

I oppose the proposed increase to fixed electricity charges under EPR0097.

Increasing the fixed portion of bills will unfairly penalise households that use less electricity and those who have invested in rooftop solar and batteries. These households have reduced demand on the grid and made significant private investments to support Australia's clean energy transition. They should not be worse off because of it.

Higher fixed charges reduce the financial benefit of saving energy. That weakens the incentive for households to install solar, maintain or upgrade older systems, add batteries, or improve energy efficiency. Over time, this risks slowing the growth of distributed clean energy that supports the grid, especially during daytime peaks.

Small and low-use households will be hit hardest. A pricing structure that shifts more costs into fixed charges disproportionately affects pensioners, renters, apartment dwellers and energy-conscious families.

There is also a serious long-term risk. If fixed charges continue to rise, households who can afford solar, batteries and backup systems will increasingly consider leaving the grid altogether. That would shrink the customer base that pays for shared network costs, pushing prices even higher for those who cannot afford to disconnect. This creates a two-tier system and undermines the idea 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. Even the ACCC has raised concerns about how privatised electricity has failed consumers and the broader economy. Pricing reforms should strengthen trust in the system, not weaken it.

At a time when large-scale renewable and transmission projects face delays, locally generated energy in cities and towns is more important than ever. Rooftop solar is not marginal — it is a core part of Australia's electricity supply. Pricing reforms should encourage participation, not discourage it.

I urge the AEMC to protect fair usage-based pricing and maintain strong incentives for households to reduce demand and invest in clean energy.

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

