

Submission to AEMC – Opposition to predominantly fixed electricity network charges

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Organisation (if relevant): Integreen Electrical (NSW)

Role: Licensed electrician, solar PV and battery installer

Location: NSW

Consultation: AEMC Pricing Review / proposal to shift network charges toward predominantly fixed charges

1) I oppose predominantly fixed network charges

I oppose the AEMC's proposal to shift network pricing toward predominantly fixed charges. Fixed, unavoidable charges reduce bill control, undermine equity, and weaken incentives for efficient energy use and investment in distributed energy resources (solar, batteries, smart load control).

Network pricing should continue to reflect consumption and time-of-use. If people use less at expensive times (or supply their own), their bills should go down. That's the whole point of demand management and consumer energy.

2) This harms solar and battery investment and slows emissions reduction

Shifting costs into fixed charges undermines the economics of rooftop solar and home batteries. It punishes households who have already invested their own money to reduce grid demand, and it reduces the benefit for households considering installation.

That weakens investment signals and risks a decline in uptake of solar and batteries. That outcome works against Australia's emissions reduction goals and the practical, consumer-led energy transition that has actually been delivering results.

3) Equity and affordability: fixed charges are regressive

Predominantly fixed network charges are regressive. Low-consumption households pay more regardless of their ability to reduce usage. That hits:

- lower-income households
- renters and apartments with limited ability to install solar
- energy-efficient households that have done the "right thing"
- older Australians who deliberately keep usage low

This entrenches inequity instead of addressing it.

4) Lack of evidence and transparency

This is a fundamental change and the evidence bar should be high. I have not seen published, detailed bill modelling that clearly shows:

- who pays more and who pays less (distributional impacts)
- impacts on households with existing solar and batteries
- impacts on future uptake of solar, batteries, and demand response
- realistic consumer and retailer behaviour impacts

Given this is a self-initiated review, the AEMC should not progress such a major change without transparent modelling and real-world evidence.

5) What I want the AEMC to do

I urge the AEMC not to progress any proposal to introduce predominantly fixed network charges.

Retain pricing structures that preserve:

- consumer agency and bill control
- fairness (especially for low-consumption and low-income households)
- strong incentives for solar, batteries, load shifting, and energy efficiency

If networks need reform, it should reward behaviour that reduces peak demand and avoids unnecessary network spend — not lock in higher unavoidable charges that protect incumbent revenues.

Regards,

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