

# Evoenergy Energy Consumer Reference Council



Meeting #59 | Thursday 15 August 2024

## Attendees

- Evoenergy presenters and observers
- ECRC members

*See meeting minutes for full attendee list.*

## Agenda

- Customer share
- Gas network five-year plan (GN26)
  - Permanent & temporary gas disconnections
- Smart meters: Draft Legacy Meter Retirement Plan

## Outcomes and agreed next steps

- Discuss disconnections again at the start of the next meeting and revisit the Slido questions to gather more feedback
- Discuss smart meters and members concerns raised about tariffs in the next meeting

## Discussion highlights

### Customer share round table: Industry specific concerns:

- Hospitality sector faces significant challenges due to reliance on gas-based equipment in older buildings (Australian Hotel Association).
- National Capital Authority highlighted complexities around recently installed gas assets amid net-zero commitments.
- Strong appetite for accessible and actionable information on electrification, particularly for:
  - Renters and apartment dwellers (raised by Electrify Canberra).
  - Older generations, who require printed materials and time to adapt (COTA ACT).

### Gas network five-year plan (GN26) - Permanent & temporary gas disconnections

#### Safety:

- Many customers are unaware that temporary disconnections leave live gas connections, posing safety risks.
- Monthly incidents involving gas line hits (25-30/month) highlight the need for greater awareness and mitigation measures.

#### Equity:

- Members debated whether disconnecting customers should bear the full cost of permanent disconnections or whether costs should be distributed among remaining gas customers.
- Concerns were raised about ensuring fairness while managing the financial burden on vulnerable customers.

#### Financial stress and vulnerable customers:

- Increasing financial pressure was noted, particularly on:
  - Double-income families seeking financial counselling (ACTCOSS).
  - Renters and low-income households struggling with rising energy costs and limited subsidies.

### Smart Meters: Draft Legacy Meter Retirement Plan

- Members provided neutral feedback on the phased rollout plan, supporting the approach to prioritize life-support customers and complex installations.
- Emphasis on the need for clear communication about potential tariff changes associated with smart meters.

### Member suggestions

- Partner with trusted community groups to enhance communication and build public confidence in Evoenergy's initiatives.
- Consider strategies to support vulnerable groups, including targeted subsidies and better awareness of safety risks linked to gas disconnections.



NEXT MEETING | Thursday 22 October 2024 9.30am – 11.30am