Public forum 15 Dec 2025

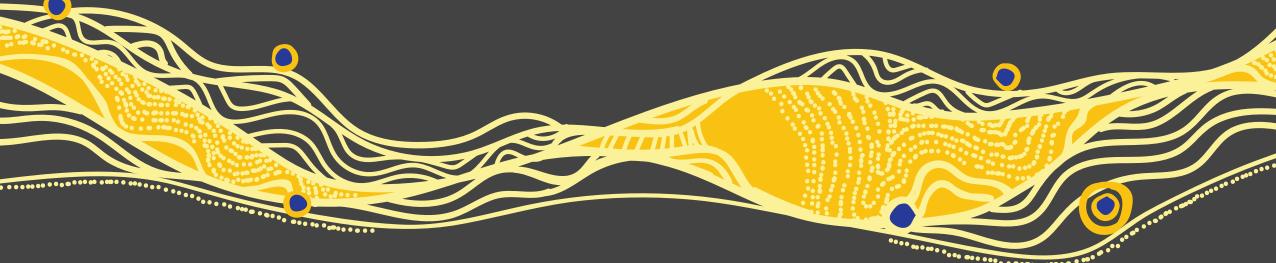
Australian Energy Market Commission

The pricing review

Draft Report

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The AEMC acknowledges and shows respect for the Traditional Custodians of the many different lands across Australia on which we live and work. The AEMC office is located on the land of the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation. We pay respect to all Elders past and present, and the enduring connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to Country.



Forum agenda

	ltem	Time	Presenter
1	Welcome	4:00 - 4:05	Tim Jordan- Commissioner AEMC
2	Housekeeping	4:05 - 4:10	Victoria Mollard – Executive General Manager AEMC
3	Recap on the journey so far	4:10 - 4:15	Drew Butterworth – Project sponsor
4	Our draft report	4:15 - 4:25	Rachel Thomas – Project lead
5	Recommendations and Q&A	4:25 - 5:20	Project team: Rudy Zverina, Milo Letho, Neil Lessem, Zak Rich Facilitated by Victoria Mollard
6	Potential implementation	5:20 - 5:23	Rachel Thomas – Project lead
7	Next Steps	5:23 - 5:25	Rachel Thomas – Project lead
8	Closing remarks	5:25 - 5:30	Tim Jordan- Commissioner AEMC



Housekeeping

Introduction to the project team

AEMC Staff



Victoria Mollard Executive General Manager



Drew Butterworth
Director
Project Sponsor



Rachel Thomas Principal Advisor Project Lead



Rudy Zverina Advisor Project Member



Milo Letho Advisor Project Member



Zak Rich Market Specialist Project Member



Neil Lessem Head of Economics Project Member



Justin Robinson Senior Economist Project Member

Commissioners



Tim JordanCommissioner



Sally McMahon Commissioner

Housekeeping

This forum is being recorded for note-taking purposes. Please note the privacy and recording statements in the invitation

All participants are currently in 'listen-only' mode

Use the Q&A button at the bottom of the screen to ask questions.

How we will run the Q&A:

- We will take questions during the discussion of the recommendations.
- If your question relates to a recommendation discussed later, we may hold the question until we discuss that recommendation.
- We will prioritise questions with the most 'upvotes' first
- You may be asked to speak to the question you have submitted via the Q&A button

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COMPETITION PROTOCOL



KEY PRINCIPLES

The AEMC is committed to complying with all applicable laws, including the *Competition and Consumer Act 2010* (CCA), during this forum. Breaching the CCA can lead to serious penalties for individuals involved in any breach (including large financial penalties and imprisonment for key individuals involved). This protocol governs the way in which discussions will proceed at this forum, and each attendee agrees to adhere to this protocol in order to comply with the CCA.

Each attendee must make an independent and unilateral decision about their commercial positions and approach in relation to the matters under discussion in this forum.

Attendees must not discuss, or reach or give effect to any agreement or understanding which relates to:

- pricing for the products and/or services that any attendee supplies or will supply, or the terms on which those products and/or services will be supplied (including discounts, rebates, price methodologies etc)
- targeting (or not targeting) customers of a particular kind, or in particular areas
- tender processes and whether (or how) they will participate
- any decision by attendees:
 - about the purchase or supply of any products or services that other attendees also buy or sell
 - to not engage with persons or the terms upon which they will engage with such persons (i.e. boycotting); or
 - to deny any person's access to any products, services or inputs they require
- sharing competitively sensitive information such as non-publicly available pricing or strategic information including details of customers, suppliers (or the terms on which they do business), volumes, future capacity etc
- breaching confidentiality obligations that each attendee owes to third parties.

COMPETITION PROTOCOL

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This forum will be conducted in accordance with the following rules:

- The agenda for this forum does not include anything that could contravene the Key Principles set out in this protocol.
- We will read and minute the below competition health warning:
 - Attendees at this forum must not enter into any discussion, activity or conduct that may infringe, on their part or on the part of other attendees, any applicable competition laws. For example, attendees must not discuss, communicate or exchange any commercially sensitive information, including information relating to prices, marketing and advertising strategy, costs and revenues, terms and conditions with third parties, terms of supply or access.
 - Participating in this forum is subject to you having read and understood the protocol including the Key Principles.
- We will keep accurate minutes of the forum, including details of attendees.
- If something comes up during the forum that could risk contravening any competition laws, attendees should:
 - Object immediately and ask for the discussion to be stopped.
 - Ensure the minutes record that the discussion was objected to and stopped.
- Raise concerns about anything that occurred in the forum with their respective legal counsel immediately afterwards.
- All attendees understand that any competitively sensitive matters must be subject to legal review before any commitment/agreement can be given.
- Any decision about whether, and on what terms, to engage with customers and suppliers is an independent and unilateral decision of each attendee.



Recap on the journey so far

Background and context

We initiated a review to look at electricity pricing

In the context of this review, electricity pricing refers to network and retail tariffs, how these interact, and how they can operate together to facilitate the design and offering of electricity products and services for consumers.

- November 2024 we published a final ToR and consultation paper
- June 2025 Published discussion paper

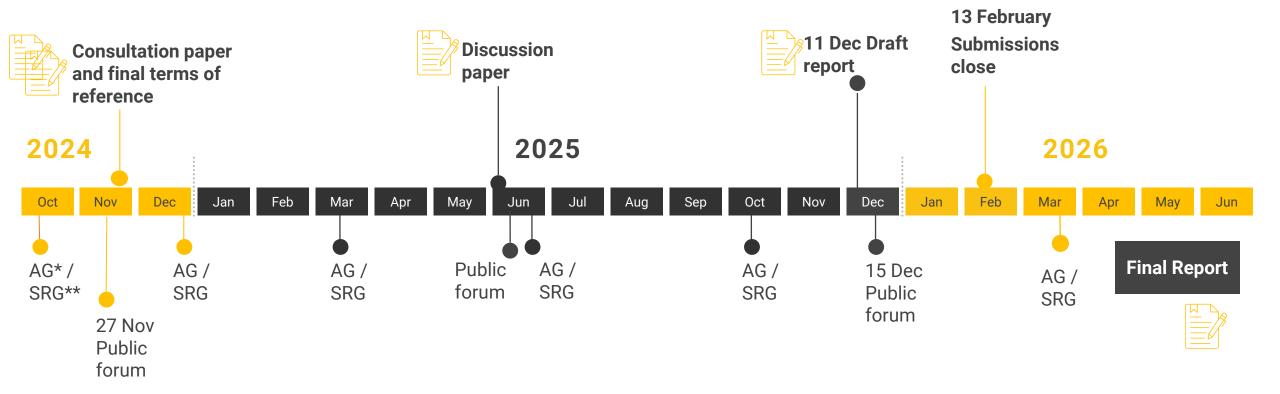
The Review is a key part of the AEMC CER work program and broader CER roadmap

The Review has three key focus areas

- 1. Market arrangements that provide for consumer choice between a range of appropriate products, services, and associated pricing structures that suit their preferences
- 2. The role of distribution networks in enabling the right products, services, and incentives for consumers, and the efficient cost and pricing outcomes that result
- 3. The role of retailers and energy service providers in effectively packaging and pricing electricity products and services to match consumer preferences

The Review will not make recommendations on the wholesale energy market or transmission pricing – although we may consider linkages where appropriate

The journey to where we are now



* AG = Advisory Group ** SRG = Stakeholder reference group

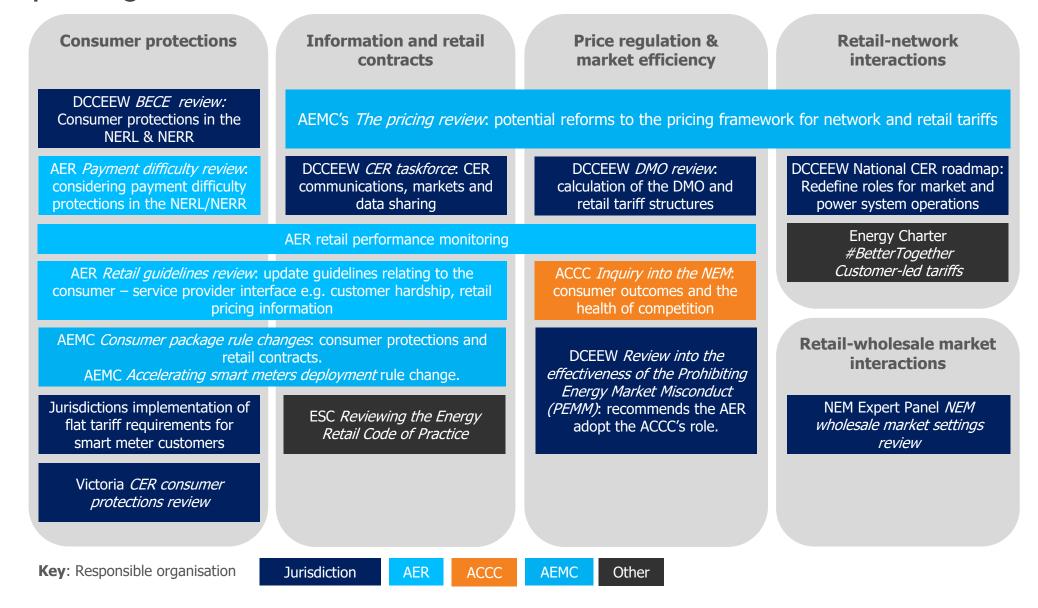
Our June discussion paper set out issues in three areas

	Retailers	Retail-network interface	Distribution networks
There are a range of areas where customers' preferences are not being met. This review provides	Retail market outcomes for consumers are uneven.	Network tariffs are not designed for retailers and may limit retail offers.	Network tariffs do not share the costs of paying for distribution infrastructure fairly among electricity consumers, and may not be suitable for future consumers.
the opportunity to address these issues.	Retail regulations may be limiting innovation and adding costs.	The number of different and changing network tariffs presents costs and risks to retailers.	Network tariffs sometimes send price signals to consumers that unnecessarily work against wholesale market signals.

We received 47 submissions from a wide variety of stakeholders, including:

- market bodies
- networks
- retailers
- innovators
- academics
- consumer groups, and
- individuals.

The pricing review intersects with several active streams of retail reform



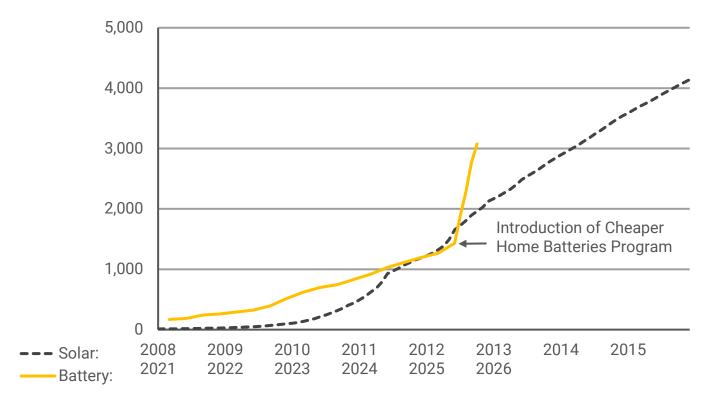


Our draft report

The consumer electricity landscape will be markedly different by 2040

Uptake of CER

Rooftop solar uptake over 2008-2015 Battery uptake over 2020-2025 MW, calendar years



Source: AEMC, Price Trends 2025

volumetric in nature – consumers are investing time and effort responding to signals that are often not connected to a network's actual costs.

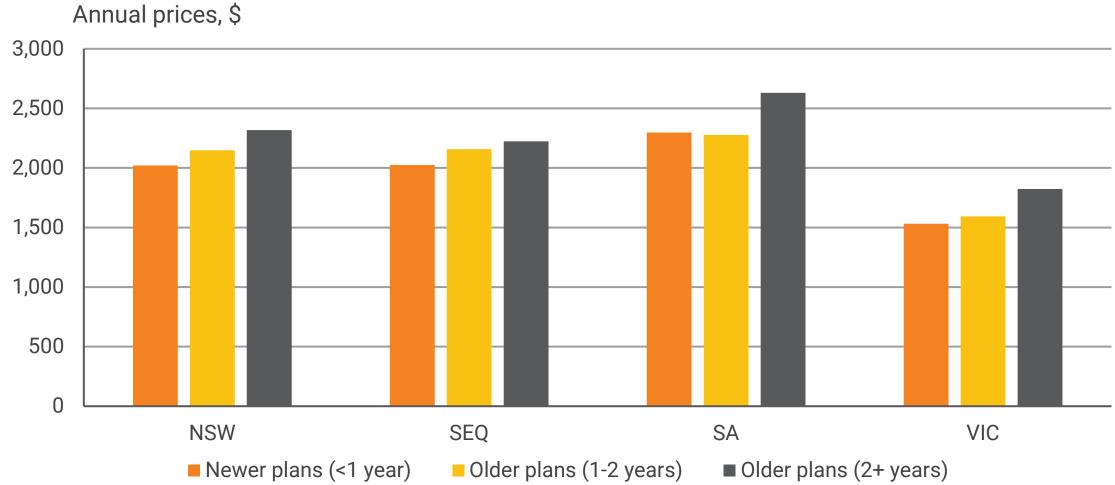
These tariffs **limit opportunities** for consumers willing and able to respond more dynamically to system needs in ways that could lower costs for everyone.

The pricing framework that worked well in the past will likely not work as well in the future system.

If we do nothing, some consumers will pay higher shares of network costs, contributing to declining equity, higher overall costs and an increased proliferation of interventions.

Prices gradually increase for existing customers over time

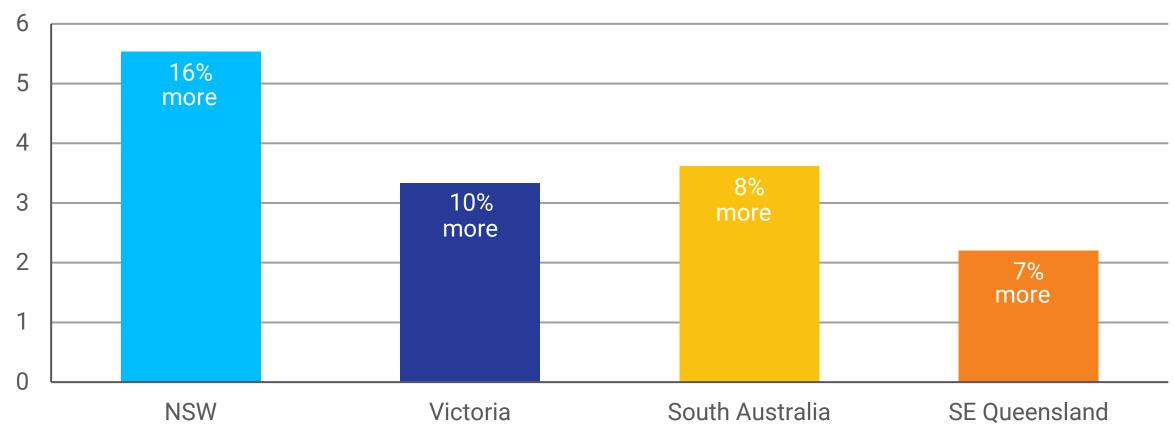
Calculated annual prices increase with the age of the offer



Source: ACCC, Inquiry into the National Electricity Market, ACCC, Australian Government, December 2024, p 4.

Standing offer customers generally pay higher prices than market offer customers





Source: AEMC analysis of data from ACCC, Inquiry into the National Electricity Market, July 2025.

Six reforms to achieve better consumer outcomes



Our vision

A dynamic energy services market that delivers value, meets the preferences of different consumers, and offers choice of energy service provider, while ensuring lowest overall costs and building trust through targeted protections.

We propose six reforms across three themes to achieve our vision.

Theme 3: Reward consumers for activities that are valuable in achieving a lowest-cost system, and target a more equitable allocation of shared costs	 5. Amend the rules to focus network tariff design on efficiency, supporting a lowest-cost grid and a fairer sharing of costs among consumers 6. Amend the rules to ensure networks design tariffs for energy service providers, rather than directly for customers, to promote more flexible and innovative retail offers
Theme 2: Make it easier for consumers to compare offers that suit them	4. Provide the AER with additional funding to upgrade Energy Made Easy so that consumers can easily compare electricity offers, including new and emerging types
	3. Periodically review whether regulations are supporting good consumer outcomes in an evolving market
Theme 1: Harness competition to improve outcomes for all consumers	2. Introduce a competitive franchise for the cohort of customers who haven't chosen a market offer, so that all customers are on a competitive plan
	1. Require energy service providers to charge all customers on the same plan the same price, to address the 'loyalty tax' on customers who don't switch and ensure every customer is always on the best price



Recommendations and Q&A

Facilitator: Victoria Mollard, EGM, Economics & System Security

We will take questions after each theme. If your question relates to a theme or recommendation discussed later, we may hold the question until we discuss that recommendation.

We will prioritise questions with the most 'upvotes' first

Please submit your questions using the Q&A button



Theme 1: Harness competition to improve outcomes for all consumers

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Harness
competition to
improve outcomes
for all consumers

Recommendation 1: Require energy service providers to charge all customers on the same plan the same price, to address the 'loyalty tax' on customers who don't switch and ensure every customer is always on the best price

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Theme 1: Harness competition to improve outcomes for all consumers	Introduce a competitive franchise for the cohort of customers who have on a competitive plan
	3. Periodically review whether regulations are supporting good consume
Theme 2: Make it easier for consumers to compare offers that suit them	Provide the AER with additional funding to upgrade Energy Made Easy offers, including new and emerging types
Theme 3: Reward consumers for activities that are valuable in achieving a lowest-cost system, and	Amend the rules to focus network tariff design on efficiency, supporting consumers
target a more equitable allocation of shared costs	6. Amend the rules to ensure networks design tariffs for energy service proven flexible and innovative retail offers
Transitional reforms	Consider transitional measures to manage the impact on consumers of ti

Context

- Energy service providers set prices for new customers more competitively to how they set them for existing customers – the 'loyalty tax'
- Customers must regularly switch offers or providers to maintain access to more competitive prices
- This contributes to a negative consumer experience of the energy system.

How it would work

Energy service providers would:

- charge all customers on the same plan, the same prices
- compete for customers with meaningfully different offers
- offer these plans to all customers, new and existing.

- This reform is to address the root cause of the 'loyalty tax' and harness the benefits of competition for all consumers
- Customers would no longer need to regularly switch plans to maintain access to a competitive price
- We want to change the dynamics of competition and focus it on areas that would deliver meaningful value for consumers
- Switching occurs to obtain and unlock new value and rewards

Theme 1: Harness competition to improve outcomes for all consumers

Recommendation 2: Introduce a competitive franchise for the cohort of customers who haven't chosen a market offer, so that all customers are on a competitive plan

	Require energy service providers to charge all customers on the same customers who don't switch and ensure every customer is always on the
Theme 1: Harness competition to improve outcomes for all consumers	Introduce a competitive franchise for the cohort of customers who ha on a competitive plan
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Transitional reforms	Consider transitional measures to manage the impact on consumers of

Context

- Generally, customers on standing offers tend to pay higher prices than customers on market offers
- The Default Market Offer and Victorian Default Offer protect customers on standing offers by setting the maximum price energy service providers can charge them.

How it work

- Energy service providers would actively compete to serve standing offer customers
- An auction process would be used to reveal the competitive price to serve standing offer customers and the provider(s)
- To improve transparency and ensure the effectiveness of the proposal, market offers would be required to be fixed-term

- This would provide a different, competitive mechanism to determine the prices of standing offers
- It would extend the benefits of competition to customers who have not selected an offer in the market by having energy service providers compete to supply these customers, rather than customers having to make this choice - ensuring that competitive pricing and innovative services are accessible to everyone

Theme 1: Harness competition to improve outcomes for all consumers

Recommendation 3: Periodically review whether regulations are supporting good consumer outcomes in an evolving market



Context

- We rely on competition, supported by regulations such as information provision and dispute resolution, to deliver good consumer outcomes in most jurisdictions in the NEM
- The recent review into the Prohibiting Energy Market Misconduct (PEMM) has recommended that the AER take on the ACCC's inquiry into the NEM function role going forward

How it would work

- The AEMC would periodically every three years undertake a targeted assessment on whether regulations are supporting good consumer outcomes. This would build on the work of the AER.
- We would conduct this review in two stages:
 - 1. Draw together the analysis and findings of other bodies to develop a broad assessment of how competition is delivering for consumers
 - 2. Depending on the findings in stage 1, assess the potential causes of any adverse findings and indicate any necessary further investigations the effectiveness of regulations

- Provide stakeholders with confidence that consumers receive good outcomes from competition.
- Redundant regulations and interventions, or those that are creating barriers to entry, could be removed, lowering regulatory costs for energy services providers therefore for consumers.

Questions

Theme 1: Harness competition to improve outcomes for all consumers

- 1. Require energy service providers to charge all customers on the same plan the same price, to address the 'loyalty tax' on customers who don't switch and ensure every customer is always on the best price
- 2. Introduce a competitive franchise for the cohort of customers who haven't chosen a market offer, so that all customers are on a competitive plan
- 3. Periodically review whether regulations are supporting good consumer outcomes in an evolving market



Theme 2: Make it easier to compare retail offers

Theme 2: Make it easier for consumers to compare offers that suit them

Recommendation 4: Provide the AER with additional funding to upgrade Energy Made Easy so that consumers can easily compare electricity offers, including new and emerging types



Context

- Retail products and services are becoming increasingly complex as technology disrupts the market and consumer preferences change
- Consumers need the *right* information, not necessarily *more* information, to make informed choices

How it would work

- The AER's review of its retail guidelines represents an opportunity to provide consumers with better quality and simpler information about plans as the retail market changes.
- We recommend additional funding for the AER to continue to develop its Energy Made Easy comparison service to make sure that it is fit for purpose for the new services that are emerging.
 - The AER could draw on technological developments, including but not limited to AI, to support its comparison service to provide information to allow consumers to make informed choices through an independent and trusted site

- Improve competition among energy service providers by increasing transparency of offerings
- Reduce the search and comparison burden for consumers and ensure dynamic products can be easily compared
- Place more competitive pressure on these offers and improve consumer satisfaction and trust with the energy market

Questions

Theme 2: Make it easier for consumers to compare offers that suit them

4. Provide the AER with additional funding to upgrade Energy Made Easy so that consumers can easily compare electricity offers, including new and emerging types



Theme 3: Reward consumers for activities that are valuable in achieving a lowest-cost system, and target a more equitable allocation of shared costs

Theme 3:

Reward consumers for activities that are valuable in achieving a lowest-cost system, and target a more equitable allocation of shared costs

Recommendation 5: Amend the rules to focus network tariff design on efficiency, supporting a lowest-cost grid and a fairer sharing of costs among consumers



Context

- Consumers are best served where network tariffs are efficient that is, they reward customers for activities that reduce costs and provide for an equitable sharing of these costs
- The current network tariff framework was largely designed for a different time and is unlikely to be fit-forpurpose for the future

How it would work

- Several reforms to support the delivery of more efficient network tariffs. While tariff design would be up to networks and the AER, the changes would lead to more efficient network tariffs that:
 - in the current landscape would likely have a higher fixed component
 - would also include dynamic elements designed to reward consumers for alleviating periods of grid congestion that would otherwise drive the need for network investment.
- Better aligning network motivations to design the tariffs that best serve consumer interests

- Addressing current tariffs that lead to poor consumer outcomes such as encouraging unfair cost shifting between different customers
- Consumers are encouraged and rewarded for making investments and behaviour changes that contribute to lowest overall system cost
- Networks more focused on designing efficient and effective tariffs

Theme 3:

Reward consumers for activities that are valuable in achieving a lowest-cost system, and target a more equitable allocation of shared costs

Recommendation 6: Amend the rules to ensure networks design tariffs for energy service providers, rather than directly for customers, to promote more flexible and innovative retail offers

	Require energy service providers to charge all customers on the same customers who don't switch and ensure every customer is always on the
Theme 1: Harness competition to improve outcomes for all consumers	Introduce a competitive franchise for the cohort of customers who ha on a competitive plan
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achieving a lowest-cost system, and target a more equitable allocation of shared costs	Amend the rules to ensure networks design tariffs for energy service more flexible and innovative retail offers
Transitional reforms	Consider transitional measures to manage the impact on consumers of

Context

- Energy service providers are the customers of distribution networks. Network tariffs should therefore support energy service providers offering products and services that consumers want
- Currently, networks are required to balance multiple objectives, including calculating the impact of tariffs on customers
- Consequently, they may not be taking into account the ways these tariffs can create complications and increase costs for energy service providers, and hence customers

How it work

This would require rule changes to the network tariff processes to:

- 1. Make energy service providers central to network tariff design consultation by removing the 'customer impact' and 'customer understanding' principles that are creating a focus on the consumer, rather than the energy service provider
- 2. Reduce energy service provider compliance costs and support retail innovation by making changes to the timing and/or flexibility of the tariff structure statement

Intended outcomes

Energy service providers being able to offer better-designed products and services that meet customer
needs, while rewarding those customers that are willing and able to enable more efficient use of existing
network infrastructure

Questions

Theme 3: Reward consumers for activities that are valuable in achieving a lowest-cost system, and target a more equitable allocation of shared costs

5. Amend the rules to focus network tariff design on efficiency, supporting a lowest-cost grid and a fairer sharing of costs among consumers

6. Amend the rules to ensure networks design tariffs for energy service providers, rather than directly for customers, to promote more flexible and innovative retail offers



Transitional measures

Consider transitional measures to manage the impact on consumers of these changes



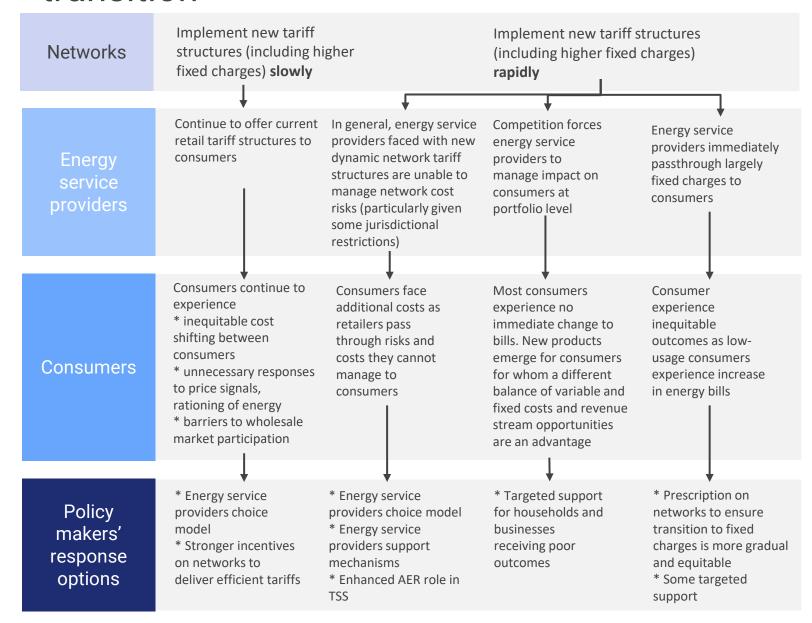
- As an industry, we need to ensure that the transition to new network tariff structures occurs at a pace that is manageable by consumers
- More efficient network tariffs will promote electrification and beneficial use of the network, but could impact some customers negatively in the transition
- Recovering a larger share of network revenue through fixed charges is likely to be the most disruptive tariff change for customers.

We are focused on understanding the risk that transitioning to increasingly fixed network tariffs would impact consumers differently.

We will consider:

- how different approaches to this transition could impact consumers
- what role energy service providers can play in mitigating the risk of creating 'winners and losers' and whether other interventions may be required to protect some consumers

We are considering potential mechanisms to support the rapid transition



Possible options

- The primary focus will be on the impacts on end use customers. There are a number of ways to manage the pace of the transition.
- We are considering some potential mechanisms to support the rapid transition to efficient tariffs, while mitigating additional costs for consumers. These include:
 - an energy service providers choice model
 - an energy service providers impact principle
 - an enhanced AER role in setting TSS
- However, further reforms where the impact on customers is managed through energy service providers and transitional customer protections may need to be considered. We are interested in stakeholder views on this for the final report.

We are undertaking analysis of different tariff transition strategies to better understand how consumer impacts can be managed

What we are doing

We are using real-world customer data to:

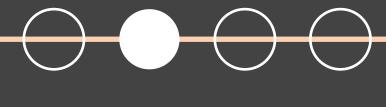
- Model different tariff transition strategies
- Better understand the magnitude and distribution of customer bill impacts
- Ensure that the proposed frameworks are sufficient to ensure a manageable pace of transition for customers

Data and methodology

- DNSPs have supplied us with a sample of small business and residential customer usage data.
- We will use this data to calculate customer bill impacts under alternative tariff transition strategies. For example:
 - Transitioning over several years
 - Implementing multiple fixed charges

Implementation considerations

- This is intentionally a worstcase analysis
- It assumes that energy service providers pass through rather than manage fixed charges, and that customers passively receive them rather than undertaking adaptive behaviour
- It ignores the benefits to customers that would result from our draft recommendations.
- We do not have any socioeconomic data



Questions

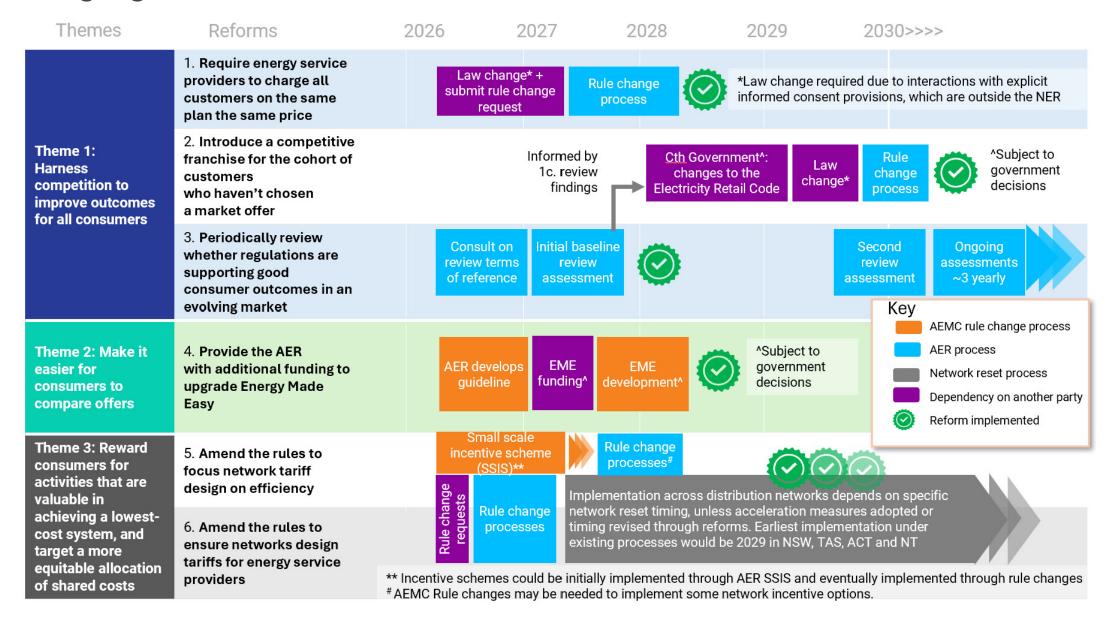
Transitional reforms

Consider transitional measures to manage the impact on consumers of these changes



Potential implementation

Subject to feedback, we aim to implement as quickly as possible while managing risks to consumers



Next steps

Draft report submissions close 13 February 2026

Continue stakeholder engagement with Advisory and Stakeholder Reference groups.

Next steps – Final Report, date TBC post submissions to this paper

