EPR0097 Electricity pricing for a consumer-driven future

13 February 2026

Dear AEMC,

I am [redacted] a Melbourne resident and advocate for sustainable, affordable energy. I welcome the opportunity to comment on the draft recommendations in the Pricing Review (EPR0097).

My submission opposes reforms that increase fixed network charges or allow hidden offsets in retail offers, as these would undermine consumer interests, equity, and the transition to renewables.

The review aims for a smarter, fairer pricing framework that meets diverse needs at lowest cost. The proposal to shift more costs to unavoidable fixed charges would disproportionately burden low-usage and vulnerable households, while penalising those investing in rooftop solar, batteries, and electrification—contrary to efficient CER integration and consumer-driven outcomes.

As a practical example, I have invested significantly in electrification, since 2021, adding: [redacted] rooftop solar + [redacted] battery storage + electric vehicle (EV) + all-electric home (heat pump hot water system and reverse-cycle air conditioning replacing gas appliances).

My **net** grid imports are now negligible—I import [redacted] per year, mainly for EV charging on rainy days, or at night—which is double previous pre-electrification grid imports when we used gas + petrol. Interestingly, I still export more (~[redacted] than I import, contributing net energy to the grid while reducing my reliance on it.

My bill is now dominated by the daily supply charge plus occasional 12-6am imports.

Higher fixed network charges would increase my costs substantially without reflecting my demand timing or private investments, erasing financial benefits from efficiency and CER. This personal outcome highlights how such reforms could discourage others from similar upgrades, slowing grid-supporting electrification and CER growth.

My key concerns include:

1. **Unfair impact on low-usage and solar/battery households**
   Higher fixed charges unfairly penalise households using less grid electricity due to efficiency or private investments in solar PV, batteries, and EVs. These reduce peak demand and network strain yet face the same proposed fixed costs as high-usage users. This reduces the financial benefit of saving energy or upgrading systems, weakening incentives for energy efficiency, CER adoption, and maintenance—slowing distributed clean energy that supports grid reliability.

2. **Disproportionate harm to vulnerable consumers**
   Low-income households, pensioners, renters, apartment dwellers, and energy-conscious families—who often have minimal grid usage—will be hit hardest. They rely on low consumption for affordability and face barriers to CER access. Fixed-charge increases would raise bills without proportional benefits, exacerbating inequality and undermining electricity as an essential service.

3. **Long-term risks to grid stability and equity**
   If fixed charges rise significantly, affluent households may opt for full off-grid solutions, shrinking the paying base and pushing prices higher for those unable to disconnect—creating a two-tier system and eroding social license.

4. **Solar Sharer Offer protections essential**
   The Solar Sharer Offer is positive for equity and solar uptake. However, my experience with time-of-use tariffs shows retailers often offset discounts by overpricing peak rates or adding hidden charges. To deliver genuine benefits, implementation must include an explicit obligation for retailers to offer the free period with no additional hidden charges or offsets (no inflated peak/off-peak rates or adjustments negating savings). Retailers are not in financial distress to justify such practices; strong safeguards would build trust and ensure fair outcomes.

These issues risk counteracting the Review's vision by discouraging CER participation—crucial amid large-scale project delays. Rooftop solar, batteries, and electrification are core to Australia's supply and lowest-cost outcomes.

I urge the AEMC to:

- Reject or strictly limit increases to fixed network charges, preserving usage-based incentives that reward efficiency and CER investment.
- Prioritise protections for vulnerable consumers, such as progressive/income-based elements, enhanced low-income CER subsidies, and equitable cost recovery.
- Recommend explicit rules preventing hidden clawbacks in offers like Solar Sharer.
- Affirm that pricing reforms must support electrification and CER growth without penalising proactive consumers, aligning with long-term consumer interests.

Thank you for considering my views. I support reforms promoting fairness, affordability, and innovation for all in the energy transition.

Sincerely,

[redacted]
Melbourne, Victoria