

Media Release

For immediate release 19 March 2026

ECA response to *Gas Networks in Transition* Directions Paper

Please quote Energy Consumers Australia CEO Dr Brendan French:

“Energy Consumers Australia urges the AEMC to put the interests of consumers first as gas networks decline, following today’s release of the AEMC’s *Gas Networks in Transition* Directions Paper.

“The paper responds to three rule change requests from ECA and one from the Justice and Equity Centre. Done right, this is a huge opportunity to support households and small businesses in the energy transition.

“We welcome that the AEMC recognises the rules need to change as gas demand declines. There are some positive proposals that respond directly to our rule changes like tightening capital spending and requiring long-term planning for gas networks.

“The proposed direction on capital cost recovery, however, fails to prioritise households and small businesses and would accelerate cost recovery for gas network investors. This may result in, in the AEMC’s own words, costs “being brought forward and today’s gas consumers facing higher prices”. This is an alarming direction at a time when cost of living pressures and concerns about energy bills are high and global conflicts again threaten to sharply increase gas prices. Consumers cannot continue to be the default funders of the energy transition – investors need to share this burden as well.

“AEMO has identified that Australian residential and small commercial gas use is expected to decline by 72% by 2043, and every recent independent study indicates that gas delivered to small consumers via the network will be largely non-existent by 2050. ECA’s latest *Consumer Energy Report Card* shows 1 in 5 Australians plan to cancel their gas supply in the next ten years.

“The transition off gas will bring countless benefits. All-electric homes and businesses will have cheaper and more predictable energy bills and be healthier places to live and work. But those consumers who are unable to or choose not to leave the gas network face escalating bills as networks seek to recover costs from a shrinking customer base. Those facing the greatest barriers to electrification – like renters, apartment dwellers, and low-income consumers – will be hit hardest.

“We support the need for an orderly transition, and the best way to help consumers who face these barriers is through targeted measures, not by keeping consumers on the gas network where they will face escalating bills.

“We agree with the AEMC that changes to the rules alone cannot solve the challenges associated with the future of gas, and that governments need to play a more prominent role. We need coordinated action from governments to develop a clear roadmap for electrification and plan for how the costs of stranded gas networks will be fairly allocated, rather than consumers bearing the overwhelming share of costs and risks. We hope the AEMC’s final report goes further than their draft in encouraging governments to do this.

“Australians should be paying a fair share for their energy and not one cent more.”

For interview requests or more information, contact Stuart Turner on 0415 403 208 or email media@energyconsumersaustralia.com.au

About Energy Consumers Australia

[Energy Consumers Australia](https://www.energyconsumersaustralia.com.au) is the independent, national voice for residential and small business energy consumers. We enable residential and small business energy consumers to have their voices heard.