.

#### 2. Condition 7 – Pricing

There is no local area retailer for the Daintree community and the notified price (standing offer price) established by the Queensland Competition Authority does not apply to supply and sale arrangements in this area. Given the small scale of the energy generation community, the level of required investment to support microgrid establishment, and in the absence of subsidies, it is difficult for the Applicant to mirror the notified price's retail price or tariff structures.

As noted above, it is proposed that pricing will be underpinned by the principles of equity, reliability, affordability and sustainability and the Applicant is happy to provide the AER with transparency regarding the process of price setting should the AER wish, including comparison to the notified price. In this context, the Applicant also notes that customer participation in the Daintree Renewable Microgrid will be opt-in based on explicit informed consent, customers will retain the right to opt-out of participation and that other energy-specific consumer protections, including billing, complaints and dispute resolution, hardship protections and flexible payment options, will be offered.

#### **Claim of confidentiality**

The Applicant seeks to claim confidentiality over limited aspects of this application and provides reasons below detailing how and why disclosure of the information for which confidentiality is claimed would cause detriment. Information for which confidentiality is claimed has been highlighted in 'yellow'.



<b>References</b>	<b>Reason for confidentiality claim</b>	<b>Potential harm of disclosure</b>
Market financing and contractual arrangements.  Number of anticipated microgrid participants and customer segmentation.	Financial arrangements and commercial parameters and terms which are the subject of a market process and negotiation, including profile of participants and project dependencies and timing.	Disclosure of information may prejudice the commercial position of the Applicant or third parties or compromise negotiations  It is in the interests of customers of the Daintree Renewable Microgrid for this project to be delivered in an efficient and timely manner.

The Applicant submits that the need for confidentiality outweighs any additional public benefit of disclosure and would be happy to provide additional detail to the AER if needed.

Please feel free to contact me at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] with any further questions.

Phil Keogan  
*Director*  
**Volt Advisory Group**

# Checklist

## Individual exemption application

(other than PPA providers)

[Retail Exempt Selling Guideline](#) – July 2022 (Appendix B)

---

### Instructions

1. Submit this completed checklist as part of your application, alongside a cover letter and supporting evidence, as required.
2. Applications should be submitted in DOCX (Microsoft Word) format, where possible.
3. If we identify missing or inconsistent information, we will seek clarification *before* accepting your application. We will only request further information on **one** occasion.
4. We will only accept applications that we deem to have met the minimum information requirements set out in this checklist.
5. Upon acceptance, your application will be published on the AER website for public consultation. The consultation period will run for 20 business days, whereby interested stakeholders can make submissions. Any submissions received will inform our application assessment process.
6. If your application includes confidential information, please submit two versions of the document – one marked **confidential** and one marked **public**:
  - a) any information the applicant deems to be confidential information must be redacted in the public version. The public version will be published on our website for public consultation.
  - b) confidential information will be handled in accordance with our [ACCC/AER Information Policy](#).

### Prerequisite requirement

Please tick the boxes in relation to the following statements:

*I confirm I have read and understood all the instructions listed above:*

*I hereby declare that the information provided below is true and correct. I also understand that any wilful dishonesty may render for refusal of this application*

## General information requirements

Please provide the below information as part of your application. Where a third party is submitting the application on your behalf, please provide a statement or letter verifying that the third party has the authority to act on your behalf.

Requirement	Applicant response
<b>General information requirements</b>	
1 Your legal name. <sup>1</sup> If you are a body corporate or community corporation, please indicate this.	Volt Advisory Group Pty Ltd
2 Your trading name, if different to your legal name.	NA
3 Your Australian Business Number (ABN) or Australian Company Number (ACN). Confirm your ABN or ACN matches the legal name you have provided via the <a href="#">ABN Lookup</a> website or <a href="#">ASIC Connect</a> website respectively.	ABN 40 637 282 047
4 Your registered postal address. We may verify this information with the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) or another relevant agency.	Lvl 7 757 Ann Street Fortitude Valley QLD 4006
5 A nominated contact person, including their position in the organisation and contact details.	Philip Keogan Director [REDACTED]
6 The primary activity of your business (for example, managing a shopping centre or managing residential accommodation).	Renewable microgrid development
7 Why you are seeking an individual exemption, and why you consider an individual exemption is appropriate to your circumstances (rather than a retailer authorisation or registrable class exemption).  <i>Refer section 3 – <a href="#">Retail Exempt Selling Guideline</a> pg. 10</i>	<p>With project support from the Local and Federal Government, Volt Advisory Group Pty Ltd (the Applicant) is seeking an individual exemption for the development of the Daintree Renewable Microgrid.</p> <p>The Applicant considers its application for an exemption is consistent with the National Energy Retail Objective. It is also consistent with the policy principles, exempt seller related factors and customer related factors specified in the NERL and outlined in Appendix E of the AER's Final Retail Exempt Selling Guidelines of July 2022. In particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the exemption is in the long term interests of energy consumers as it enables the provision of renewable energy to customers in the Daintree community who currently have limited energy generation options, no connection to the national electricity grid in the microgrid footprint and businesses and residents are required to supply their own expensive, unreliable and inefficient power supply which is often diesel generation;</li> <li>- there is no local jurisdictional retailer and no access to notified prices for residents and businesses in the area;</li> <li>- customers will still be able to opt out of the supply of renewable energy and opting in will be based on principles of explicit informed consent;</li> <li>- customers who opt out will be able to rely upon their existing method of diesel (or other) generation;</li> <li>- customers will be afforded hardship protections and flexible payment options for those identifying themselves as experiencing financial difficulty;</li> <li>- the Applicant lacks the economies of scale and scope from which retailers benefit;</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> The applicant must be a legal person, for example an individual, company, corporation, or body corporate. A trust is not a legal person and cannot hold an exemption. If you are seeking an exemption for a trust, a trustee must apply.



Requirement	Applicant response
<b>General information requirements</b>	
	<p>- the Applicant is only intending to serve the Daintree community;</p> <p>- the Applicant has been supported by the Federal Government with an \$18.75m grant to enable the financial viability of the generation and sale of energy to customers at the Daintree;</p> <p>- the Applicant's business is not exclusively focused on the sale of energy but includes the sale of broadband internet and carbon credits;</p> <p>- the cost of obtaining a retailer authorisation and of the ongoing compliance with the NERL is likely to be substantial and will outweigh the benefits to customers.</p>
<p>8 The site address where you intend to sell energy Please attach a site map as an appendix to this checklist.</p>	<p>The sale of energy will be to those residents and businesses who do not have access to grid electricity in the Daintree community from north of the Alexandra Range to Cape Tribulation.</p> <p>A site map of the Daintree community and the footprint of the Daintree Renewable Microgrid is attached.</p>
<p>9 Provide a brief description of this site and its current and future intended use/s.</p>	<p>The generation site that the Applicant proposes to use will comprise a solar farm, electrical switchgear and battery and hydrogen storage facility. The site has been used as a cleared cattle farm for many decades. Electricity will be distributed to customers via underground cables that run under roads and easements with the permission of government authorities.</p>
<p>10 The <i>form</i> of energy for which you are seeking the individual exemption (electricity or gas, or both).</p> <p>Electricity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Gas <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Electricity &amp; Gas <input type="checkbox"/></p>	
<p>11 If you selected electricity (above), state whether the relevant network is directly or indirectly connected to the main grid or is (or will be) an off-grid network.</p>	<p>The network will be off-grid as there is no grid connection option for the Daintree community.</p>
<p>12 Are you establishing, or have you established, energy supply in an area where there are no other viable energy supply arrangements available?</p> <p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If <b>yes</b>, please provide further information.</p> <p>If <b>no</b>, please provide examples of how customers will be able to access alternatives, should they choose to utilise their power of choice.</p>	<p>The Daintree community has no access to affordable and reliable grid electricity.</p> <p>There is no existing or planned network or retailer offering energy sale in the area.</p> <p>Residents and businesses rely primarily on liquid fuels and standalone generators to supply their own generation. The applicant will provide underground, reticulated power supply from an adjacent solar, battery and hydrogen generation facility at rates comparable to those provide within the National Electricity Market.</p>
<p>13 The date from which you intend to start selling energy.</p>	<p>1/04/2024</p>
<p>14 Mailing addresses for premises at the site (where applicable). We may use this information to ensure that potential customers are able to participate in our consultation process.</p>	<p>Mailing address</p> <p>Lvl 7 757 Ann Street</p> <p>FORTITUDE VALLEY QLD 4006</p>
<p>15 Details of your (or your agent's) energy selling experience, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• date/s and location/s of previous operations</li> <li>• form/s of energy sold</li> </ul>	<p>The Applicant's management team has extensive experience in the energy sector and electricity retail including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ executive and operational roles in major utilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Jemena, Sydney 2006 - 2011 - electricity and gas</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>



Requirement	Applicant response
<b>General information requirements</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• scale of operations (the number, size, and type of customers)</li> <li>• an explanation of which activities will be conducted in-house, and which will be contracted out to third parties.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 350,000 homes and businesses across north and western Melbourne</li> <li>○ 1.5M homes and business across NSW</li> <li>▪ Ergon Energy, Brisbane 2011 - 2014 - electricity x34 remote microgrid locations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 39 communities of ~ 100,000 homes and businesses across FNQ</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Sunverge, Brisbane 2014 - 2019 - electricity via distributed VPP energy management solutions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ New technology solution demonstrated across 6 pilot programs and 1,000 homes</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Pricing and regulatory experience within Energex, Ergon and Australian energy retailers (2007-2015)</li> <li>▪ System planning and coordination roles for major utilities in New Zealand</li> <li>▪ Various roles within retail portfolio and product development teams focussing on tariffs and new energy/ DER products</li> </ul> <p>The Applicant's management team will be supported by a third party contractor which will undertake billing in accordance with all regulatory requirements.</p>
<p>16 Do you currently hold; or have you previously held; or been refused an energy selling exemption or a retail licence (retailer authorisation) in any state or territory?</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If <b>yes</b>, please provide details (including any relevant AER reference number/s).</p>	
<p>17 Have you have made arrangements in the event that you can no longer continue supplying energy (for example, whether the retailer that sells to you has agreed that they will service the customers)?</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If <b>yes</b>, please explain the arrangements you have put in place.</p> <p>If <b>no</b>, please provide the reasons why you have not put arrangements in place.</p> <p><i>If an exempt seller is (or expects to be) disconnected, or there is any likelihood that they will be unable to continue selling energy, they must notify the exempt customers and the AER immediately. As part of this notification, the exempt seller must advise the steps they are taking to arrange an alternative supply.</i></p>	<p>Customers in this area are currently responsible for their own provision of power and as such have their own generation capacity installed.</p> <p>The Daintree Renewable Microgrid is in the process of raising investment required to construct the system.</p> <p>The system has been designed as a high reliability system with underground cable network. All assets are warranted for performance and life by Tier 1 manufacturers to meet the required system design.</p> <p>The project system plans allow for N-1 reliability with backup capacity and the project will be fully funded over its 35 year life and is not exposed to increases in fuel costs or market fluctuations.</p> <p>"N-1" means that the system shall be capable of experiencing outage of its generation system without causing losses in electricity supply. Remediation to network assets has been designed to allow fast replacement of assets and restoration of service.</p>

## Particulars relating to the nature and scope of the proposed operations

To determine whether it is appropriate to exempt you from the requirement to hold a retailer authorisation, we need information on the nature and scope of the proposed operations.

Requirement	Applicant response								
<b>Particulars relating to the nature and scope of the proposed operations</b>									
<p>18 What is the total number of customers at the site? Please provide a breakdown between residential, retail, and commercial customers (include whether they are small or large, as defined for the jurisdiction in which you intend to operate).</p> <p><i>The threshold for large electricity customers in New South Wales, the ACT, Queensland, and Victoria is 100 MWh per annum, 150 MWh per annum in Tasmania and 160MWh per annum in South Australia. For gas, the threshold in all jurisdictions is 1 TJ per annum.</i></p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td data-bbox="842 387 1203 432">Residential</td> <td data-bbox="1203 387 1437 432">█</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="842 432 1203 506">Commercial/retail (small customers)</td> <td data-bbox="1203 432 1437 506">█</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="842 506 1203 551">Large customers</td> <td data-bbox="1203 506 1437 551">█</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="842 551 1203 595" style="text-align: right;"><b>Total</b></td> <td data-bbox="1203 551 1437 595">█</td> </tr> </table>	Residential	█	Commercial/retail (small customers)	█	Large customers	█	<b>Total</b>	█
Residential	█								
Commercial/retail (small customers)	█								
Large customers	█								
<b>Total</b>	█								
<p>Will your customers be your tenants?</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>									
<p>19 Will you be providing other services, aside from energy to persons on the site (for example, accommodation/leasing of property)?</p> <p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If <b>yes</b>, please specify these services and the contractual or leasing arrangements under which you are providing them.</p>	<p>A broadband service will be made available to residential and commercial customers. The arrangements under which these services will be provided are under development.</p>								
<p>20 Will you be on-selling energy purchased from an authorised retailer or purchasing it directly from the wholesale market?</p>	<p>No – as the site is greenfield and not able to be connected to the grid, the energy sold will be supplied from a local site containing a solar, battery and hydrogen facility.</p>								
<p>21 What is the estimated annual aggregate amount of energy you are likely to sell (kilowatt hours or megawatt hours for electricity and mega joules or gigajoules for gas) and the average expected consumption of customers for each type of customer you service (residential customers, retail, or commercial customers)?</p>	<p>█</p> <p>█</p> <p>█</p> <p>█</p>								
<p>22 Will your customers be wholly contained within a site owned, controlled, or operated by you?</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p><i>For the purposes of this question, a body corporate may be taken to ‘operate’ premises it oversees.</i></p>									
<p>23 Will each premises/dwelling be separately metered?</p> <p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If <b>no</b>, please explain why not and how you intend to determine energy charges.</p>	<p>The system will include revenue grade, comms-enabled interval meters, typically referred to as smart meters.</p>								
<p>24 Will meters allow your customers to change retailers (i.e. not buy their energy from you) as required by the <a href="#">Network Exemptions Guideline</a>?</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Please specify the types of meters to be installed at the site.</p>	<p>Whilst technically possible, there is currently no retail competition or alternative supply arrangements in the area due to intentional limitations on development and the challenges faced with accessing suitable sites in a World Heritage area.</p>								

Requirement	Applicant response
<b>Particulars relating to the nature and scope of the proposed operations</b>	
<p>25 In what form, and how often, will you bill your customers? Will you be issuing bills yourself or through a billing agent? Please provide an energy bill sample.</p> <p><i>Condition 3 of the Retail Exempt Selling Guideline sets out our expectation around billing for residential customers.</i></p>	<p>It is proposed that bills will be issued either on a monthly or quarterly basis as agreed by customers according to their preference. It is expected that bills will be issued through a billing agent, but this may change depending on the investor. A sample bill structure has been provided. This is consistent with Ergon Energy Queensland's bills.</p>
<p>26 What dispute resolution procedures do you intend to put in place to deal with energy-related complaints and issues? Confirm that your dispute resolution policy is consistent the <a href="#">Australian Standard AS10002:2022 Guidelines for complaint management in organizations</a> (or subsequent versions). Please provide a copy of the relevant policy.</p>	<p>The Applicant will follow standard complaint management processes in accordance with AS10002:2022. All customers will have the right to access the Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland (EWOQ) and will be advised of that right and the relevant contact details.</p> <p>A copy of the relevant policy is attached.</p>
<p>27 <i>This question only applies where residential customers are included in your application.</i></p> <p>Are you a member of a recognised energy industry ombudsman scheme in the jurisdiction/s in which you intend to on-sell energy to residential customers?</p> <p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>n/a <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If no, have you taken steps to become a member?</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If <b>yes</b>, please provide supporting evidence or explain steps taken to obtain membership. Supporting evidence should include an ombudsman membership application reference number if attainable from the relevant ombudsman.</p> <p>If <b>no</b>, please explain the reasons you have not taken steps to become a member.</p> <p><i>An exempt seller must, (if permitted by an energy ombudsman scheme) be a member of, or subject to, an energy ombudsman scheme for each jurisdiction where it sells energy to exempt customers and must comply with the requirements of that scheme.</i></p>	<p>As of 28 February 2022, the Applicant is eligible to become a member of EWOQ.</p> <p>The Applicant has taken steps to become a scheme participant. As an exempt seller with 2,000 or fewer customers, the Applicant will be automatically deemed an EWOQ scheme participant.</p> <p>The Applicant has completed the EWOQ scheme participant application form, however has been advised on 24 October 2022 that the individual exemption must first be provided by the AER in order to complete the application.</p> <p>A copy of the application receipt email and completed application form is attached – there is no application reference number attached to the email.</p>
<p>28 Please provide any further information that would assist us to assess your application.</p>	

Requirement	Applicant response
<b>AER consultation process</b>	
<p>29 Have you advised customers of the AER's consultation process, including that the AER will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>consult on individual exemption applications</li> <li>publish your application on its website</li> <li>invite public submissions on your application from interested stakeholders, and</li> <li>ensure that the public consultation period runs for at least 20 business days?</li> </ol> <p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Please provide evidence of your communication with customers regarding the above.</p>	<p><b>Attachment reference:</b></p> <p>Potential customers have been advised of the application and approvals process at successive community meetings in the Daintree, most recently at Heritage Lodge, Diwan on 4 October 2022, but also with the Energy Minister's public announcement on 9 March 2022 at Diwan.</p> <p>As this is a greenfield site, potential customers whose premises are in the Daintree community will contact the Applicant via the website (<a href="http://voltadvisorygroup.com">voltadvisorygroup.com</a>) to lodge an expression of interest to connect to the microgrid. Relevant details regarding the connection process will be provided to potential customers at that point. Connection is entirely voluntary (i.e. opt-in) and customers are not compelled to take up the connection and can choose to continue with self-provision of energy via diesel generation</p>

Requirement	Applicant response
<b>AER consultation process</b>	
	if that is their preferred option. Connection will be based upon explicit informed consent.

## Converting embedded networks (retrofitting) - NA

If you are planning to sell energy through a converted embedded network, your application needs to also address the following questions. If your application does not involve a retrofit you do not need to complete this section.

Requirement	Applicant response – NOT APPLICABLE	
<b>Converting embedded networks (retrofitting)</b>		
<b>Provision of information – attach evidence that you have supplied prospective customers with easily accessible written information explaining:</b>		
30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>you are proposing to retrofit the site as an embedded network, which requires metering changes and both the <b>pros and cons</b> of being an embedded network customer. <i>Examples may include, but are not limited to, customer information leaflets, brochures or copies of presentations.</i></li> </ul>	<b>Attachment reference:</b>
31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>customers retain the right to contract with a retailer of choice even after inclusion in the embedded network (except where this right does not exist due to jurisdictional legislation).</li> </ul>	<b>Attachment reference:</b>
32	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to exercise their right to a retailer of choice, customers may need to enter into an ‘energy only’ contract, which is offered at retailers’ discretion and may be difficult to obtain. <i>We encourage applicants to provide prospective customers with a copy of our AER <a href="#">factsheet</a>, which explains the above in plain English and will satisfy this requirement.</i></li> </ul>	<b>Attachment reference:</b>
33	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>customers in embedded networks may not receive the same protections as those of an authorised retailer under the National Energy Retail Law.</li> </ul>	<b>Attachment reference:</b>
<b>Provision of information – in addition, you must provide evidence in your application you have provided customers with:</b>		
34	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>your electricity sales agreement, which details all fees and tariffs. <i>The energy sales agreement must be provided to prospective customers <u>prior</u> to seeking their consent to the retrofit.</i></li> </ul>	<b>Attachment reference:</b>
35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>contact details of a representative from your company to answer any queries or concerns about the proposed retrofit.</li> </ul>	<b>Attachment reference:</b>
<b>Explicit informed consent<sup>2</sup> – to demonstrate that you have obtained customer consent you need to:</b>		

<sup>2</sup> The Network Exemptions Guideline provides further detail on explicit informed consent calculation requirements.



Requirement	Applicant response – NOT APPLICABLE												
<b>Converting embedded networks (retrofitting)</b>													
<p>36</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide evidence of their explicit informed consent to the proposed retrofit</li> </ul> <p><i>Please note we cannot access Dropbox and explicit informed consent evidence may need to be submitted separately to AERexemptions@aer.gov.au in PDF format, via multiple emails.</i></p> <p><i>If the proposed embedded network has more than 100 prospective customers, please contact us to seek permission to provide a sample of the explicit informed consent evidence. We will assess requests on a case-by-case basis.</i></p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td data-bbox="879 248 1302 331">Number of customers who have provided explicit informed consent</td> <td data-bbox="1302 248 1441 331"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="879 331 1302 436">Number of customers who have refused to provide explicit informed consent</td> <td data-bbox="1302 331 1441 436"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="879 436 1302 483">Number of unresponsive customers</td> <td data-bbox="1302 436 1441 483"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="879 483 1302 530">Vacant premises</td> <td data-bbox="1302 483 1441 530"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="879 530 1302 636">Number of customers who are being wired out of the proposed embedded network</td> <td data-bbox="1302 530 1441 636"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="879 636 1302 680"><b>Total number of premises at the site</b></td> <td data-bbox="1302 636 1441 680"></td> </tr> </table>	Number of customers who have provided explicit informed consent		Number of customers who have refused to provide explicit informed consent		Number of unresponsive customers		Vacant premises		Number of customers who are being wired out of the proposed embedded network		<b>Total number of premises at the site</b>	
Number of customers who have provided explicit informed consent													
Number of customers who have refused to provide explicit informed consent													
Number of unresponsive customers													
Vacant premises													
Number of customers who are being wired out of the proposed embedded network													
<b>Total number of premises at the site</b>													
<p>37</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>confirm the explicit informed consent % calculation for total numbers affected by the proposed retrofit.</li> </ul> <p><i>Vacant premises, common areas and 'wired out' customers should be excluded from the percentage calculations.</i></p> <p><i>If you can demonstrate at the conclusion of a marketing campaign that an 85% or greater majority of prospective customers have agreed to the retrofit, you may apply to the AER to convert the network. If the AER determines special circumstances apply, we may apply a lower or higher threshold to a specific application.</i></p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td data-bbox="879 725 1302 831">% Of customers who have provided explicitly informed consent to the proposed retrofit</td> <td data-bbox="1302 725 1441 831"></td> </tr> </table>	% Of customers who have provided explicitly informed consent to the proposed retrofit											
% Of customers who have provided explicitly informed consent to the proposed retrofit													
<p>38</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>confirm that you sought consent separately from customers for the proposed retrofit and the energy sale agreement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Yes, consent was sought for the proposed retrofit, <i>separately</i> from the energy sales agreement <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>No, consent was <b>not</b> sought for the proposed retrofit, separately from the energy sales agreement <input type="checkbox"/></li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Provide an explanation of when and how consent documents were provided to prospective customers.</p>													
<p>39</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>attach a prospective customer consent summary/communications log, including dated records of consultation and meetings with all customers affected by the proposed retrofit, identifying and recording any non-consent and the reasons for non-consenting.</li> </ul>	<b>Attachment reference:</b>												
<p>40</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide evidence of your attempts to resolve any customer concerns relating to the proposed retrofit.</li> </ul>	<b>Attachment reference:</b>												
<b>Retail contestability – to demonstrate you have addressed any potential customer detriment resulting from a loss of retail contestability, you must confirm you have:</b>													
<p>41</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>sought advice from the distributor about whether non-consenting customers can be wired out of the embedded network.</li> </ul> <p>Provide evidence of advice sought/received and details of any available 'wiring out' options.</p>	<b>Attachment reference:</b>												
<p>42</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>taken steps to ensure customers who wish to remain with their retailer, but cannot be wired out, will not be financially disadvantaged by the retrofit.</li> </ul> <p>Measures to reduce financial detriment are likely to include price matching for affected customers and taking financial responsibility for any double billing of network charges.</p> <p>Provide evidence that supports your confirmation.</p>	<b>Attachment reference:</b>												

Requirement	Applicant response – NOT APPLICABLE
<b>Converting embedded networks (retrofitting)</b>	
<b>Customer dispute resolution services</b>	
43	<p data-bbox="215 264 853 407">Provide evidence that you have advised customers of your dispute resolution process and the available options for external dispute resolution, such as ombudsman schemes. For individual exemptions relating to retrofits, we will assess the need for ombudsman scheme membership on a case-by-case basis.</p> <p data-bbox="885 264 1114 291"><b>Attachment reference:</b></p>

Document attachment checklist	Tick as appropriate
Cover letter	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Public application version with confidential information redacted, for publication on our website	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Statement or letter verifying that a third party has the authority to act on your behalf (if relevant)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Site map	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Sample energy bill	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Energy sales agreement	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Proposed dispute resolution policy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Evidence of efforts to obtain ombudsman scheme membership (if relevant)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Evidence that customers have been advised they retain the right to contract with a retailer of choice	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p data-bbox="161 689 408 716"><i>Retrofit applications only</i></p> <p data-bbox="161 725 724 752">Marketing campaign evidence, including and evidence of:</p> <ul data-bbox="161 761 962 981" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="161 761 528 788">• information provision (see 30-34)</li> <li data-bbox="161 797 536 824">• explicit informed consent (see 36)</li> <li data-bbox="161 833 903 860">• a prospective customer consent summary/communications log (see 39)</li> <li data-bbox="161 869 612 896">• engagement with the distributor (see 41)</li> <li data-bbox="161 904 791 931">• attempts to resolve prospective customer concerns (see 40)</li> <li data-bbox="161 940 962 967">• providing prospective customers their options for dispute resolution (see 43).</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>