

# Customers management approach



We are committed to creating value for our customers through a culture that puts them firmly at the centre of all our decisions and actions.

Origin is a leading retailer of electricity, gas and LPG, delivering energy to homes and businesses across Australia. Our customers depend on us to provide energy that is reliable, affordable and sustainable.

## **Making energy smarter and easier for our customers**

In a rapidly changing energy landscape, we are focusing on making energy smarter, easier and cleaner for customers, enabled by developing new capabilities and trialling new technologies.

Rooftop solar, batteries, electric vehicles and Internet devices are changing the way our customers use energy. These technologies are increasingly offering customers the opportunity to have more control over their energy usage and costs. Origin is providing more personalised products and services that deliver value to customers by helping them manage their energy assets in their homes and business.

## **Better customer experiences**

Customers are at the heart of everything we do. We are working to deliver great customer experiences by making them simple, seamless and increasingly digital.

We are focused on engaging with our customers through the channels they prefer. Customers can contact Origin and manage their account via the My Account page on our website, our app, online chat, social apps, phone or email. A telephone interpreter service is available in multiple languages. Our My Business Account digital portal offers business customers instant access to bills, meter data and customised reports and analytics. Our digital hardship portal gives customers with overdue bills a range of options to make it easier to make a payment or set up a payment plan.

To make purchasing and managing essential services in homes and businesses as easy as possible, we are working to make Origin a one-stop shop. This includes products and services such as broadband, and an energy plan with home emergency support.

In May 2020, Origin entered a strategic partnership with UK-based energy retailer and technology business Octopus Energy, taking a 20 per cent equity share in the

fast-growing company. We also gained a perpetual licence to its customer technology platform, Kraken, in Australia.

Kraken will deliver significant benefits for our customers by providing one point of service, simpler processes and the ability to integrate services into a single account. These customers are being serviced by small teams of Energy Specialists, each with accountability for providing end-to-end service for their unique customer base.

## **Smart products**

Finding the right customer solutions is key to the success of our strategy of connecting customers to the energy and technologies of the future. We trial new technologies and business models and assess hundreds of opportunities and potential partners each year in areas such as solar storage, control of distributed assets, Internet of Things devices in the home, energy efficiency, electric vehicles, smart charging, data security and blockchain.

A key part of this is Free Electrons, an open innovation program for clean energy start-ups. Free Electrons has connected us with leading-edge ideas and innovations since we cofounded the program in 2017. Free Electrons alumni include OhmConnect, with which we partnered to launch Origin Spike, a gamified behavioural demand response technology, and Orison, with which we are working to develop a modular energy storage system.

We are also growing our virtual power plant (VPP), which connects energy assets across many separate locations and coordinates them to work together like a traditional power station. Through the VPP, we can shift demand to times when renewable generation is high and electricity prices are low, providing grid stabilisation services to network businesses and enabling personalised connected solutions for our retail and business customers.

## **Customer satisfaction**

We monitor customer experience continually. We use a number of performance measures to review and improve how we work, and report these in our annual Sustainability Report.

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

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), after a customer has a conversation or digital experience with us (at the interaction level), and at the completion of a request such as a property move (at the journey level).

Customer ratings and reviews play an increasing role in how consumers make purchasing decisions, so these are important in helping us better serve our customers. We actively monitor, respond to and encourage customers to post reviews on Google, Trustpilot and Product Review.

### Insights and feedback

We use our customer insights panel, Origin Exchange, to gather feedback and ensure we consider customer experiences and views in our business decisions. More than 3,000 customers have joined the panel and provide insights and feedback on a range of projects in development, from reviewing web pages to end-to-end customer experiences to a new product proposition. We also collate and analyse verbatim feedback received in our call centres and through channels such as field sales and kiosks.

We engage with consumer groups via our Consumer Advocacy Panel. The Panel is chaired by the Executive General Manager, Retail and meets approximately every four months.

### Customer complaints

We try to resolve customer complaints quickly and to identify learning opportunities to enhance our service delivery and customer experience. If a customer feels that, despite our best efforts, we have not addressed their issue or concern, they can have the matter reviewed by the relevant ombudsman in their state or territory.

More details on how we handle complaints, including customer rights and entitlements and ombudsman contact details, can be found on our website at [originenergy.com.au/contact-us/complaints.html](https://originenergy.com.au/contact-us/complaints.html)

### Responsible marketing

We are committed to responsible marketing practices that build a better, more direct relationship with our customers. Since 2013, we have not engaged in door-to-door sales for the residential market, and

we make limited outbound calls. We filter our customer lists for campaign activity to exclude customers we know to be in financial distress or to have been impacted by emergencies such as bushfires or floods and we proactively contact customers with information on how we can support them.

### Customer privacy and security

Origin is committed to protecting customers' privacy and managing their personal and credit related information in accordance with the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)*. Our [Privacy policy](#) explains how we manage personal information, as required by the Act and the National Privacy Principles.

Our Privacy policy and [Privacy collection statement for credit reporting](#) set out how we collect, use, hold, and disclose customers' personal and credit-related information.

We ensure our website and app are as secure as possible. The security of our customers' accounts and details is vitally important to us.

### Cyber security

We recognise that cyber security risk can have a material impact on our business. We do all we can to protect our customers against risks online, and we have a dedicated cyber risk team that is responsible for implementing and Board-approved cyber strategy and continuously improving controls. We are committed to continuously improving our security resilience and safeguarding our critical assets and customers' data.

We define cyber security risk as the potential loss or harm from misuse or compromise of Origin's technology and information assets. The most prominent examples of cyber security risks are ransomware attacks, denial of service attacks, and data theft and loss.

A cyber security incident could lead to a breach of privacy, loss of and/or corruption of commercially sensitive data, and/or a disruption of critical business processes. This may adversely impact our customers and Origin's business activities.

Cyber security risks are governed at multiple levels at Origin. The Board Risk Committee has overall governance accountability, and business units are responsible for adequate controls within their technology platforms and business processes.

Origin has appointed an executive to the role of Chief Information Security Officer to lead the in-house cyber security team. The team is responsible for the deployment and ongoing effectiveness of enterprise-wide security controls. A cyber security strategy

is in place and is regularly updated to cater for emerging threats, security regulations and stakeholder expectations.

A key part of our cyber security program is our robust security monitoring and incident response process, which is exercised on a regular basis, and we are supported by external incident response specialists. We also undertake regular independent security assurance from the perspective of an attacker to assess the resilience of our digital channels and internal security controls.

Our employees undertake annual compulsory cyber awareness training, including how to identify phishing emails and keep data safe.

### Energy affordability and hardship

Affordability is an important issue for our customers, and we continue to focus on actions to reduce energy prices.

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 Default Market Offer in New South Wales, south east Queensland and South Australia and the Victorian Default Offer in 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.

### Supporting vulnerable customers and communities

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

Origin's hardship program Power On offers referrals to financial counselling services, flexible payment options, free home energy audits and energy efficiency information to help customers manage their energy bills. We work with customers entering this program to reduce their energy usage to sustainable levels and repay their debt over a longer period.

Origin is required to submit quarterly performance indicator reports to the Australian Energy Regulator and the Essential Services Commission of Victoria, and an annual performance indicator report to the Economic Regulation Authority of Western Australia, as well as report compliance breaches according to a prescribed schedule.

Given the essential nature of energy, protecting people in financial hardship is a priority for Origin. We have processes in place to protect customers from wrongful disconnection, including:

- checking services orders created when a customer is being disconnected for non-payment;
- tracking and monitoring potential wrongful disconnections, with feedback loops to coach and upskill agents; and
- providing annual training for all credit and collections team members on the disconnection process.

If a wrongful disconnection does occur, we investigate the issue and seek to identify the root cause, and implement fixes to mitigate the risk of similar incidents occurring.

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.

Origin works with community organisations and federal and state government agencies to help vulnerable customers and those experiencing hardship. This includes our support for women and children in crisis through The Queens Fund, and providing debt waivers to those impacted by family and domestic violence. We also partner with the New South Wales Government to deliver the Solar for Low Income Households program.

We have also partnered with other energy companies and civil society groups to help address some of the barriers experienced by members of culturally and linguistically diverse communities when managing their energy needs.

## Energy reliability and sustainability

The energy sector is rapidly transitioning towards a low carbon future, with more renewables coming into the market every day. It is important that our industry gets this transition right so we can continue to deliver reliable, affordable and cleaner energy.

### Reliability

We will continue to adapt Eraring Power Station during the energy transition ahead of our exit from coal-fired generation by 2032 or earlier. We are already planning for how we will eventually replace Eraring's supply with renewables, firmed by large-scale batteries, gas-fired peaking generation and pumped hydro.

Our fleet of gas-fired power stations play a vital role in supporting renewables. They can be 'switched on' and off quickly and

operated efficiently on an intermittent basis. We are investing in our existing gas fleet to improve its reliability and flexibility.

Reliable, dispatchable firming generation – like gas, batteries and hydro – will support the continued growth of renewable energy. We have set out a number of expansion opportunities that can provide additional firming capacity to the market. This includes our proposal for a large-scale battery at Eraring, expansion of our pumped hydro scheme at Shoalhaven and a number of other opportunities at existing sites. We also contract significant renewable generation capacity as part of our energy supply portfolio, and we will continue to add to this as needed.

### Energy policy

We have long advocated for clear government policies to support Australia's transition to a low-carbon economy and help make the transition easier for customers. Origin continues to advocate for a coordinated and long-term energy policy at the national level to give industry the confidence to invest in new electricity generation and gas supply. Investment is critical to maintain reliability and improve affordability as we transition to a low-carbon energy system.

The Energy Security Board (ESB) is undertaking a comprehensive review of the design of the National Electricity Market. Origin has made detailed submissions to the ESB's directions and options papers and continues to work with the ESB and governments to ensure the reforms are fit for purpose. In our view, the key challenge for the review is to strengthen the long-term investment signals for new dispatchable generation to maintain electricity system reliability as the share of intermittent renewable generation capacity grows. Origin supports the work streams of the review that enhance system security, encourage demand-side participation, and co-ordinate transmission investment to support the growth of renewables.

### Supporting customers to take up renewable energy

We are committed to becoming Australia's leading renewable and low carbon energy provider and continue to help our customers with the uptake of renewable sources of electricity. We have dedicated marketing teams and activities to accelerate customer uptake of solar and battery storage. We also offer a range of maintenance and support services, including regular cleaning and servicing, to extend the lifespan of our customers' solar systems.

We understand the importance of accessing cleaner energy and have been giving our customers the option to choose renewable energy products for more than 20 years. When customers choose our GreenPower product, they can select the percentage of their electricity they would like Origin to match with an equivalent amount of electricity from GreenPower-accredited renewable sources, which is added to the electricity grid. With our GreenPower products, we offer customers the option to offset up to 100 per cent of their electricity greenhouse gas emissions.

Our Green Gas, Green LPG and electricity product are certified carbon neutral by Climate Active, an initiative backed by the Australian Government. When customers choose these products, we offset the relevant emissions associated with their consumption of natural gas, LPG or electricity as part of our Climate Active commitments.

We offer business customers innovative corporate power purchase agreements that combine renewable energy with firming generation. We have also launched Origin 360 EV Fleet, a full-service electric vehicle fleet management solution. It provides business customers with fit-for-purpose and fully managed cars, smart charging infrastructure, carbon offsets, and reporting and insights to help optimise fleet performance and reduce emissions and transportation costs.

Details about our low carbon product solutions can be found at [originenergy.com.au](https://originenergy.com.au)

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Further information about Origin's performance can be found on our website [originenergy.com.au](https://originenergy.com.au)

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