

Australian Energy Market Commission
Level 15, 60 Castlereagh Street
Sydney NSW 2000



RE: EPR0097: The pricing review: Electricity pricing for a consumer-driven future

To whom it may concern,

I don't think for a moment that the AEMC has deliberately chosen to target low-income households, or to punish those who have invested their own hard-earned money in solar and battery systems, but it seems to me that this is what your proposal will do.

It is hard to understand how anyone could view this as acceptable to consumers.

Low-income earners tend to have smaller houses and actively minimise electricity use - because they can't afford to do otherwise. Shifting charges from energy used onto an increased fixed charge will simply increase their bills and decrease the control they have over their spend. I live next door to a pensioner who will likely die in her home from the heat because she is so reluctant to use her small but inefficient single room air-conditioner. She can't afford to upgrade it, nor can she afford to buy solar panels. Looking at her bills, under this proposal, it is likely that they will increase substantially, even if she somehow further reduces what she uses from her already carefully minimised consumption.

I fail to see how this is fair.

I have invested in solar (and have committed to install batteries shortly) specifically to reduce my impact on the planet and to compensate for having disconnected from gas in order to contribute to Australia's push to reduce emissions. It seems that now I'll be seen as having obtained an unfair advantage - as if I got all this equipment for free - and I'll now have to pay much more. This proposal makes me feel like I have been tricked into investing in all this equipment.

I fail to see how this is fair.

It's not all gloom though: larger, wealthier households, with ducted air conditioning, pool pumps and two EVs will be better off under this proposal, because they consume so much energy that the savings from the expected reduced energy rates will well exceed the additional costs of the fixed daily charge.

I fail to see how this is fair.

But I guess it's not about being fair.

This proposal will probably be very good for the network operators' profits, and that it will come at the expense of the physical and economic well-being of the population - who depend utterly on electricity - seems not to have been a concern of its authors.

This proposal will harm those who have the least agency over their costs, and the least capacity to stump up more for their electricity.

Already, support for the vital task of removing fossil fuels from electricity generation is waning, because consumers are not seeing the benefits from the reported downward pressure that wind, solar and batteries are putting on the wholesale price. This proposal, if implemented will demolish any remaining support.

Please scrap this proposal and rethink it - starting with some basic principles around affordability and fairness.

Yours sincerely,

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