

I strongly oppose the proposed increase to fixed electricity charges under EPR0097. Raising the fixed portion of electricity bills unfairly disadvantages households that use less power and those who have invested in rooftop solar and battery systems. These households have reduced their reliance on the grid and made significant private investments to support Australia's clean energy transition. They should not be penalised for doing so. Higher fixed charges also weaken the incentive to conserve energy. When more of the bill is unavoidable, the financial reward for reducing consumption declines. This discourages households from installing solar, maintaining or upgrading existing systems, adding batteries, or improving energy efficiency. Over time, this could slow the growth of distributed clean energy resources that help support

the grid, particularly during daytime peak periods.

Low-usage and smaller households would be disproportionately affected. Shifting more costs into fixed charges places a heavier burden on pensioners, renters, apartment residents, and energy-conscious families who work to keep their consumption low.

There is also a significant long-term risk. As fixed charges rise, households that can afford solar, batteries, and backup systems may increasingly consider disconnecting from the grid. This would reduce the number of customers contributing to shared network costs, driving prices higher for those who cannot afford to leave. Such an outcome would create a two-tier system and undermine the principle of electricity as an essential service.

Electricity networks are natural

monopolies and a critical public good. Many Australians already question whether privatisation has delivered lower prices or better outcomes. The ACCC has also raised concerns about how aspects of the privatised electricity system have failed consumers and the broader economy. Pricing reforms should build confidence in the system, not erode it. At a time when large-scale renewable and transmission projects face delays, locally generated energy in our cities and communities is more important than ever. Rooftop solar is no longer marginal — it is central to Australia's electricity supply. Pricing reforms should encourage participation in this transition, not discourage it. I urge the AEMC to preserve fair, usage-based pricing and maintain strong incentives for households to reduce

demand and invest in clean energy.

Please reject any changes that increase fixed charges at the expense of equity, efficiency, and long-term grid stability.