



# The Energy Charter

Annual Disclosure Statement 2020



## A message from the Chief Executive Officer



We have made strong progress against the Energy Charter principles and the areas for improvement we identified in our inaugural disclosure statement.

The last 12 months have been extremely challenging for our customers, communities and the economy with bushfires, drought and the COVID-19 pandemic. It has equally challenged the way our teams work, stay connected and run our business.

I am proud that our teams have kept the needs of our most vulnerable customers front of mind and made sure we maintain a reliable supply of electricity, natural gas and LPG to our millions of customers. We have supported those customers in hardship as a result of COVID-19, moving ahead of regulatory decrees to protect residential and small business customers in financial stress from disconnection or default listing and providing payment relief for those in need. We are continuing to support customers through these additional measures alongside our hardship program.

We have made strong progress against the Energy Charter principles and the areas for improvement we identified in our inaugural disclosure statement. The events of this year have underscored the importance of lifting trust, reducing our costs and creating a superior customer experience by transforming our operating model, capabilities and culture.

We are pleased to have announced gas and electricity price reductions from July 2020 for customers in most jurisdictions. Origin has also made it easier for customers to take up market offers and discounts ensuring that none of our electricity customers on a flat rate tariff paid more than the Commonwealth Default Market Offer or Victorian Default Offer in FY2020.<sup>1</sup>

This year we committed to making a step change in our capability to improve the customer experience. We have invested in Octopus, a UK best-in-class energy retailer, and will adopt its globally distinctive operating model and proprietary 'Kraken' IT platform to deliver a superior customer experience. Over the next year, we will run the phased migration of customers to our new operating model, while we continue to embed a customer-centric approach across our business.

We continue to drive the transition to a decarbonised, decentralised and increasingly digital future. We have increased our contracted renewable supply, created options for future investment in firming generation capacity and made it easier for customers to understand and control their consumption.

The principles of the Energy Charter align with Origin's purpose of getting energy right for our customers, communities and planet.

**Frank Calabria**  
Chief Executive Officer

<sup>1</sup> Origin ensured electricity bills after discounts for small market customers on flat tariffs were less than the DMO/VDO in FY2020. Where customers' bills were deemed higher than the DMO, Origin took proactive steps in adjusting those offers below the DMO/VDO. Price changes for each jurisdiction in FY2021 are set out in our commentary in Principle 2.

## Our performance against the Energy Charter’s five principles

The Energy Charter is a whole-of-sector initiative to address customer expectations.

Our annual disclosure statement outlines how Origin has delivered against the Energy Charter’s five principles for households, small business and commercial and industrial customers. This disclosure focuses on our customer-facing Energy Markets business and will be reviewed by the independent Accountability Panel of the Energy Charter. The Accountability Panel will review the disclosures of all Energy Charter signatories and will publish a final report in December 2020.

We report on our Integrated Gas business, including how we’re getting energy right for our communities and planet, in our 2020 Sustainability Report, which was lodged with the Australian Securities Exchange on 20 August 2020. The report can be found at [originenergy.com.au/sustainability](http://originenergy.com.au/sustainability) and also includes our reporting against the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures recommendations.

### Energy Charter Maturity Model

Energy Charter signatories are to subjectively assess their level of maturity against the Principles and Principles in Action. An explanation of the assessment framework is provided at [theenergycharter.com.au/whatwedo/](http://theenergycharter.com.au/whatwedo/) and our self-assessment is summarised below.

**Table: Self-assessment against the Energy Charter Maturity Model**

	Elementary	Emerging	Evolved	Empowered	Exceeding
Definitions/ characteristics of capability	No formal approach to the majority of the Principles in Action	Emerging and repeatable approach to the majority of the Principles in Action	Evolved and defined approach to the majority of the Principles in Action and implemented	Empowered and proactive approach to the Principles in Action and customer outcomes measured and managed	Exceeding all Principles in Action and achieving optimal customer outcomes
1. We will put customers at the centre of our business and the energy system				○	
2. We will improve energy affordability for customers				○	
3. We will provide energy safely, sustainably and reliably				○	
4. We will improve the customer experience				○	
5. We will support customers facing vulnerable circumstances				○	

We have made significant improvements in delivering against the Energy Charter Principles in FY2020. We set out our plan to improve performance over FY2021 in Principle 1, including migrating to a new operating model that will deliver a step change in our capability to improve customer experience.



#### Case study

### Strategic partnership with Octopus Energy to transform Origin’s retail business

Our new partnership with Octopus Energy will transform our retail operating model and how we service our customers, radically improving the customer experience.

[Read more here >](#)

## Principle 1: We will put customers at the centre of our business and the energy system

Origin is committed to embedding a customer-centric approach and is implementing leading-edge technological solutions to support this.

Origin is one of Australia’s leading energy retailers. Customers are at the heart of everything we do, and our immediate focus is to transform their experience to make it simple, seamless and increasingly digital. In the near term, we are focused on delivering a superior customer experience and growing our product offerings, including solar, Community Energy Services and broadband.

### Embedding our new purpose, values and behaviours

Origin embarked on a cultural transformation program in 2018 with a new purpose and values. These are underpinned by defined behaviours expected of everyone at Origin and closely align with the Energy Charter principles. The Origin purpose and values include specific reference to the importance of customers.

#### Our purpose

Getting energy right for our customers, communities and planet.

#### Our values

- Work as one team, one Origin
- Be the customer champion
- Care about our impact
- Find a better way
- Being accountable

In FY2020, we set about building the capability of our people leaders with a focus on our ‘behaviours’. Our senior people leaders are completing a five-workshop program over 18 months to understand and embed the day-to-day habits that will help them and their teams to live our values.

We also launched an Origin-wide reward and recognition program rooted in our values. The program has been developed so everyone can recognise a colleague or team in the moment or formally by nominating a colleague for a monthly reward. Over 5,000 recognitions were made in the first month of the program.

Origin’s purpose and values are endorsed by the Board and incorporated in our remuneration framework:

- A balanced scorecard approach is used to determine the Managing Director and CEO’s bonus (short-term incentive). This scorecard is weighted 65 per cent for financial measures and 35 per cent for non-financial measures. In FY2020, the non-financial measures comprised voice of the customer (10 per cent), customer innovation (5 per cent) and safety and people measures (20 per cent).
- Bonuses for eligible employees have a similar structure and always include a customer component.

As part of the annual performance review process, all employees are required to assess their behaviour against each value.

The Board reviews customer experience performance regularly, including regular reports to the Board on customer complaints, their drivers and actions to reduce complaints.

### Employee engagement

Employee engagement can directly impact positive customer outcomes. 91 per cent of Origin employees participated in our annual engagement survey in FY2020, our highest ever participation rate. Our overall score was 75 per cent, an increase from 61 per cent in FY2019. This result places us in the top quartile of organisations across Australia and New Zealand. We are 10 per cent ahead of the energy and utilities industry average engagement score of 65 per cent.

### Customer Insights Panel

We have expanded our Customer Insights Panel and Experience Lounge to include remote testing as well as online surveys. Across the program we have received feedback from more than 8,000 customers and over 62,000 comments through our digital channels. These forums help us to ensure that customers’ views are well considered and represented in our business decisions.

We also collate and analyse verbatim feedback received by our call centres as well as through channels such as field sales and kiosks. Origin has performed well on first-call resolution (meeting customer needs in a single call) and has identified areas for improvement, including helping customers understand and manage their energy usage.

### Driving improvements through innovation

To support our strategy of connecting customers to the energies and technologies of the future, Origin has dedicated in-house teams and partners with start-ups – many through Free Electrons, the energy start-up program we co-founded in 2017 – and other

innovators in the energy space to prototype and trial new technologies with a view to bringing them to market. Over the last three years, we have assessed more than 2,500 companies across areas such as solar, storage, control of distributed assets, Internet of Things devices in the home, energy efficiency, electric vehicle smart charging, data security and blockchain. Our latest technological offerings giving customers greater control over their energy are summarised in Principle 4.

### Our partnership with Octopus Energy

Key to the success of our strategy is finding the right customer solutions. This year we entered a strategic partnership with the innovative UK retailer Octopus Energy, to adopt its market-leading operating model and customer technology platform, as well as taking a 20 per cent equity interest.

Octopus is a leader in customer satisfaction, winning numerous awards including, best in class by ‘Which?’ and a 5-star rating on Trustpilot, the world’s leading customer review platform. Its customer complaint rate is a fifth of the UK average, its churn rate one of the lowest in the UK, and its cost to serve significantly lower than its major peers.

Octopus’ customer platform, Kraken, provides a single view of a customer with advanced analytics to improve the customer experience. Kraken also has a high degree of automation and is designed to work with future changes in energy usage, such as connected devices. Combined with Octopus’ operating model, this will provide significant benefits for our customers by providing one point of service, simpler processes, reduced call volume and handling times and the ability to integrate services into a single account.

We are making good progress in customising the Kraken platform for the Australian market and are on track to have our first major customer cohort migrated by the end of the calendar year. Our first group of Energy Specialists have been trained on the UK Kraken platform and are supporting Octopus’ UK customers, and will be transitioning to the Australian platform as we start to migrate the first customers.

“Through the Octopus partnership, our people will be given the tools and empowered to provide an exceptional service, with small autonomous teams having full accountability for end-to-end customer experience, resulting in faster and better service.”

Frank Calabria  
Chief Executive Officer



## Principle 2: We will improve energy affordability for customers

Affordability is a pressing issue for our customers and we continue to focus on actions to reduce energy prices.

In June 2019, Origin went beyond what was required with the implementation of the DMO by reducing electricity prices for more than 520,000 residential and small business customers on standing offers and non-discounted plans.<sup>2</sup> Due to increases in gas wholesale and network costs, Origin's natural gas tariffs increased between 2 and 3 per cent in New South Wales, Queensland and the Australian Capital Territory, and 4.5 per cent in South Australia. Origin's natural gas tariffs remained competitive despite these price increases.

In January 2020, Victorian electricity price changes reflected an increase in the wholesale and network costs. To support our most vulnerable customers and reduce the impact of the price increase, Origin introduced an automatic 5 per cent discount on the VDO for concession card holders. We also absorbed an increase in network costs for natural gas to keep prices flat in 2020.

In July 2020, we continued to reduce prices, announcing price reductions in most jurisdictions, with electricity customers across Queensland and South Australia seeing average reductions in

their electricity prices in the range of 4 to 5 per cent. Across NSW, where electricity network costs have risen by approximately 2 to 3 per cent for residential customers, Origin committed to absorbing some of these additional costs so that most customers do not receive an increase.

Price adjustments for FY2021 differ between each state depending on wholesale and network costs. This year, wholesale electricity costs declined in all states driven by more renewables coming online. Electricity network costs have fallen in Queensland and South Australia, while they have increased across NSW and the ACT, offsetting reductions in wholesale electricity costs.

The wholesale cost of natural gas has decreased across the country, while gas network costs vary between different regions. All mass market natural gas customers across Australia have seen a price reduction from 15 July 2020, with the exception of residential customers in South Australia where Origin has absorbed an increase in network gas costs to keep prices flat.

Origin has also made it easier for customers to take up market offers and discounts by:

- ensuring that none of our electricity customers on a flat rate tariff paid more than the DMO or VDO in FY2020;<sup>3</sup>
- continuing to deliver the South Australian Government's Concessions Energy Discount Offer. Over 50,000 South Australian concession cardholders have taken up the offer;
- ensuring concession card holders who are on undiscounted electricity plans in the ACT, NSW, South Australia and Victoria receive an automatic discount/loyalty credit on their bills; and

### Case study

## Helping low-income households in NSW access solar

Origin is working with the New South Wales Government to provide free, fully installed solar systems to around 2,000 low-income households in the Illawarra, Shoalhaven, Central Coast and southern Sydney regions.

[Read more here >](#)

Table: Summary of Origin electricity and gas price changes for FY2021\*

Jurisdiction	Electricity price changes from 1 July 2020		Gas price changes from 15 July 2020	
	Residential customers Average % tariff change (estimated annual cost impact)	Small business customers Average % tariff change (estimated annual cost impact)	Residential customers Average % tariff change (estimated annual cost impact)	Small business customers Average % tariff change (estimated annual cost impact)
Queensland	-5.1% (-\$88)	-4.4% (-\$194)	-0.3% (-\$2)	-2.7% (-\$116)
South Australia	-5.6% (-\$127)	-5.5% (-\$372)	No change	-1.8% (-\$119)
New South Wales	-0.6% (-\$12)	-0.7% (-\$32)	-7.1% (-\$55)	-7.8% (-\$384)
Australian Capital Territory	-0.4% (-\$7)	-0.1% (-\$10)	-1.2% (-\$16)	-2.1% (-\$166)

\* Weighted average electricity movement based on all tariffs in the relevant network area or the weighted average customer bill movement where there are multiple networks in a jurisdiction (e.g. NSW electricity and Queensland gas). Estimated cost impact based on average annual consumption.

<sup>2</sup> An average residential customer on a flat tariff in NSW saved between \$50 and \$91, while an average customer in Queensland saved \$107 per year. An average small business customer in NSW on a flat tariff saved between \$471 and \$832, while an average small business customer in Queensland saved \$324 per year.

<sup>3</sup> Origin ensured electricity bills after discounts for small market customers on flat tariffs were less than the DMO/VDO in FY2020. Where customers' bills were deemed higher than the DMO, Origin took proactive steps in adjusting those offers below the DMO/VDO.

- extending additional assistance to our Power On hardship program customers. Origin committed to ‘freezing the impact’ of the July 2017 price changes for customers in the program in NSW, Queensland, South Australia, Northern Territory and the ACT until 30 June 2020. We’ve continued to support this group of customers beyond June 2020; with these customers currently receiving price relief credits, ensuring the net bill outcome is below FY2017 bill levels. We also ensure this group of customers are on a competitive offer available with Origin.

### Commercial and industrial customers

Commercial and industrial customers seeking supply contracts for future periods have seen prices continue to fall over the course of FY2020 as a result of declining wholesale market prices in both gas and electricity. The decreasing electricity prices allowed us to smooth bills and reduce in-year pricing for customers.

We are assisting many of our customers to actively reduce their energy consumption by enhancing our energy solutions product offering, which includes solar, power factor correction and flexibility services. A number of our commercial and industrial customers joined our virtual power plant (VPP) in FY2020, benefitting from payments from Origin to leverage their flexible assets and load and the opportunity to earn additional revenue streams. See Principle 4 for more information on our VPP.

We have worked with customers affected by COVID-19 to tailor assistance to their needs, including deferring payments, waiving fees and recontracting for additional terms to reduce current year pricing. Many of our customers have found that although their energy consumption has reduced to negligible levels due to COVID-19-related closures, they have continued to receive bills, which were predominantly network charges. Origin advocated on behalf of customers, working closely with networks to enable customers to move onto new network tariffs without the usual 12 months of history and stop them receiving bills with large demand charges.

### Working for longer-term affordability

Increasing capacity and supply into the market are the critical actions required to keep downward pressure on energy prices. We are targeting for renewables and storage to account for more than 25 per cent of our owned and contracted generation capacity by the end of 2020, subject to development and commissioning timelines. Over the year we have continued to progress a range of brownfield generation opportunities, including fast-start gas and batteries, which would further improve our flexibility and capacity to support the increase in renewables.

A stable and effective regulatory framework is critical to lower energy prices over the longer term and to ensure reliable supply through the energy transition. Origin contributes to the policy process of federal, state and territory governments by actively participating in public policy debate, proactively engaging with policy makers and participating in public forums, industry associations, think tanks and research.

The CEO and other Origin representatives use opportunities to advocate for sound policy outcomes in media and other public statements, speeches, the Origin blog and on social media.

We also advocate for better customer outcomes through our membership of industry associations. See [originenergy.com.au/industryassociations](http://originenergy.com.au/industryassociations) for more information and our Sustainability Report for our position on energy policy.

### Principle 3: We will provide energy safely, sustainably and reliably

As an essential service, we are committed to providing energy to our customers that is affordable, reliable and sustainable.

### Safety and environment

One of our core values is caring about our impact. We are committed to preventing all injuries and ensuring we keep our people, environment and communities safe from harm.

Our personal safety has improved, with our Total Recordable Injury Frequency Rate – which measures the number of company-wide work-related recordable injuries per million hours worked for employees and contractors – falling from 4.4 in FY2019 to 2.6 in FY2020. The reduction reflects the implementation of targeted activities that focus on the safety of our people.

The health and safety of our people and communities was one of the key priorities of our responses to both natural disasters and the COVID-19 pandemic. To ensure we maintained energy supply, and did so safely, we had to change many aspects of the way we work, including how to safely transport key workers to our operational sites. We moved most of our office-based staff to remote working from mid-March and also fast-tracked a technology upgrade to our phone systems that enabled 1,200 of our contact centre staff across four locations in two countries to work from home within 48 hours. For employees unable to work

remotely, we implemented a range of measures to mitigate risks such as managing rosters to reduce contact between staff, restricting visitors to sites and additional health screenings.

In March 2020, we temporarily paused exploration in the Northern Territory’s Beetaloo Basin to help keep local communities safe. Our response followed discussions with the NT Government and the Northern Land Council, the representative body for the Aboriginal people where we are exploring. A rigorous COVID-19 management plan approved by the NT Chief Health Officer was put in place to support our people and safely maintain the site.

### Supporting customers and communities

We play an important role within Australian communities, including through the provision of reliable and affordable energy, as a major employer with over 5,000 people, and by supporting educational opportunities through the Origin Energy Foundation, our philanthropic organisation. This year the Origin Energy Foundation celebrated its 10th anniversary. Since inception, the Foundation has provided more than \$27 million to support community organisations and has helped more than 62,000 young people to achieve in education.

We respect the rights and interests of the communities where we operate and consult with them to understand and manage the environmental, economic and social impacts of our activities and maximise the benefits. These can include employment for people living in the region; opportunities for local suppliers; financial payments for pastoralists and Native Title holders; and taxes, levies and royalties for governments. Local communities can benefit from activities such as dedicated funding programs for community initiatives and local apprenticeship and traineeship opportunities.

During FY2020, we contributed more than \$795,000 to support various programs and events in the communities in which we operate. Origin and its employees also donated more than \$870,000 to support affected communities, including \$300,000 to the Australian Red Cross and state-based rural fire services, and \$100,000 to Drought Angels.

The impacts of COVID-19 are likely to be far-reaching and we believe in business getting behind the community and offering whatever support we can. For Origin, this has included working with our suppliers to help community organisations source much needed provisions such as hand soap; redirecting our office fruit and biscuit deliveries and sending other perishable items to a range of community groups; and supplying vouchers for food, clothing and other essential items to those in need through local charities. We are supporting our small business suppliers with shorter payment

terms to help them with cash flow through the current period of economic uncertainty. We are also providing health and wellbeing support to communities where we operate, such as in regional Queensland where we launched a program to give small businesses and their employees access to a range of counselling services.

We also support community capacity-building programs and events, such as national and state Financial Counsellor’s Associations conferences, which provide training and development opportunities for financial counsellors so they can better support people experiencing financial stress.

## Energy and climate change

We have a five-pillar approach to progressively decarbonise our business.

- 1. Exit coal-fired generation by 2032.** To reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and help lead the transition to a decarbonised future, we have committed to exiting coal-fired generation at our Eraring Power Station by 2032. Until that time, Eraring will play an important role in providing energy stability and reliability to customers.
- 2. Significantly grow renewables in our portfolio.** We continue to target 25 per cent of our owned and contracted generation capacity being made up of renewables and storage by the end of 2020, with 530MW of new wind generation at Stockyard Hill currently under construction.
- 3. Utilise our strong gas position as a lower-emissions fuel.** Origin owns Australia’s largest fleet of gas-fired power stations, supporting the increase in intermittent renewable generation in the National Energy Market by helping to meet demand when the sun is not shining and wind is not blowing.
- 4. Empower customers with cleaner, smarter energy solutions.** We continuously assess and trial new technologies and business models that have the potential to give customers more control over their energy usage.
- 5. Demonstrate leadership in climate change advocacy.** Origin continues to advocate for climate change action, including the progressive decarbonisation of the energy sector and the policy settings to enable this.

Climate change remains one of the most significant challenges facing society and managing the transition to a low-carbon economy is a strategic priority for Origin. We are the only company in the Australian energy sector to have validated and approved science-based emissions reduction targets. These commit us to halving our Scope 1 and Scope 2 greenhouse gas emissions by 2032<sup>4</sup> from our FY2017 baseline and reducing our Scope 3 emissions by 25 per cent.<sup>5</sup>

In FY2020, our Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions fell by 9 per cent compared to the previous year, while our Scope 3 emissions declined by 12 per cent on FY2019. We are committed to delivering further reductions on our absolute emissions over the short term and recently announced a new short-term emissions target, to reduce our Scope 1 emissions over the next three financial years to FY2023 by 10 per cent on average, compared to our FY2017 baseline.

## Delivering reliable solutions for business customers

Origin partners with its business customers to provide them with ongoing support to better manage energy for long-term sustainability, including a reliable supply. In January 2020, a weather event caused damage to transmission lines between Victoria and South Australia, cutting off electricity supply to Victoria’s Portland aluminium smelter and isolating South Australia from the NEM. The Portland smelter, the largest employer in the region, requires a large continuous supply of energy to operate, without which it was at risk of serious and permanent damage. During this transmission outage, Mortlake Power Station was able to provide electricity directly to the Portland smelter via a closed-loop connection, enabling it to continue operating while transmission cables were replaced.



### Case study

## Supporting reliable and clean energy

Origin is improving the flexibility of our gas fleet to support the rapid uptake of renewables in South Australia and ensure our customers have access to reliable and affordable energy.

[Read more here >](#)

4 On an equity share basis.  
 5 Scope 1 greenhouse gas emissions are the emissions released to the atmosphere as a direct result of an activity, e.g. electricity generation and gas production. Scope 2 emissions result from the electricity that we consume to power our offices and operating sites. Scope 3 emissions encompass indirect emissions, other than Scope 2 emissions, relating to our value chain that we do not own or control, including wholesale purchases of electricity from the NEM.



## Principle 4: We will improve the customer experience

We are committed to creating a positive customer experience and looking for ways to make energy easier and smarter.

Origin has long supported the introduction of a reference price across the sector as a way of making it clearer and easier for customers to navigate the market and compare offers between retailers.

Since the introduction of the DMO and VDO on 1 July 2019, we have continued to simplify our products to make comparison against our peers easier for our customers. We have also eliminated products with pay-on-time conditions.

### Making tasks easier for customers

In FY2020, we further improved customer journeys by moving our customer platform to a cloud-based solution. This provides our customers with easier and smarter authentication and a faster route to the right team to resolve their query quickly, with our agents now equipped with better data and processes to assist. Customers can now also access digital self-serve solutions for simple enquiries.

We also implemented our Customer Hub technology, which brings together data points from multiple systems to build a complete customer view and improve our ability to deliver a seamless and consistent customer experience.

To make completing simple tasks online easier for our customers, we launched new functionality in My Account and our app to enable them to update or change plans, deal with payments and seek help and support. Our renewal process has been simplified by introducing automated renewals and product and benefit extensions at the end of a contract and we have digitised short-term payment plan functionality in our hardship customer journey.

### Customer snapshot

4.2 million retail and business customer accounts at 30 June 2020.

	<b>Electricity</b> 2.6 million
	<b>Natural gas</b> 1.2 million
	<b>LPG</b> 363,000
	<b>Broadband</b> 20,000

Origin's mobile app has become a key digital channel for our customers to self-serve, with customers using the app to actively monitor their usage, check their predicted bills, view their bill history and pay their bills. Usage and cost information has been added to MyAccount and the app so customers can see costs and actual consumption in a quarterly, monthly or daily view. In February 2020 our Origin App was voted number 1 over all retailer apps – 68 per cent of customers are now on e-billing and service call volumes reduced by a further 8 per cent this year.

### Measuring customer satisfaction

One of our key customer satisfaction measurement tools is the Net Promoter Score (NPS), which measures customer advocacy and helps us understand what our customers are saying about their experience with us. We measure NPS as a business (at the strategic level), and after a customer has a conversation or digital experience with us (at the interaction level).

Our Strategic NPS improved by eight points from -6 in FY2019 to +2 in FY2020, giving Origin the highest strategic NPS of tier 1 energy providers. This follows a continuous focus on improving the customer experience, offering fair prices and sustainable energy solutions.

At the interaction level, our NPS was 26.4 in FY2020, an improvement from 24.7 at the end of FY2019. Since we began measuring Interaction NPS in FY2016, our performance has improved from a score of 12.3. This is due to an improved customer experience as tools and processes make it quicker and simpler for customer enquiries to be resolved.

#### Case studies

## Creating a digital first customer experience

Origin's Digital Product Manager, Sarah Howard, has long been championing the potential of technology to help solve problems and make energy smarter and easier for our customers.

[Read more here >](#)

## Smarter solutions giving customers greater control

We want to encourage more customers to be engaged in the market and take advantage of the products and services on offer.

Last year, customers with smart meters could start to better understand their electricity usage with the rollout of our Usage Buster tool, which splits usage by appliance. This year customers can win prizes or cash for voluntarily reducing their electricity usage or shifting their usage to another time when demand for energy is lower, giving them control over their energy usage and the opportunity to reduce their carbon footprint. This new product – Spike – was launched in partnership with OhmConnect, a US-based tech start-up that participated in the first year of Free Electrons.

Australians have embraced rooftop solar, with one of the highest penetration rates in the world. However, the take-up of battery storage in the home has been much lower. We are working with another Free Electrons participant, Orison, on its modular energy storage system to help address this issue. The portable nature of the Orison system means customers will be able to easily install storage in their home, move it to a new location within the home or take it with them if they move. The system will provide customers with control and flexibility around their energy use, an opportunity to save money on energy bills, back-up power during blackouts and help reduce emissions.

We are building a Virtual Power Plant, with more than 85 MW of connected distributed energy assets and Internet of Things devices, including batteries, electric hot water, pool pumps, air conditioners, electric vehicles, diesel generators and other large industrial assets. The platform uses artificial intelligence to learn and predict the behaviour of energy consumers and optimises the performance of assets based on this learned behaviour. This creates value for customers by maximising solar self-consumption, energy efficiency measures, load shifting and peak shaving. The platform also allows us to use customers' assets for demand response and market services.

We have also started to provide charging solutions and infrastructure to customers who have electric vehicles and are undertaking a trial with the Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA) to manage and reduce the cost of charging electric vehicles.

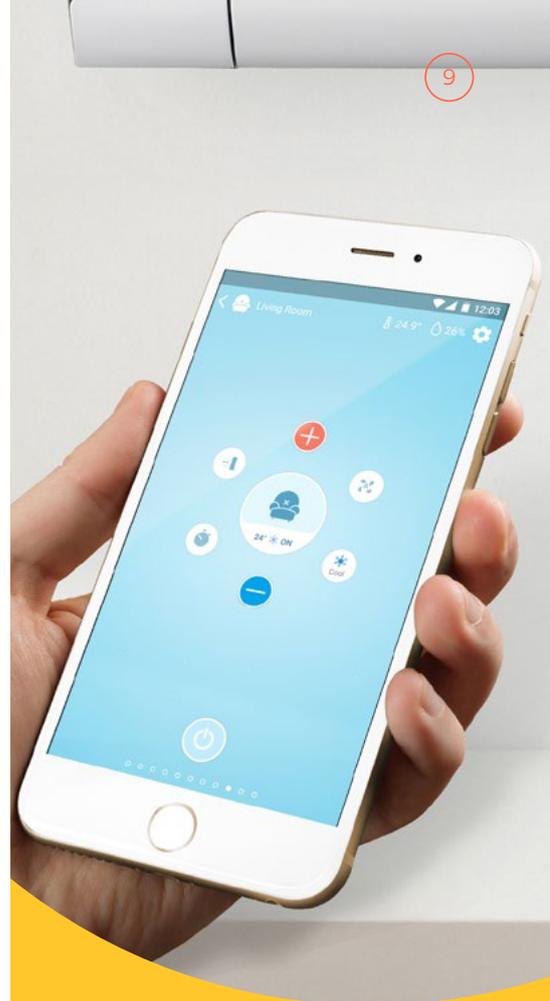
## Customer complaints

We endeavour to resolve customer complaints quickly and identify learning opportunities to enhance our service delivery and customer experience. We measure complaints at an interaction level and develop action plans to address key drivers, reporting to the Board's risk committee.

If a customer feels that, despite our best efforts, we haven't addressed their issue or concern, they can have the matter reviewed by the relevant ombudsman in their state or territory.

In FY2020, the number of ombudsman complaints per 1,000 Origin customers was 2.7, in line with FY2019. In the six years to the end of FY2020, ombudsman customer complaints have declined from 4.9 per 1,000 customers.

In 2019, Origin experienced an increase in customer complaints around digital metering installations with the introduction of Power of Choice metering reforms. We responded to this and have taken considerable steps to improve installation time, including increasing resources across our meter providers, simplifying and improving our processes, increasing resources to make and receive customer calls and introducing a new digital metering tool allowing users to provide us with meter access information. This has resulted in a significantly improved customer experience when installing new digital meters.



### Case studies

## Reimagining the future of energy

Origin's Group Manager, Future Energy, Brendan Manzie, leads a team focussed on providing customers with smarter and easier ways to manage their energy use, save money and reduce their carbon footprint.

[Read more here >](#)

## Principle 5: We will support customers facing vulnerable circumstances

We support vulnerable customers through tailored solutions, including direct bill relief, getting our customers on the right deal and helping them access concession and other government or community support.

Given the essential nature of energy, protecting people in financial hardship is always a priority for Origin and we have not passed on any price increases to our hardship customers since 2016. We are also working closely with community partners to support these customers in other ways, including investing more than \$15 million in our Power On hardship program during FY2020.

At 30 June 2020, we had 34,700 active customer accounts in the Power On program, with 33,100 customers having paid their debts and successfully completed the program throughout the year. Eligible customers can take part in the program, and our call centre staff are trained to identify a customer who may be experiencing hardship. We've also made it easier for customers to self-identify and access assistance through our Origin App, where they can create payment plans, provide concession information and access financial support. We stay in regular contact with hardship customers to ensure they are on the most appropriate product.

Many communities were affected by the drought and bushfires experienced in Australia in FY2020. Origin provided short and longer-term assistance to customers in impacted areas, including waiving debt and providing ongoing hardship support. We also set aside a bushfire relief fund of \$4 million to directly support those who needed assistance with their energy bills.

In March 2020, we announced new measures to support customers impacted by COVID-19, including protecting residential and small business customers in financial distress from disconnection or default listing, and waiving late payment fees until 31 July 2020. We have since extended this support to 31 October 2020 for customers who let us know they are having issues paying on time due to the pandemic. We sent emails to customers, published open letters in newspapers, advertised on TV and radio, posted on social media, and included information on bills to help customers know what support was available and how to get it. We continue to closely monitor and adjust our assistance package.

The various challenges that Origin and our customers faced this year, including natural disasters, COVID-19 and associated restrictions, and regulatory change have impacted the way our customers have needed our support and have resulted in more complex conversations, at times this resulted in temporary increases in call handling and call waiting times.

Origin has a dedicated customer advocacy team that provides vulnerable customer support, including front-line staff to deliver programs. We continuously survey customers to identify what is working well and opportunities for improvement. We surveyed customers who received assistance from our customer advocacy team and note that their NPS score in FY2020 was significantly higher than Origin's overall strategic NPS, indicating that the service they provide is valued by our vulnerable customers.

Origin works with community organisations and federal and state government agencies to help vulnerable customers achieve financial independence. This includes our support for women and children in crisis through The Queens Fund and an additional \$60,000 in debt waivers to support those impacted by family and domestic violence. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, we haven't been able to physically connect with the community, however, we have participated in virtual Bring your Bill and Community Assistance days organised by the Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW (EWON). Customers express their interest through EWON and one of our senior advocacy consultants contacts the customer to discuss their energy needs at a time that suits them.