



1D – Optimised Energy Systems Market Leadership Award

This category is for projects that leverage demand-side assets to help optimise the electricity system, including:

- projects that use energy efficiency, electrification or load shifting/shaping at a sufficient scale to materially contribute to helping:
 - reduce peak demand;
 - minimise renewable energy curtailment;
 - maintain minimum system load;
 - provide frequency and ancillary services;
 - provide emergency demand response services; and/or
 - provide other grid services.
- projects that cover:
 - multiple sites (e.g., multiple homes, commercial buildings, or industrial sites)
 - multiple technologies (e.g. thousands of air-conditioners participating in virtual powerplant (VPP)).

Projects that both employ technologies (e.g. devices that modulate demand across multiple sites largely autonomously), and behaviour change (e.g. an alert that encourages consumers to modify their demand) are eligible.

Eligibility criteria

To be eligible in this category, nominated projects must:

- have been located in Australia;
- include some form of energy monitoring and evaluation to verify the project's impacts on the energy system;
- have been completed OR the results confirmed between 1 October 2022 and the date the project is nominated.

[Begin an Award nomination](#)

Judging criteria

Nominations are not required to address all the judging criteria, however it is strongly recommended.

Performance	
Energy and emissions impact(s)	<p>The judging panel will consider the energy and emissions impacts that the project has delivered, or will be expected to deliver, including one or more of the following:</p> <p>Grid services: The impact on the electricity system for one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The reduction in peak demand; • The prevention of renewable curtailment; • The maintenance of minimum system load; • Provision of frequency and ancillary services; • Provision of emergency demand response services; and/or • Provision of other grid services. <p>Noting that some of these impacts rely on a counterfactual (e.g. minimum system load), evidence to justify impacts may rely on modelled data. However, where possible, metered data on the project impact is preferred.</p> <p>Relevant metrics for data on the project’s impact on grid services could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MW (capacity) • MWh (energy/duration) • ms / s (response time) • MW/s (ramp rate) • MW·s / MJ (inertia) • kA / MVA fault level (system strength) • MVar (voltage support) • % availability / reliability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ MW or MWh shifted (demand flexibility) <p>Emissions savings: The reduction in energy-related GHG emissions resulting from the project (in tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent).</p> <p>Energy system cost savings: The avoided costs to the energy system, for example, from avoided investments in upgrades to the distribution network.</p>
Relative performance	Where possible, processes or sites should be compared to a national or international benchmark.
Co-benefits	Describe (and quantify if possible) any major co-benefits associated with the project, such as improvements in comfort and/or energy bill reductions in homes or productivity / cost-savings for businesses.
Return on investment	Where an ROI or simple payback period is provided, nominees are asked to specify whether the ROI/payback is energy-only or inclusive of co-benefits.
<p>Performance will be judged at the ‘site’ or ‘entity’ level. Performance will not be judged just by the performance of an isolated component. For example, if a lighting retrofit reduced total energy consumption at a site by 20%, but energy consumption for lighting by 50%, the judges would consider the project based on a 20% energy saving.</p>	

Leadership

Catalysing change

Judges will consider how much a project has catalysed change in the sector. Judges will consider both the extent that the project is a leading project, the effort by the nominees in overcoming barriers and the effort by the nominees or partners to promote the project.

Innovation

New technology and design

Judges will consider innovative design, the application of a novel technology or process, novel application of an existing technology or novel approach or method to the project design.

Terms and conditions of entry

Entry process

1. To enter the 2026 EEC Awards (EECA), you must comply with these terms and conditions of entry.
2. Entries will only be accepted via the official entry form and in line with the guidelines and word counts provided.
3. You may enter multiple nominations, but each nomination can only be entered into one award category.
4. The Energy Efficiency Council (EEC) reserves the right to reallocate a nomination to an alternate category should the judging panel deem it more relevant to the nomination.
5. If you have more than one project or initiative, you may enter each project or initiative once into separate award categories. You must complete a new nomination form for each nomination.
6. You must complete the entry form fully addressing the judging criteria provided in this document.
7. Entries (including supporting information) close at **5pm AEDT on Thursday 26 March 2026**.
8. No late submissions will be accepted.
9. Claims made in your entry must be true and correct. The EEC reserves the right to declare your entry ineligible if, in the reasonable opinion of the EEC, the information provided in your entry is deficient, false or misleading in any way.
10. You may self-nominate for any award except the *EEC energy management champion*, the *EEC energy management young champion* and the *EEC inclusion champion* categories where nominations must be received from a third party.
11. If you nominate a third party, the nominated party must, on request, provide written evidence that they accept these terms and conditions of entry.
12. Entrants agree to attend or provide representation at the EEC National Conference Gala Dinner featuring the 2026 EEC Awards and other relevant publicity activities if they are short-listed as a finalist.
13. Entrants must declare any perceived conflicts of interest in their entry.

Privacy and intellectual property

14. By submitting an application, the entrant:
 - a) Warrants that the entry and the project or initiative which is the subject of the entry do not infringe on the copyrights, trademarks, moral rights, rights of privacy or publicity or intellectual property rights of any person or entity, and that no other person or entity has any right, title, claim or interest in the entry or the project or initiative which is the subject of the entry;
 - b) Grants an irrevocable, perpetual, world-wide non-exclusive license to the EEC to reproduce, distribute, display, adapt and modify information contained in your entry (except for confidential information identified by the entrant in accordance with clause 16) and any intellectual property subsisting in it in connection with the EECA and to promote the EECA in any media now or hereafter known, including but not limited to web content, advertising, publications and on-screen content;
 - c) Acknowledges that entries (including supporting evidence provided for the purposes of an EECA nomination) become the property of the EEC and will not be returned;
 - d) Grants the EEC an unrestricted right to use all statements made in connection with the EECA and images of the entrant or which resemble the entrant in any reasonable manner, and to permit third parties to do so, at the EEC's sole discretion; and
 - e) Acknowledges that the EEC will not be required to pay any additional consideration or seek any additional approval in connection with the uses described in this clause (except where prohibited by law).
15. Subject to clause 16, information contained within the entries of EECA winners and finalists will be made public. It is a condition of entry that you give permission to publish your entry including your name and any photograph of you provided as part of your entry. This information may be used by the EEC for promotional purposes.
16. Entrants must indicate any confidential information (including commercial and personal information) provided in their application that is not intended for public release. The EEC will not publish confidential information identified in accordance with this clause.
17. The EEC will recognise and promote award winners, including with media partners. Entrants should be prepared to allow case studies of their entries to be prepared by the EEC and must provide input and information for those case studies as reasonably required. Case studies may be made public, except for confidential information (including photographs) identified in accordance with clause 16.
18. By entering the EECA, you consent to photographs of you being taken at the EEC National Conference Gala Dinner featuring the 2026 EEC Awards and other relevant publicity activities, and to the use of such photographs in promotional material published by the EEC, including on websites, social media platforms and printed materials.

Judging panel

19. The decisions of the judging panel are final and no further correspondence regarding the panel's decisions will be entered into.
20. The panel of judges consists of experts in a range of fields. The panel will score nominations against the judging criteria for each award category and supporting information supplied by the applicant.
21. The judging panel may nominate entries for any award category and must declare any perceived conflicts of interest if they do so.
22. The judging panel may elect to present more than one award per category to reflect outstanding achievement.
23. The judging panel may recommend to the EEC that a nomination be reallocated to an alternate category if it deems the alternate category more relevant to the application.