

# **Appendix 1.2: Communication Link Report of feedback from community forum sessions 1–10**

Access Arrangement Information

ACT and Queanbeyan-Palerang gas network 2026–31

Submission to the Australian Energy Regulator

# Evoenergy Community Forum

Gas Network 2026-31 access arrangement regulatory proposal

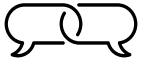


Report of feedback received  
from sessions 1-10

June 2025

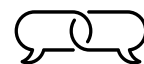


Communication Link



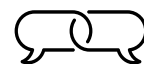
## Acknowledgement of Country

In the spirit of reconciliation, Communication Link acknowledges the Ngunnawal people, Traditional Custodians of the land on which our head office resides. We acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of our community in Canberra and the region. We also acknowledge all other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Custodians of all land on which our work and connections may reach, and pay our respect to their Elders, past and present.



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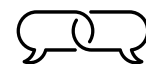
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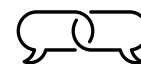
## 1. Executive Summary

Every five years, Evoenergy prepares a detailed plan about how they will operate, maintain, and invest in their gas network (ACT and Queanbeyan-Palerang) to meet the future needs of consumers. This five-year gas plan is submitted to the Australian Energy Regulator (AER) for consideration and approval to determine how costs associated with operating the gas network are recovered from customers.

A community forum was established to help Evoenergy better understand the values and long-term interests of their customers and inform decisions for the 2026-31 gas network access arrangement regulatory proposal (the five-year gas plan).

The community forum was independently recruited and is facilitated by Communication Link and met ten times between May 2024 and May 2025. The engagement journey timeline of community forum sessions is described in figure 1 below. This report provides a summary of the activities undertaken and feedback heard to date.



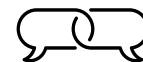


## Evoenergy community forum

### Gas network five-year plan 2026-31



Figure 1. Engagement journey timeline.



The community forum process was deliberative and methodical moving along a journey that built understanding of the energy network and complex pricing and revenue recovery considerations. It included diverse learning and feedback activities to ensure that all voices were heard, and everyone had the ability to contribute.

Significant investment in AV technology, online tools and the tailoring of workshop design allowed the online participant experience to very closely replicate that of those participating in-person. A dedicated facilitator guided each online session including activities, questions and sharing of feedback with members who attended in-person. Communication Link considers this program to be one of the highest quality hybrid workshops we have delivered.

The community forum process was meaningful and rewarding for participants, with over 80% of participants recording that the ability to participate and contribute to discussion was easy or very easy.

Although complex information and concepts were discussed in the forum, 69% of participants found the information presented easy or somewhat easy to understand. This reflects the investment by Evoenergy in ensuring information was presented in an easy to understand manner with significant time allowed for questions and discussion to aid understanding.

The community forum reflected on and agreed on community values to inform Evoenergy's planning and prepared an independent report which was provided to Evoenergy and made public on Evoenergy's website. This report highlighted the following priorities:

- 'More information should be provided to the community about the energy transition and its impact on customers
- Evoenergy has a role to encourage customers to move off gas, while not disadvantaging customers who may not be able to transition as easily, including vulnerable customers
- The cost of the transition should be shared fairly across all energy consumers
- We support a move away from separate gas and electricity networks to consider the energy system as a whole, including the impacts on the electricity network and its costs to customers
- The transition is ACT Government policy, and the ACT Government should be taking a greater role in facilitating the transition.'

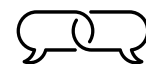
Since the presentation of the Community Forum Report to Evoenergy, the forum has met a further four times to consider the content of Evoenergy's draft five-year gas plan, published for public feedback in March 2025. Further meetings are planned once feedback from the AER is received on the draft.

Community forum participants generally felt heard and their feedback was reflected appropriately in Evoenergy's draft five-year gas plan and final plan. We also circled back on outstanding issues that the forum members requested further information on to close the loop and provided an overview of the final plan for submission. In the exit survey over two-thirds of participants are confident or very confident that the work of the forum will influence Evoenergy's planning.

The number of active forum members remained largely the same across sessions 1-10, starting with 35 members (May 2024), then 32 members (August 2024) followed by 28 members (March 2025). All sessions were well attended, with an average attendance of 86.6% across 10 sessions demonstrating that members remained engaged throughout the process.

This report provides a summary of the activities undertaken and detailed feedback provided by the community forum.

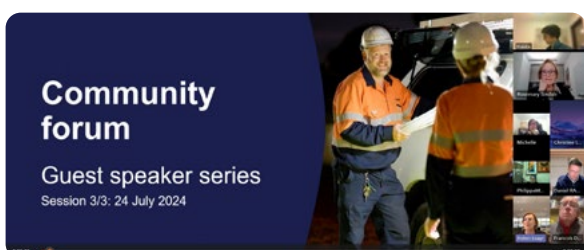




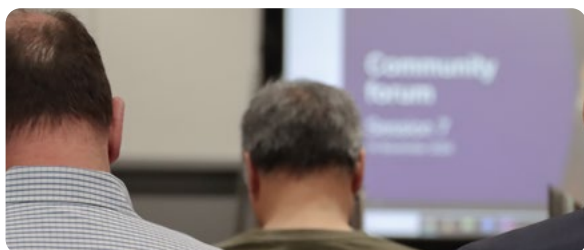
**28 forum members**



**1 site visit**



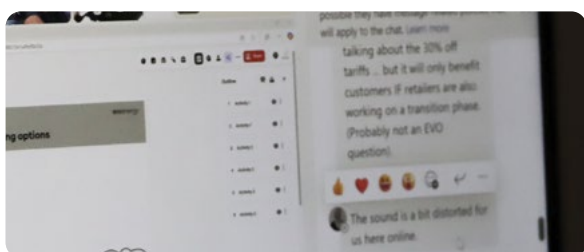
**3 guest speaker forums**



**30 hours of sessions**



**30+ feedback activities**



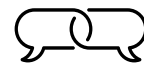
**1500 data points**



**Approximately  
300 cups of tea**







## 2. Introduction

### 2.1 Context for the engagement program

Australia's energy sector is in a period of enormous change, and the ACT is leading the way.

The ACT Government has set a clear direction for the transition away from gas toward electricity over the next 20 years to 2045. The ACT Government's first Integrated Energy Plan 2024–30 sets the pathway for a phased customer exit from the gas service and subsequent decommissioning of the gas network.

There are significant cost implications for the energy transition. Evoenergy is seeking community input on the approaches to fairly and equitably recover gas network costs of a shared network that was expected to last another 50+ years.

### 2.2 Purpose of this report

Every five years, Evoenergy is required to submit a regulatory proposal to the AER that details the proposed services, network investments, revenue and prices required to deliver gas distribution services for the next regulatory period. The review includes a Reference Service Proposal which was submitted to the AER 30 June 2024 and the Access Arrangement 2026–31 five-year gas plan to be submitted to the AER by 30 June 2025.

The Engagement Strategy for Evoenergy's gas network 2026–2031 access arrangement regulatory proposal (five-year gas plan) includes the establishment and delivery of a community forum made up of randomly selected participants representative of Canberra and the associated region's diverse community.

The community forum is being facilitated by Communication Link. The community forum plays a pivotal role in helping Evoenergy better understand the values and long-term interests of their customers to make informed decisions over the transition period. It was established to undertake deep dives into issues (shown in Table 1) and provide considered feedback to Evoenergy.

These conversations with consumers and other stakeholders are informing and shaping Evoenergy's decisions over the next five years and through to 2045.

**This report provides a summary of the discussions and feedback heard from ten meetings of this community forum.**

Value: Honesty, transparency  
+ genuine

HONEST

Honesty

Honesty

Transparency

GENUINE/  
HONEST

Genuine

Honesty

Honesty

Open minded.

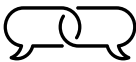
transparency

RELIABLE

Honesty

transparency

Authenticity



### 3. How we engaged



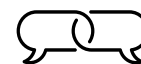
#### 3.1 Engagement objectives

The delivery of the community forum is guided by Communication Link’s best practice principles.

	Implementation	Outcome
Two-way	Effective facilitation and listening activities to build shared understanding and meaningful feedback.	Better understand of client and stakeholder views making it easier to reflect and respond.
Genuine	Effectively reflect feedback received, even if we are unable to deliver on expectations of all stakeholders.	Community and stakeholders will have greater support for client’s initiatives.
Clear and accurate information	Non-technical, simple language. Work closely with subject matter experts to ensure accuracy.	Increase stakeholder engagement. Builds trust in the outputs. Minimises potential for confusion or rumour.
Timely	Respond quickly to enquires. Provide stakeholders with notice of change and potential impacts.	Builds confidence in the project team and project outputs. Allows stakeholders time to adjust.
Accessible and inclusive	Digitally and physically accessible. Meeting stakeholders when and how it suits them.	Fosters increased participation. Strengthens understanding by all stakeholders.
Sustainable	Continue engagement throughout a project. Acknowledge input and how it has been used.	Facilitates delivery of final project outcomes that are reflective of the values of stakeholders.
Build ownership	Build stakeholders as long-term partners in the project.	A long-term partnership that lasts beyond individual projects and helps shape the future of the organisation.

Figure 2. Best practice principles





Through applying the best practice principles above, the community forum process seeks to achieve the following four engagement objectives informed by Evoenergy's Stakeholder Engagement Strategy and the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) Spectrum of Public Participation.

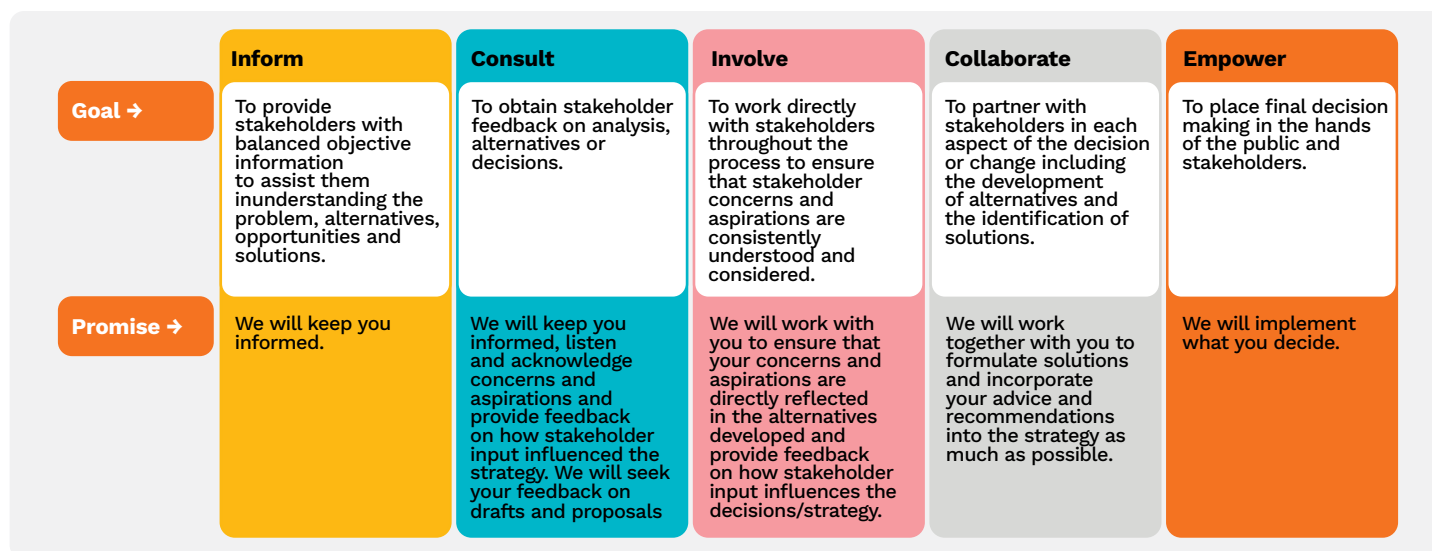
**Table 1.** Engagement objectives

Number	Objective	Details
1	Inform stakeholder engagement for Evoenergy's future gas plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gather diverse consumer and other stakeholder input to enhance connection and inform the gas plan development.</li> </ul>
2	Engage the community on the future of the gas network.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct transparent consultations with residential and business consumers, industry, and government</li> <li>Balance competing outcomes and manage equity issues in these discussions.</li> </ul>
3	Foster discussions on energy transition and gas network decommissioning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote community and stakeholder conversations on the energy transition and its customer impacts.</li> </ul>
4	Ensure transparency and accessibility in feedback.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide genuine two-way communication channels for stakeholders to see how their feedback influences the proposal.</li> </ul>

## 3.2 Engagement approach

### 3.2.1 IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation

We have used the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation to guide the design of our engagement approaches. We attained the 'involve' level of IAP2 participation as a baseline for the community forum sessions. This level varies depending on the session purpose and activities with 'empower' being the highest level of participation achieved.

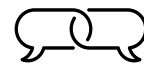


**Figure 3.** IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation

### 3.2.2 Accessibility

We considered access needs to support people's full participation in each session. The engagement utilised a mix of qualitative, quantitative, collaborative and participatory engagement tools, surveys, spatial information and online communication methods to allow diverse participants sufficient opportunities to participate.

Information was provided in a variety of formats to increase the accessibility of the engagement. Infographics, imagery and easy-to-understand content was produced, including Easy English and information presented in graphic as well as written form where possible.

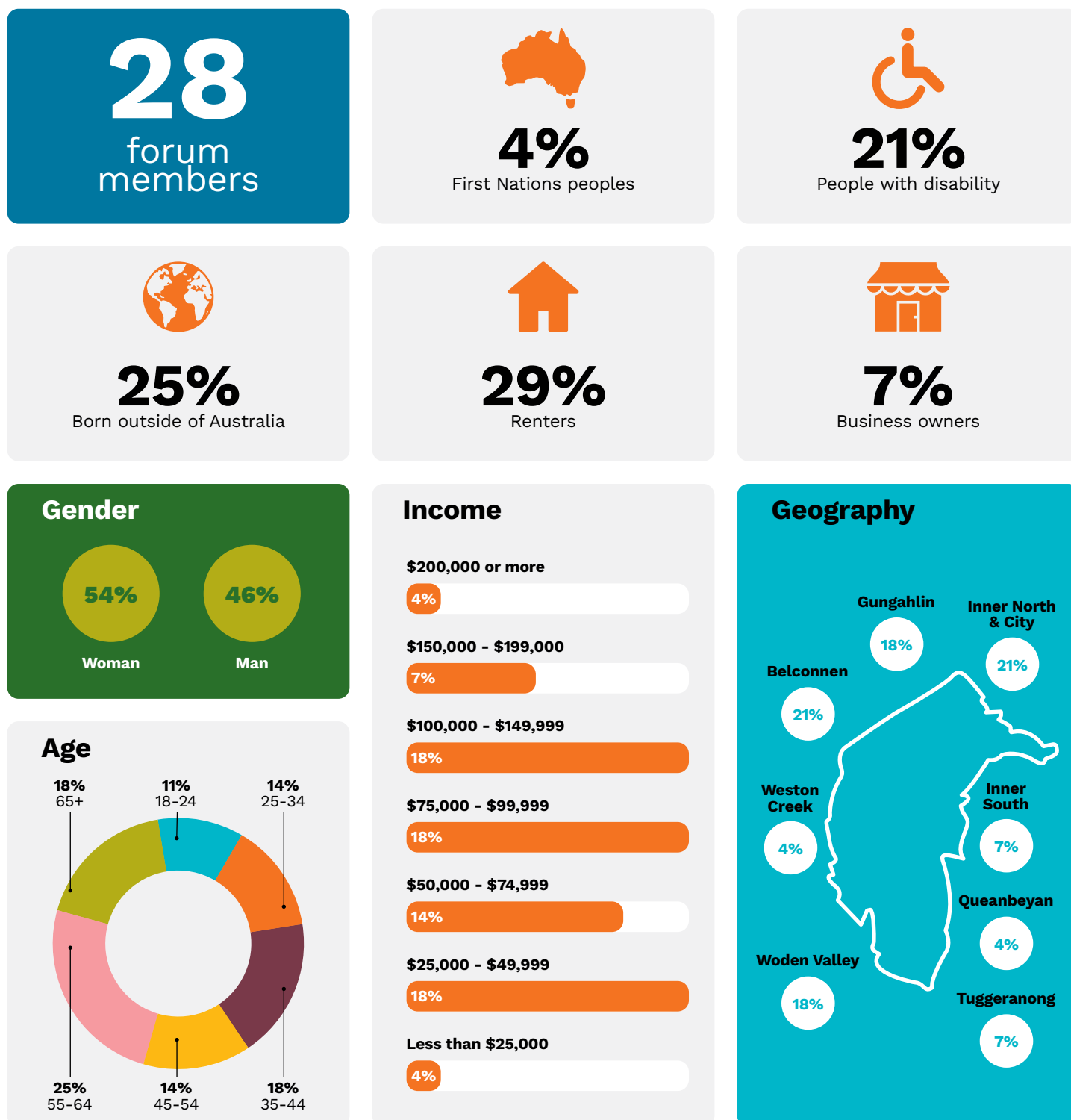


### 3.3 Composition of the community forum

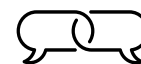
#### 3.3.1 Recruitment

The Evoenergy community forum was established through an independent recruitment process that used blind demographic stratification to build a group that is diverse and representative of the Canberra and Queanbeyan-Palerang community. The community forum started off with 35 people and currently consists of 28 people. A summary of the community forum demographics is provided in Figure 4.

#### 3.3.2 Demographics



**Figure 4.** Demographic composition of the community forum

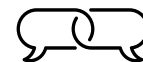


### 3.4 Timeline of community forum sessions

At the time of this report the community forum has met ten times as outlined in the table below.

#### Evoenergy community forum Gas network five-year plan 2026-31





## 3.5 Engagement activities and tools

### 3.5.1 Community forum sessions

A range of activities and tools were employed during forum sessions to assist participants in considering options and exploring complex topics. This variety of tools allows for all participants to contribute to discussions and reduces the risk of the louder, more confident, voices driving opinion.

The forum has used tools and activities to aid in contributing and developing knowledge and understanding including:

- Small group and whole of group discussions
- Individual feedback through post-it notes and a story-wall
- Digital polling to provide quick feedback both online and in person
- Worksheets to capture group feedback
- Scenarios and personas to understand and consider uncertainty, fairness and equity
- Providing information in different ways to encourage critical thinking and discussion – presentations, written information, site visit, personas, scenarios, FAQs, videos and hybrid technology (online and in-person)
- Many ways to ask questions – Slack, story wall, online chat, during presentations
- Access to experts and leadership at Evoenergy.

### 3.5.2 Slido

Slido is an interactive online polling tool which was used throughout the forum to capture quick, anonymous feedback. It was also used for the post-session evaluation.

### 3.5.3 Slack

A dedicated online group chat via Slack was created to help members connect with one another in between sessions and chat about options and considerations that they may have after each session.

This option gives participants an opportunity to provide further feedback, particularly as ideas may come after the session when members have had time to consider the information more.

### 3.5.4 Website

A publicly available [website](#) hosts information about the project and community forum and other stakeholder forums and is regularly updated with forum session materials and summaries. Copies of community forum session summaries are available at [Appendix A](#).

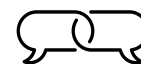
### 3.5.5 Scenarios and personas

Scenarios and personas have been created to help frame some discussions and considerations particularly with respect to areas of uncertainty, fairness and equity.

The personas are based on key demographic information from the most recent census and have been used to explore how changes may impact a broad range of people.

### 3.5.6 Frequently Asked Questions

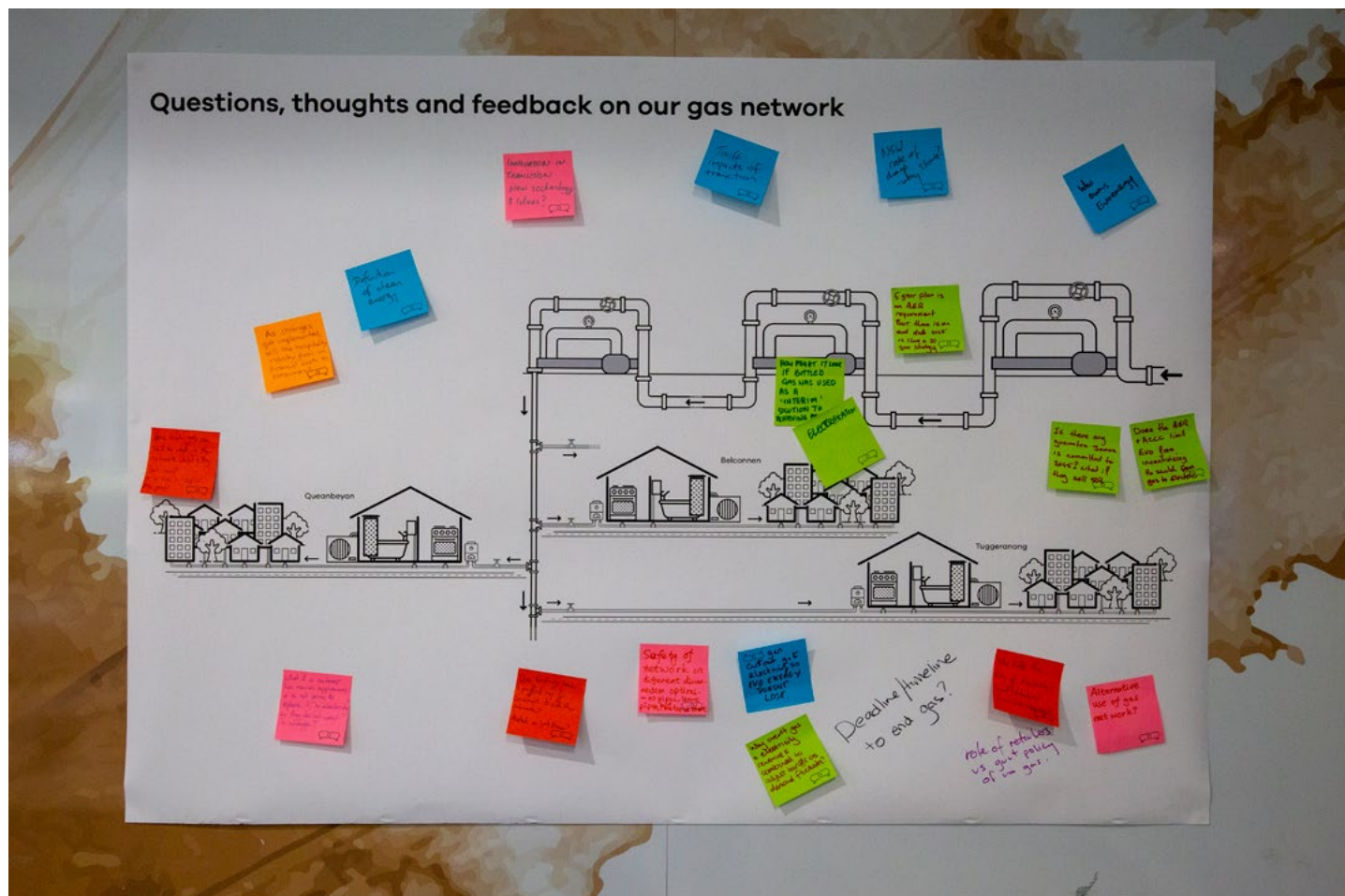
To aid understanding, Evoenergy developed frequently asked questions ahead of each session to support the technical presentations with clear, concise information about topics discussed on the forum agenda.



### 3.5.7 Story wall

Most participant questions were answered as part of general discussion associated with presentations in each session.

Questions not directly relevant to that day's discussion or thought of at a later time were recorded by participants on a large poster referred to as a story wall. These questions were answered by Evoenergy in a document shared with participants following each meeting.



### 3.5.8 Guest Speaker Series

As part of the community forum process, Evoenergy hosted a Guest Speaker Series on 3, 17 and 24 July 2024. This series was intentionally designed to help build the knowledge of forum participants and share different perspectives. It featured presentations from the ACT Government, ACT Council of Social Service (ACTCOSS) and the Chair of Evoenergy's Energy Consumer Reference Council.

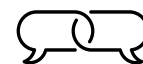
**Session 1:** Covered the ACT Government's recently released Integrated Energy Plan (IEP) which outlines the ACT's path to electrification.

**Session 2:** Highlighted the perspectives of vulnerable customers in the ACT energy transition, providing valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities.

**Session 3:** Discussed Australia's energy transition and examined how the ACT fits into the national picture. It also explored customer perspectives, values, and priorities during the transition.

Copies of the community forum guest speaker series summaries are included at [Appendix B](#).

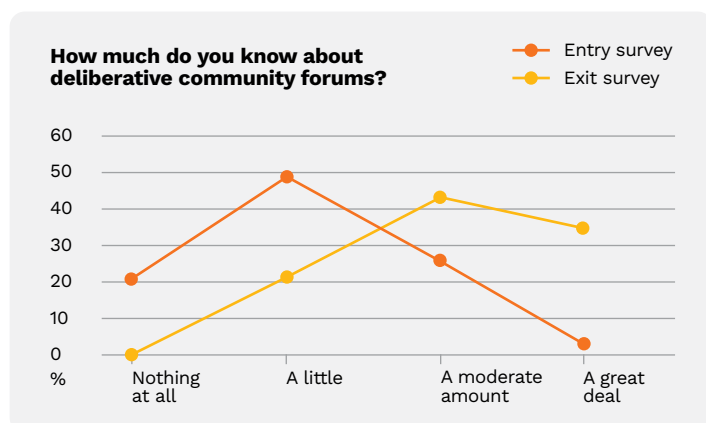




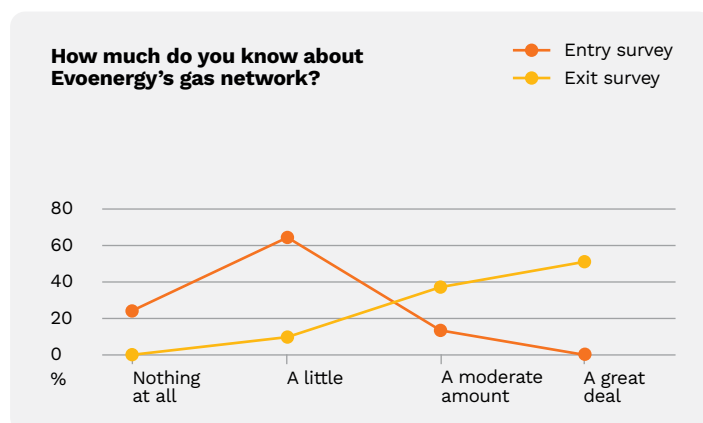
### 3.5.9 Entry/exit survey

An entry survey was completed by onboarding members prior to session one to understand how much they know about deliberative community forums, Evoenergy's gas network, ACT/NSW's approach to energy transition, decommissioning of the gas network, and their expectations for the forum process.

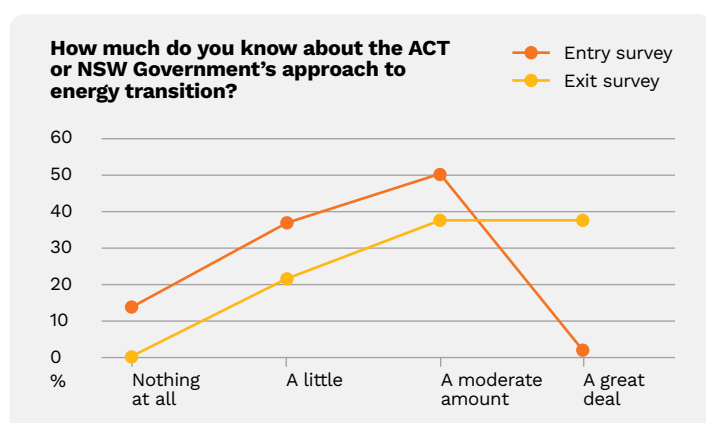
This same survey labelled as an exit survey was completed by members at the end of 2024 after completing seven forum sessions to compare responses. A total of 34 out of 35 participants completed the entry survey and 23 out of 28 completed the exit survey. The following graphs display comparisons between the two surveys:



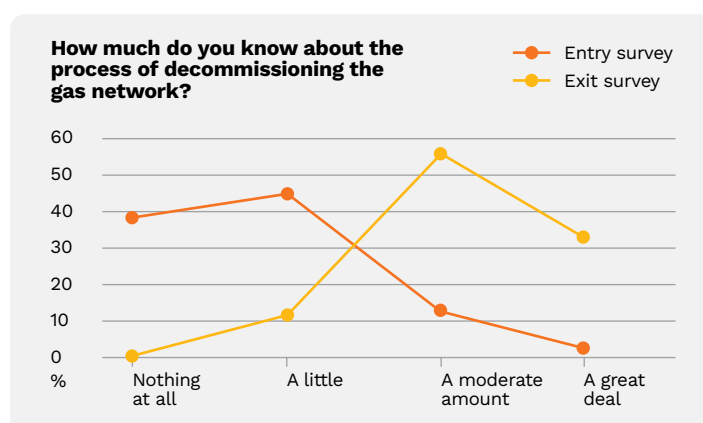
This graph demonstrates that levels of **understanding have increased**.



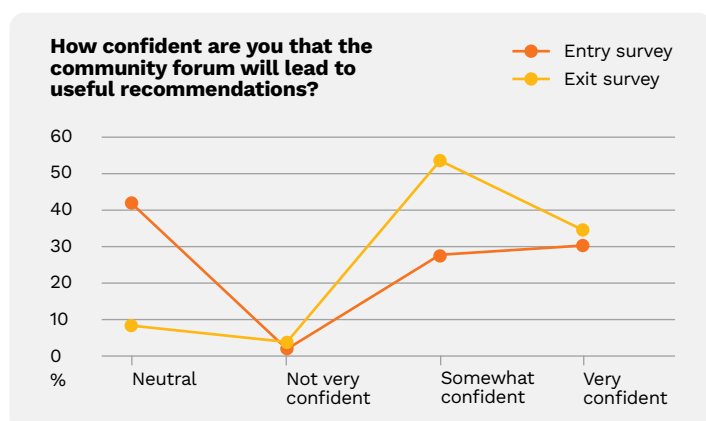
This graph demonstrates that levels of **understanding have increased**.



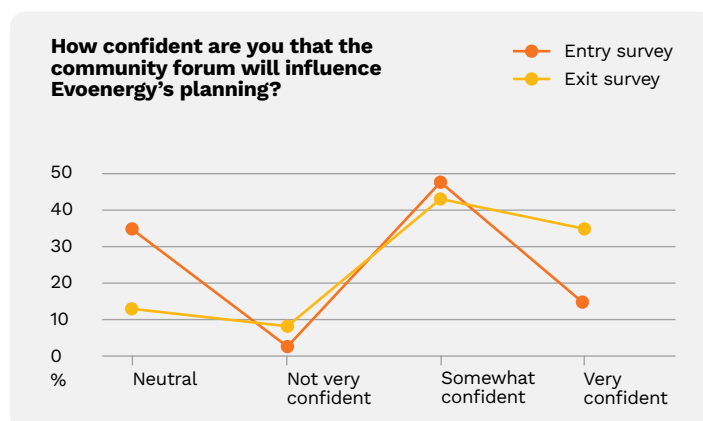
This graph demonstrates that levels of **understanding have increased**.



This graph demonstrates that levels of **understanding have significantly increased**.



This graph demonstrates that **'somewhat comfortable'** has increased.



This graph demonstrates that **'very confident'** has increased.

**Figure 5.** Entry and exit survey results

How does this value  
relate to gas?

persal of Info.

community awareness — booth @ Florio  
to understand language + multiple languages  
Expo

website quizzes etc.

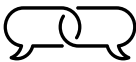
leaflet in bills, both Gas + Elec.

- Countering Misinfo

Helping consumers  
make informed  
choices about  
their own transition

More con  
on the r  
for the ult  
end.  
What helps

INNOVATION  
IN TRANSITION



## 4. Summary of feedback

Section 4 of this report provides detail on the engagement activities and associated feedback provided in each session.

For each community forum session there is also a Snapshot summary which was presented at the conclusion of each session (and via email following the meeting) for review and ratification by participants. These summaries are explained in more detail at section 5 of this report and are attached as [Appendix A](#).

### 4.1 Session 1 – Introduction and values

IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum level: **Involve** and **Empower**

The first session of the community forum was an important opportunity to allow forum participants to get to know each other and feel comfortable in sharing their opinions to the group and more directly to Evoenergy. Ice-breaker activities included a get-to-know each other bingo and a forum naming activity. The forum naming activity did not elicit any appropriate names, however did provide an opportunity for participants to get to know each other.

#### 4.1.1 Community forum activities and behaviours

To further strengthen relationships within the forum and establish an environment that provided a safe place for frank and open discussion, the community forum members worked as a whole group to identify and agree on the following community forum principles of operation.

<b>How you want to work together</b>  <small>This reflects the participant endorsed session 1 snapshot summary - refer to <a href="#">Appendix A</a>.</small>	Respect	Tolerance
	Open mind	Sense of humour
	Being ready to share	Anonymity
	Listening	Transparency
	Considering ideas	Focus
	Honesty	Everyone has a voice

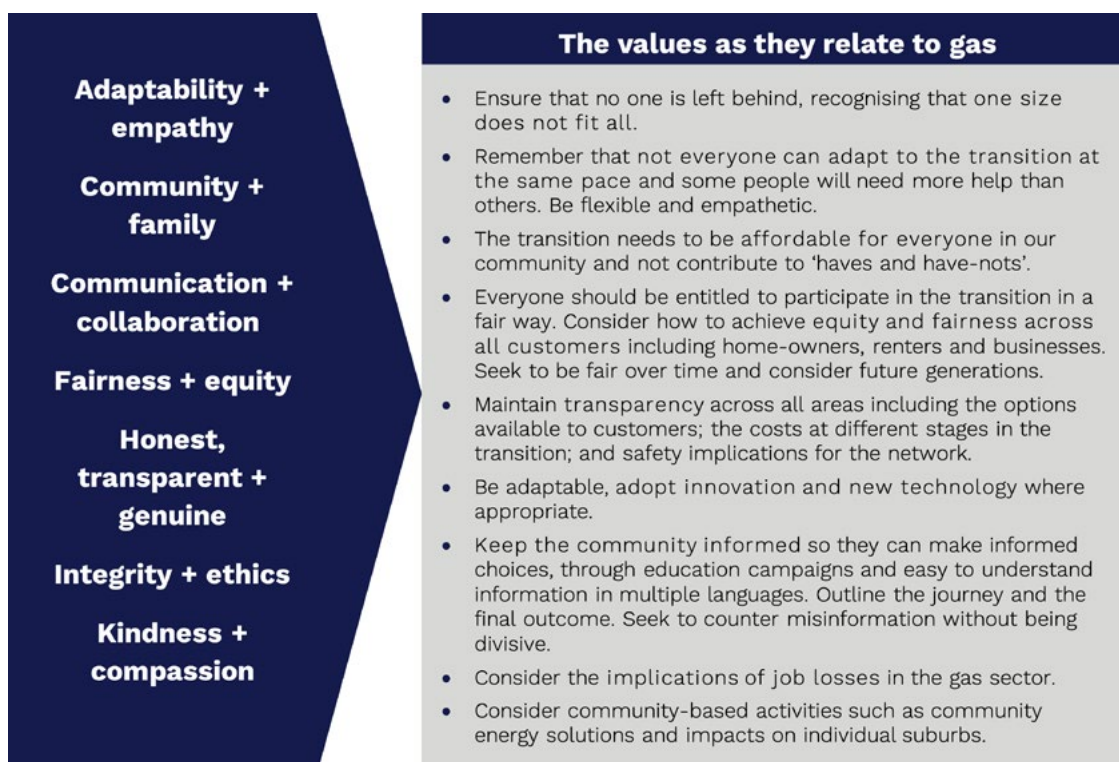
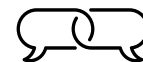
#### 4.1.2 Customer values

An underpinning feature of Evoenergy’s approach is to develop the five-year gas plan in accordance with the expectations and values of its customers.

The community forum undertook a three stage process to identify customer values as they relate to the gas network.

1. Each member of the community forum identified what was important to them – what they valued.
2. Working in small groups and then as a large group, these values were bundled into like values. This generated eight broad values.
3. Participants then received an introductory briefing on Evoenergy and the gas network and visited a gas receiving station. After this, participants were asked to consider how these values relate to gas. This exercise was undertaken by participants moving around the room to contribute to each of the eight broad values and then a whole group discussion to further refine.

This was an important ‘empower’ component of the community forum and provided an underpinning foundation for discussions across all remaining sessions. The outcome of this values exercise is provided below in Figure 6. This image was displayed at all community forum sessions as a reminder of the underpinning values.



**Figure 6.** Customer values as defined by the community forum

## 4.2 Session 2 – Uncertainty and impacts on revenue recovery options

IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum level: **Involve** and **Collaborate**

The ACT Government's commitment to transitioning away from gas presents several challenges for Evoenergy as it seeks to develop its GN26 proposal. One of the most significant of these challenges relates to the impact on traditional demand modelling. As part of helping customers meaningfully inform the development of the GN26 proposal, it is important to build their understanding of the role demand forecasts play in developing the access arrangement. This includes the current uncertainty associated with demand forecasts and the potential implications of getting these forecasts wrong in the future.

This capability development was a key priority across the first three sessions of the community forum, and a particular focus of Session 2.

### 4.2.1 Understanding demand uncertainty

To help participants understand demand uncertainty, two exercises were undertaken. First participants were asked to consider how quickly they are personally likely to transition away from gas and then asked to consider the transition through the lens of various customer types.

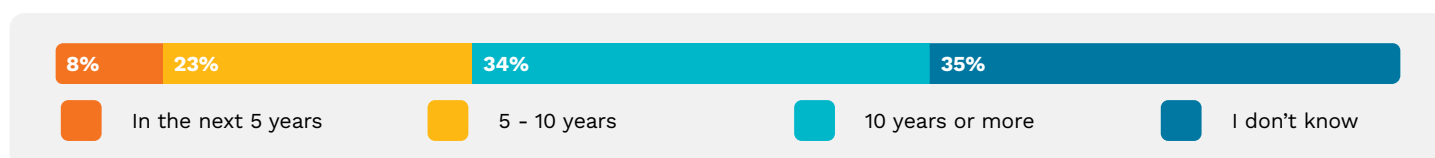
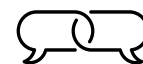
#### 4.2.1.1 Personal transition journey

Through a presentation by Evoenergy, forum members were asked to consider the following:

- ACT Government's transition timeline
- Three different demand scenarios – slow, moderate and fast energy transition
- Likely costs to customer to change from gas to electricity.

Using a digital polling tool, Slido, participants were asked how quickly they think they will transition from gas to electricity. Results are provided in Figure 7.





**Figure 7.** Question: How quickly do you think you will shift your energy use from gas to electricity? (26 responses)

Participants were asked what influenced their decision about timing of the transition away from gas. The following feedback was received (in order of frequency):

- The cost associated with disconnection and replacing appliances
- The condition of existing gas appliances
- They live in a rental property
- They live in an apartment
- They have questions about the ACT Government policy and if it will change in the future
- One person suggested they would wait as long as possible as they prefer to cook with gas.

## What we heard

Over a third of participants in the community forum are not sure how quickly they will transition between gas and electricity. Factors influencing their transition timeframe include:

- Cost
- Remaining life of existing appliances
- Type and ownership status of housing

This reflects the participant endorsed session 2 snapshot summary - refer to [Appendix A](#).

### 4.2.1.2 Considering different customer types

The community forum was introduced to a series of different customer personas which were used throughout the community forum program to encourage participants to consider perspectives of different types of energy customers.

When considering the different personas, the forum members worked in small groups, both in-person and online. Each group was allocated a persona or two and was asked to consider:

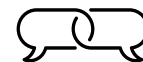
- What factors will impact the persona's ability to transition more quickly or slowly, and
- What are the challenges and benefits to them moving to electricity?

The feedback is summarised below.

**Table 2.** Summary of small group work on personas and their timeframe to transition

Considering different types of customers	Factors impacting transition	Benefits	Challenges
<b>Tony</b> – renting a townhouse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Out of his control, up to the landlord</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One condensed bill</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gaining access to the property to do the works</li> </ul>
<b>Susan and Prav</b> – double income, family of four, house already paid off	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cost not an issue for this family</li> <li>• Motivation high</li> <li>• Time poor so organising it will be a challenge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lower long-term cost</li> <li>• Ability to transition early will mean they can do so when there is not a shortage of resources such as appliances or tradespeople</li> <li>• Improved air quality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organising the time</li> <li>• Secondary upgrade costs such as reinsulating</li> </ul>





Considering different types of customers	Factors impacting transition	Benefits	Challenges
<b>Eden and William</b> – retired, empty nesters, own their home outright – fully electric	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Already transitioned with the exception of battery and EV</li> <li>Further incentives</li> <li>Safety considerations such as battery in EV</li> <li>If they relocate to new home/unit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cheaper bills</li> </ul>	
<b>Share house</b> – renting students, low income	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Landlord's ability and willingness – influenced by costs and energy efficiency</li> <li>Incentives or punitive measures by the Government</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of information and understanding by students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of information and understanding by students</li> </ul>
<b>Jerrabomberra Family</b> – family of four medium income, paying off a mortgage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policies of the NSW Government.</li> <li>Household income</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Electricity bill – may not be a solar offset in NSW</li> <li>Suitability of house for solar panels</li> </ul>
<b>Burley Griffin &amp; Co</b> – Medium sized legal firm, 55 staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Doesn't own the building, would need landlord and strata action</li> <li>Government incentive for landlords</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduced costs</li> <li>Simplified billing – only one source of energy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No real incentive for landlords to change</li> </ul>

## What we heard

When considering the ability of different customer types to make the transition, the following themes were identified:

- Transitioning is up to the landlord for renters and commercial tenants. There is no real incentives or penalties for landlords
- While cost may not be a barrier for higher income households, being time-poor could impact the pace of transition
- NSW customers may not move quickly due to lack of policy drivers by the NSW Government
- Lack of information and poor understanding could be barriers for transition
- A single energy bill is a benefit for households and businesses.

This reflects the participant endorsed session 2 snapshot summary - refer to [Appendix A](#).

## 4.2.2 Recovering network costs

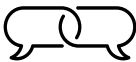
The community forum was provided with a presentation that introduced the following concepts:

- How allowable revenue is calculated in five year periods
- How revenue is recovered from customers and how gas prices are set
- The difference between revenue cap and price cap as tools to recover revenue from customers.

### 4.2.2.1 Considering the revenue recovery options

The calculation of gas prices based on actual demand (revenue cap) and forecast demand (price cap) was presented to the community forum.

To help the community forum understand this complex content, the presentation on different demand scenarios was



interspersed with Slido polls, the opportunity to ask questions and whole-group discussions. The Slido questions provided a prompt for participants to reflect on the different scenarios and how they could impact price outcomes. The results of each of the Slido polls is provided below and reflects the shifting views of the group as the scenarios highlighted outcomes. It should be noted that the Slido polls were largely a tool to aid understanding, and as a result the outcomes of the polls provide only a superficial indication of participant preferences.

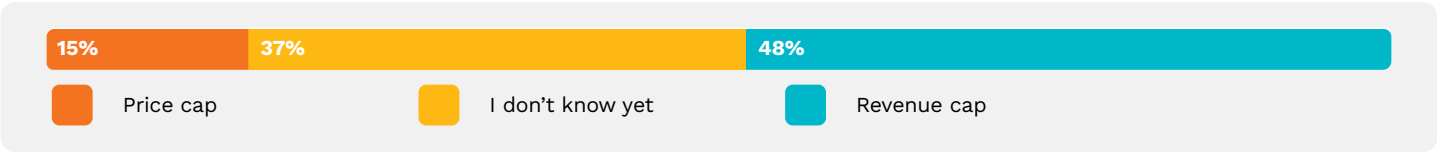


Figure 8. Question: At this stage, which option do you prefer between revenue cap and price cap? (27 responses)

Participants were invited to provide a reason for their choice. The following reasons were provided to the above choices.

Table 3. Reasons given for selecting options in Figure 7.

Option selected	Reason given – as provided by participant
Revenue cap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>It seems more immediate for household budgets</li><li>Paying for what I’m using</li><li>Evo may need to forecast high to make sure they cover costs. Increasing cost to users</li><li>Who will bear the risk for a price cap? It probably means that there is an incentive for Evoenergy to charge more (as a premium) to cover the risk to ensure they can make a profit</li><li>Would be more accurate?</li><li>I would rather it be more variable to better reflect actual demand that is occurring during the period. Especially given the uncertainty and this feels like a better outcome</li><li>Modelling does not sound accurate, consumer wants confidence.</li></ul>
Price cap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Price cap smooths out the cost for the consumer each year. Though there could be a jump after 5 years so maybe I’ll change my answer</li><li>Gives people certainty while they transition</li><li>Allows consumers to budget for costs and therefore work out if it is worth transitioning</li><li>Seems to me it will be better for customers. Anyway it is just modelling.</li></ul>
I don’t know yet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Not enough information to make an informed decision</li><li>Want to see figures / examples</li><li>Confused at the proportion that supply vs usage charges occupy with each option. Price cap maybe best due to fluctuating price of gas?</li><li>Which one is most consistent each year over the 5 years.</li></ul>

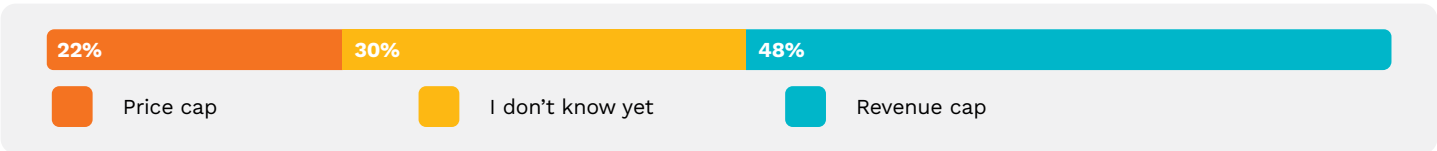
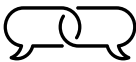


Figure 9. Question: Which option do you prefer when customers use more gas than predicted? (27 responses)



**Table 4.** Reasons given for selecting options in Figure 8

Option selected	Reason given – as provided by participant
Revenue cap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Revenue cost all the way</li><li>It goes to my point of preferring actual usage (which would also go the other way in a low gas connection demand scenario)</li><li>Still revenue cap</li><li>Revenue cap means prices will not go up for customers.</li></ul>
Price cap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Ideally I'd be paying the least amount possible but I can't know that until after I've decided</li><li>Prices will be less (!) but revenue for Evoenergy will be a bit higher</li><li>Better value for the customer</li><li>I don't think gas demand will increase. I would prefer a price cap.</li></ul>
I don't know yet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Still would like to understand what this translates to for my gas bill. Are we talking another \$20 or \$200?</li></ul>



**Figure 10.** Question: Which option do you prefer when there are less customers using gas? (27 responses)

**Table 5.** Reasons given for selecting options in Figure 9

Option selected	Reason given – as provided by participant
Revenue cap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>It still should be charged on demand</li><li>I feel there's a risk that if the price cap model is used; should demand move more than expected (downwards) due to government policy etc (factors that could not have been foreseen) we could have an unsustainable business that is more disadvantageous to the community</li><li>I'm all for the revenue cap now. Seems there will be more advantages for all with this method.</li></ul>
Price cap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Under a price forecast why does the price to a consumer not change. Would the forecast for the energy transition (whether slow / medium / fast) not assume decreased gas usage will occur over the next 5 years and have to increase the cost to make up for this</li><li>I believe a price cap will be best for stability's sake. However, I do believe the five year bump will need to be communicated to consumers</li><li>During next 5 years we will have certainty with price cap.</li></ul>
I don't know yet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>I need time to process all this information</li><li>It's really hard to know what sort of scenario will complement the price of living.</li></ul>

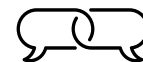
What we heard

When considering the revenue cap versus price cap participants preferences shifted as understanding grew of the impacts of different demand scenarios. Across the discussion participant views were mixed.

The importance of predictability and certainty of price was a constant theme across all discussions, including avoiding jumps in prices at the end of a five year regulatory period.

There remained a proportion of participants that did not have a formed opinion and participants expressed interest in receiving more information, such as understanding the magnitude of price variability under different scenarios.

This reflects the participant endorsed session 2 snapshot summary - refer to [Appendix A](#).

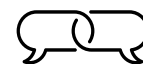


#### 4.2.2.2 Considering the revenue recovery options from the perspective of different customer types

The community forum was also asked to consider the different recovery options from the perspective of the customer personas. Working in small groups participants were asked to answer the question 'what do you think the views of your persona would be on each of the options for how Evoenergy recovers revenue? Why?'. Table 6 captures the answers provided by these groups.

**Table 6.** Worksheet data from small group activity considering different personas.

Considering different types of customers	Views on revenue cap	Views on price cap
<b>Tony</b> – renting a townhouse		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consistency</li> </ul>
<b>Wei</b> – single owns his apartment, low usage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>He is a low usage</li> <li>Unsure of how the body corporate charges</li> <li>Group was indifferent</li> </ul>	
<b>Susan and Prav</b> – Double income, family of four, house already paid off	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Doesn't really bother them</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Doesn't really bother them</li> </ul>
<b>Eden and William</b> – Retired, empty nesters, own their home outright – fully electric	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No view as no gas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No view as no gas</li> </ul>
<b>Share house</b> – renting students, low income	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Preference for price cap, due to certainty of costs</li> <li>Indifferent, Why? 1. transient nature of sharehouse - only there for, generally, 12 months. 2. students will take what they can get - therefore, price/revenue cap makes no/little difference</li> </ul>	
<b>Jerrabomberra Family</b> – family of four medium income, paying off a mortgage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gambling with price</li> <li>High usage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Certainty -&gt; budget accurately</li> <li>stability with price</li> </ul>
<b>Burley Griffin &amp; Co</b> – Medium sized legal firm, 55 staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Will also depend on whether they feel they have been disadvantaged by circumstances outside of their control</li> <li>If demand turns out to be higher than expected &amp; they benefit from lower prices, revenue cap would be viewed positively</li> <li>i.e. has demand dropped significantly because of a fast transition (that they can't make on their own), so they now pay more</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Will the costs need to be transferred to customers</li> <li>May value a price cap more as it gives them more stability in outgoing costs / easier to manage business finances</li> <li>May also value this option because it may 'buy them time' to encourage transition in their building while maintaining price stability. i.e. 5 year timeline.</li> </ul>
<b>Burley Griffin &amp; Co</b> – Medium sized legal firm, 55 staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>out of their control as far as capital costs to refurbish, unless building owner co-operates {discounts,}</li> <li>I think how they will feel will depend significantly on the nature of the communications they receive :).</li> </ul>	
<b>The Dragon Boat</b> – Small, family run restaurant. 10 staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Would be keen if it meant lower prices than under price cap</li> <li>May be concerned about lack of certainty given cashflow issues - if demands shifts significantly which will raise bill.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide better gas price certainty</li> <li>Might appreciate clear deadline (&lt;5yrs)</li> <li>Would be less concerned about paying slightly too much if it was set in advance.</li> </ul>



#### 4.2.2.2 Considering the revenue recovery options more broadly

The community forum was asked to consider the revenue recovery options more broadly, to consider customer values and benefits beyond the individual. Working in small groups within the room and online, participants considered the following questions:

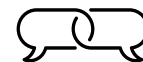
1. How should Evoenergy reflect the values you have identified as they consider the revenue recovery options?
2. On balance, what do you think is the best option – consider Evoenergy, the customer and the broader community.

Feedback from this group activity is presented in Table 7 with each row representing a different group.

**Table 7.** Feedback generated by small-group activity on revenue recovery options

Question: How should Evoenergy reflect the values you have identified as they consider the revenue recovery options?	Question: On balance, what do you think is the best option – consider Evoenergy, the customer and the broader community?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fairness</li> <li>• Encouragement</li> <li>• Transparency – (re. info on pricing structure)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revenue cap (Evo, community, consumer) + profit to Evo</li> <li>• Provides certainty of service</li> <li>• Yearly nudges through change of price – As opposed to the cap price which may shield from price rises ('5 year price trap)</li> <li>• Encourage less procrastination (people may wait till end of each 5 year period)</li> <li>• Evoenergy should be transparent on its prices and encourage information from retailer.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consideration of last to change. Who would pay more under which model?</li> <li>• We may be underestimating cost of living.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evoenergy – revenue cap</li> <li>• Customer – depend on circumstance</li> <li>• Community – price cap (5 year).</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look at vulnerable groups – equity for people who cannot manage</li> <li>• Allow Evoenergy to even out – ability and empathy, communication and collaboration, family and community</li> <li>• Climate change effects ranking 1. communication and collaboration. 2. fairness and equity 3. Adaptability and empathy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you do 5 year, there will probably be a spike it when the next revenue allowance is determined</li> <li>• Look at the role of AER in determining it.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the governments going to be providing to help people transition?</li> <li>• Now leaning towards potential of revenue cap – no shock in five years.</li> <li>• We have identified values. There is also climate change – an important issue. Reality that people who are enabled in timely manner (cost of living) – reality is different. We may be.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What incentives to give to people?</li> <li>• Different views for Evo. Could lose a lot of money with the price cap, but revenue cap would allow them to do forward planning (over next 5 years).</li> </ul>





**Question: How should Evoenergy reflect the values you have identified as they consider the revenue recovery options?**

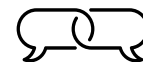
- I think the majority of cases comes down to costs. Newer suburbs have gas appliances etc, and they may still have long life left in them. Decision to stop selling gas appliances should be prioritised
- Government has a clear and crucial role to play here in ensuring their policy is practicable for all parties
- I know this is about revenue- but should planning and legislation for investors of homes be considered and consider deadlines? Much like Food Safety, ensuring standards are
- Need large corporation such as Housing Department, and Defence homes Authority to be onboard early
- The fact gas may need to be in the mix still needs incentives to get customers to go electric and a price cap does meet the urgency better than revenue cap
- I think the case is urgent to change off fossil fuels but I hear that the target of doing so by 2050 may need gas for a while in the mix
- The revenue recovery for Evoenergy I hope will be picked up by changing to electricity. That they can make revenue from that more in the future.

- Old houses that need to be electrified
- Pensioners, unemployed, single parents
- Equity
- Transparency and communication: prices will rise, big jump in 5 years (people need to know what to expect)
- Reconsider buying gas appliances (communicate this, in partnership with govt)
- Evoenergy - be honest about the difficulty in forecasting.

**Question: On balance, what do you think is the best option - consider Evoenergy, the customer and the broader community?**

- Price certainty. Then everyone can budget towards the end goal
- Given Evo is half government owned and the transition is government policy, should Evo not bear the risk, rather than the consumer?
- I think the focus should be on the needs of the broader community. Financially supporting transition for those who need it.
- Climate change will affect all regardless of income bracket, but it will disproportionately affect low SES. > Transition addresses causes of Climate change & considers broader community
- Isn't the whole point of business risk vs reward? Why are the consumers having to carry the risk so business can have the reward
- Climate change is the demon and we must adjust or the world suffers. So a lot of financial prioritising needs doing.

- Customers: it depends - if can transition in 25 years, price cap (locked in lower price)
- Businesses: revenue
- if you know you can't afford transition - revenue cap.



## What we heard

The top priorities that Evoenergy should keep in mind as it considers the revenue recovery options are:

- Adaptability and empathy
- Communication and collaboration
- Fairness and equity
- Honest, transparent and genuine.

When considering the options of revenue cap versus price cap, as appropriate for Evoenergy, the customer and the broader community, views were mixed.

Key areas of concern by customers were:

- Price certainty and the impact of spikes in prices after a five year reset
- The role of government to support the transition
- Evoenergy's role as a business to accept great risks than customers
- The importance of recognising that climate change is the real driver behind the transition.

This reflects the participant endorsed session 2 snapshot summary - refer to [Appendix A](#).

The outcome of the above activity was discussed in more detail during Session 3 of the community forum and revisited in session 9.

## 4.3 Session 3 – Review revenue recovery options and tariff structure

IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum level: **Involve** and **Collaborate**

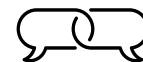
### 4.3.1 Review of revenue recovery options

Building on the discussion and outcomes from Session 2, community forum participants were provided with a context setting presentation to consider the following:

- How the revenue cap and price cap options could impact price over two 5-year periods under different demand predictions and outcome scenarios
- The potential for a hybrid version drawing on elements of both the revenue and price cap.

Using the Slido polling tool, participants were asked the following questions:

1. When you consider a longer-term view of the price or revenue cap, does your view change on the benefits and risks of the different approaches. Why?
2. What are your thoughts on a hybrid approach?
3. What features/benefits of a price and revenue cap would you consider to be important if Evoenergy was to consider a hybrid approach?



#### 4.3.1.1 Long term view of revenue recovery options

When asked to consider the benefits and risks of different revenue recovery options over a longer term the following themes were raised by participants:

- Concern about price volatility and significant spikes in price at the end of five years. Interest in understanding the potential magnitude of price changes
- Interested to ensure Evoenergy remains viable
- Suggestions that a hybrid option be considered
- The impact on vulnerable customers if they are left on the network for an extended time
- Suggestion that an allowance be made for additional revenue collection to allow for the decommissioning of the network
- Interest in the role of retailers to undertake customer engagement and communication.

#### 4.3.1.2 Feedback on a hybrid approach to revenue recovery

In response to the question, 'What are your thoughts on a hybrid approach?', the following is a summary of the feedback provided by participants, captured into themes and presented in order of frequency from most frequent to least.

- Sounds like a better option
- It could be difficult to explain and confusing to customers
- Further information is needed to better understand the cost implications for customers
- It sounds like it might be fairer across all customers and Evoenergy.

Accompanying general discussion was supportive of considering a hybrid approach, particularly if this was able to help keep customer bills more stable and predictable.

Fourteen participants provided feedback to the question 'What features/benefits of a price and revenue cap would you consider to be important if Evoenergy was to consider a hybrid approach.' Their responses could generally be grouped into four themes listed below.

- Price certainty and stability
- Potential to balance benefits and risk across Evoenergy, customers and the community
- Better averaging over time may mean that price changes are shared more evenly over time rather than leaving it to those left on the network at the end
- Not sure at this stage what it would look like.

### What we heard

This reflects the participant endorsed session 3 snapshot summary - refer to [Appendix A](#).

There was some support within the group for Evoenergy considering a hybrid approach to revenue recovery incorporating elements of both a revenue and price cap.

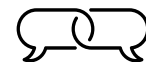
#### 4.3.2 Considering Evoenergy's services and tariffs

In considering Evoenergy's services and tariffs, the community forum was introduced to the following concepts:

- The types of services provided by Evoenergy to customers
- Network tariffs structures and how they relate to different types of customers, including fixed charges and consumption charges
- The principles that Evoenergy has identified to guide its tariff approach.

##### 4.3.2.1 Feedback on Evoenergy's tariff principles

Working in small groups, the community forum considered which of Evoenergy's tariff principles were particularly important and if any were missing. Feedback from the groups is identified in the Table 8 with each row representing feedback from a different group.

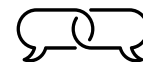
**Table 8.** Worksheet feedback on Evoenergy's tariff principles

Question: What tariff principles do you think are particularly important? Why?	Question: Is there anything missing from the principles?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Equity</li> <li>As someone who uses very minimal gas and has no interest in using more (for environmental and cost reasons), it bothers me that I would be incentivised for using more gas X2 supply charges make up a big part of my bill. If I use more gas (unit price) I would pay less for it</li> <li>Like water we are trying to discourage consumers from using lots of gas just like water</li> <li>One interesting thing is if we increase the unit price (Block 4-5 goes up, while Block 1 goes down) it might be better for consumers, however, for businesses, particularly small owners, that might have their bill doubled if the current system was removed. That means that next time we get a coffee or eat out, we will pay more (as businesses will charge more)! X2.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consultation and communication</li> <li>Consult with people left behind. Consult with community, why it is priced like that?</li> <li>Those left behind may be poorer. Incredibly hard if they are paying so much when there is so few people. Block 1</li> <li>People left to pay for all removal</li> <li>Thing that was missing was communication with the community. To do community forums like this and other forms of active community consultation</li> <li>Water has fixed costs. Couldn't Evoenergy use the water model?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emissions reduction - reason for government policy pushing people to electrify.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Views of principle have changed - consideration of block pricing.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Equity across customers - impacts of cost of living and sense of fairness</li> <li>Cost reflectivity - tariff should pay more the more we use.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concessions?</li> <li>Printed info - education, communication.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Equity across customers and over time -&gt; it needs to be fair for those who cannot transition as quickly</li> <li>Value of emissions reduction - for the environment and for the sake of aligning with govt policy</li> <li>Long term stability of network important so vulnerable consumers aren't penalised for not being able to transition.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pricing structure rewarding higher consumption</li> <li>how do we incentivise people transitioning away from gas</li> <li>govt coming in over the top and adversely affecting tariffs</li> <li>% value of principles compared to one another</li> <li>encouraging decommissioning / disconnections -&gt; means testing.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transparency - not just Evoenergy charges, but total charges for customer</li> <li>Preparation for 5-10 year transition - what's the future narrative for customers / the community.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Equity across customers and over time -&gt; it needs to be fair for those who cannot transition as quickly</li> <li>Big gas users may move business interstate to place keeping gas longer</li> <li>Emission reduction is tariffs per GJ increase instead of decrease - may lose big customers who can move.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is age of equipment under equity section</li> <li>Climate change affecting demand - is this considered under emissions reduction and price stability</li> <li>Limitations on transition from gas to electricity (our network won't cope if we are to have transition happen all at once).</li> </ul>

When reviewing the answers above against the Evoenergy tariff principles presented to the group, the following tariff principles were most frequently supported by the community forum:

- Equity across customers and over time
- Value of emissions reduction.

The data above, also suggests that the community forum felt a principle about communication and consultation with customers would be a useful addition to Evoenergy's tariff principles. This was reiterated during general discussion in the session.



## What we heard

This reflects the participant endorsed session 3 snapshot summary - refer to [Appendix A](#).

The community forum identified the following tariff principles as particularly important:

- Equity across customers and over time
- Value of emission reductions

The community forum would like Evoenergy to consider communication with customers as an additional principle when determining tariffs.

Large group discussion built on the written feedback of the above exercise and highlighted the following views of the community forum:

- The long term stability of the network is important to ensure equity and that vulnerable customers are not penalised for being unable to transition
- It was suggested by some participants that if businesses were penalised they may relocate out of Canberra
- The possible role of tariffs in changing behaviour and incentivising customers to use less gas
- Customer communication and transparency of pricing is important
- The different ways utility providers recover costs was raised and comparisons were drawn with water tariffs which incentivise customers to use less water.

### 4.3.3 Considering Evoenergy's tariff trade off and implications

The community forum was provided an opportunity to consider the different tariff trade-offs and the implications for different community members and businesses.

In considering Evoenergy's tariffs, the community forum was introduced to the following concepts:

- Fixed charges versus consumption charges
- Consumption block charges.

#### 4.3.3.1 Feedback on Evoenergy's tariff structure

The community forum worked in small groups to answer the following questions:

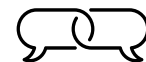
- What are your thoughts on the tariff structure?
  - The balance between fixed charges and consumption charges
  - Having a flatter consumption block charge?
- How should network costs be shared across different customer types?
  - Consider the implications for different personas – business and residential.

The outcomes of the small group discussions are documented in the table below. The small group discussions were then followed by a whole of group discussion which highlighted the following key point that appeared to be supported by the group:

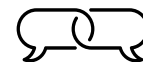
*A general desire for tariffs to be structured to encourage people to move off the gas network, while ensuring that those unable to transition easily, including vulnerable customers, were not disadvantaged.*

Table 9 provides the feedback from each group, with each row representing a different group.



**Table 9.** Feedback on tariff structures from group worksheets

Question: What are your thoughts on the tariff structure?	Question: How should network costs be shared across different customer types?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I like lower fixed charges</li> <li>We don't know what retailers are going to do. Difficult to say. Incentive to drop the price?</li> <li>I agree, we need to incentivise consumers to reduce gas usage so have a flatter consumption charges</li> <li>Evoenergy supply charge. Retailer charges me 70cents (evo 20cents) if Evo reduces that, the retail supplier going to pass it on or keep it themselves as the profit?</li> <li>What's in it for them? My supply charge is twice as much as my usage charge</li> <li>Supply charge is high</li> <li>lower fixed charges and lower block one - who will pay? Someone needs to pay either way. We pay more at the bill</li> <li>I would support a lower fixed charge but the existing consumption tariffs as a "compromise"</li> <li>I thought it was clever that the lower fixed charge might also keep people on the network a little longer.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lower for residential. Aim for commercial consumers to change (due to higher emissions)</li> <li>Less options for residential - no other option than bearing the cost (e.g., save money) (Apartments need to wait to catch up) Business - tax strategies, offset costs, different revenue</li> <li>Incentivise commercial vs residential</li> <li>Technologies - availability.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Don't think it's fair to 'hide' part of fixed cost in block and tariff</li> <li>Fixed low encourages consumers to stay with gas. (it is fair to replace for low consumption appliances ie. Oven, cooktop and GWS)</li> <li>Fixed high and low consumer charges benefit people with high cost appliance to connect to electricity</li> <li>Having a flatter consumption block charge - Yes but higher charges for large users (increase 3&amp;4 block prices) Therefore decrease slightly block 1 prices</li> <li>Consider even punishing residential users who go into block 2.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access to energy is a human right. Do businesses have human rights?</li> <li>Residential customers should pay less than business customers</li> <li>Helping a little to a lot of people? Or helping a lot to few businesses?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If the overall cost is still the same why would people change to electric options.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Should be equitably charged across all users.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Block 1 and 2 need to better reflect residential and commercial usage - the 44GJ ceiling is too high</li> <li>Keeping up with other market forces (workforce etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Should be flatter</li> <li>Need to incentivise the transition for small businesses (nothing there's already a ton of green energy initiatives)</li> <li>Means testing.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It doesn't matter - don't really understand the fixed charge</li> <li>Put in a new block for small users - to incentivise.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do we still need blocks 3 and 4 - or merge into 1 block</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For low residential users - will prefer lower fixed rates</li> <li>If rates are higher it may encourage people to transition (if they can)</li> <li>For high residential user/commercial - fixed rate charges will have less impact</li> <li>Table feedback - would prefer higher fixed charge and lower consumption component</li> <li>We want the larger customer on the network (15% of revenue)</li> <li>Incentives for emission reduction.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Low use residential vs high use residential</li> <li>Business / commercial use (small business vs larger business)</li> <li>We like the current ranges in terms of targeting different customers - higher fixed and lower band 1 and 2 residential customers</li> <li>Look after bigger customers to help transition costs.</li> </ul>



Review of the above feedback suggests that in addition to a desire for tariffs to be structured to encourage reduced use of gas, the community forum also had a range of ideas about how the tariffs could be restructured and had mixed views on the split between residential and business customers.

The role of tariffs to support emissions reduction also continued to be a common theme.

### What we heard

This reflects the participant endorsed session 3 snapshot summary - refer to [Appendix A](#).

The community forum expressed an opinion that tariffs should be structured to encourage people to move off the gas network, while ensuring that those unable to transition easily, including vulnerable customers, were not disadvantaged.

There was also a growing recognition that if customers move too quickly off the network, there will be negative impacts on revenue to operate the network.

The first phase on early engagement, including sessions 1 to 3, were focussed on topics to set the context for future engagement and inform the development of preliminary positions for the Reference Service Proposal. A midway report, by Communication Link, that provides a summary of the discussions and feedback from the first three meetings of the community forum was submitted along with the Reference Service Proposal.

## 4.4 Session 4 – Reference service proposal and recovering network costs

IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum level: **Involve**

### 4.4.1 Recovery of network investment costs

The community forum was introduced to the concept of recovering network investment costs and depreciation. The challenge of how to fairly recover asset costs in the face of uncertainty and declining customer numbers was posed for the community forum to consider.

#### 4.4.1.1 Ideas to support customers

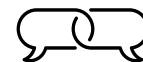
The community forum identified several ways that Evoenergy could support customers during the transition. The following ideas were shared:

- Providing clear information such as one-stop shop; customer information phone line; tailored to different customer types; information on timeframes and estimated cost of transition
- Access to trades such as a list of qualified installers for new appliances
- Incentivising customers to transition.

#### 4.4.1.2 Ideas to address the challenge of recovering network costs

Working in groups, participants considered the challenge of recovering network costs as customer numbers declined. The areas they felt were important were (in order of frequency mentioned):

- The costs - the magnitude, how they will be shared, what is to be recovered
- Fairness and equity – how to share the costs equitably, potential for different costs for different customer types
- The role of incentives - to facilitate the transition and recovering of associated costs
- The ACT Government's roles and responsibilities.



#### 4.4.1.3 Other ideas to address the challenge of recovering network costs

The community forum was asked to consider other ideas to address the challenge of recovering network costs. The following ideas were shared:

- The current regulatory framework is no longer appropriate
- Energy network owners carry some of the cost even though not getting 100% return on their assets
- Change the role of governments, so that they contribute more
- Evoenergy transition faster than the Government timeframe
- Be innovative and revolutionary
- The disconnection bank idea and managing transition on a suburb-by-suburb basis
- Bringing together all the energy (gas and electricity) to be considered as a whole.

### What we heard

This reflects the participant endorsed session 4 snapshot summary - refer to [Appendix A](#).

There were mixed views on recovering network costs including views that Evoenergy should not fully recover its costs or that it should be a shared responsibility between Evoenergy and the ACT Government.

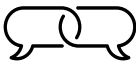
#### 4.4.2 Different approaches to depreciation

The community forum considered the different approaches to depreciation and potential implications for different customer types. The feedback is summarised below.

##### 4.4.2.1 Feedback on straight line depreciation and customer weighted depreciation

**Table 10.** Feedback on straight line depreciation and customer weighted depreciation

Straight line depreciation	
<b>Strengths</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easier concept to calculate and understand</li> <li>• Creates an incentive to leave the network earlier, as there are lower costs for those who transition early</li> <li>• Could fast track the potential transition for those that can afford it</li> <li>• Allows time to transition</li> <li>• Gives businesses time to plan.</li> </ul>
<b>Weaknesses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Late adopters/transitions have a huge bill shock</li> <li>• Disadvantages those that can't transition easily e.g. vulnerable customers, renters, apartments</li> <li>• Is unsustainable, less economically viable, no control over future costs</li> <li>• Harder to exit for customers and Evoenergy</li> <li>• May encourage reactive decision making rather than proactive - delaying the transition</li> <li>• May not be fair on future customers, young people</li> <li>• Only gas customers paying for the transition.</li> </ul>
Customer weighted depreciation	
<b>Strengths</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customers have less bill shock</li> <li>• More consistent, stable costs over the longer term</li> <li>• Balanced for all users, costs shared more equitably</li> <li>• Allows costs to be reweighted every 5 years depending on what happens</li> <li>• May provide more flexibility for businesses to plan for transition.</li> </ul>
<b>Weaknesses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customers have no incentive to leave earlier</li> <li>• Not encouraged to disconnect - susceptible to further regulating action from government</li> <li>• Uncertainty and lack of control of future price.</li> </ul>



What we heard

This reflects the participant endorsed session 4 snapshot summary - refer to [Appendix A](#).

The community forum did not indicate a clear preference for a depreciation method. There was strong interest in how different cost recovery methods influenced the incentive to transition.

4.4.3 Considering a network exit fee

The community forum considered the strengths and weaknesses of an exit fee based on a presentation by Evoenergy. The feedback is summarised below:

4.4.2.1 Feedback on exit fee

Table 11. Feedback on exit fee

Exit fee	
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Will reduce the costs of those on the network the longest – the final amount to recover</li><li>Allows Evoenergy to recover costs</li><li>Won't impact those with the means to transition easily.</li></ul>
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Further disadvantages vulnerable customers</li><li>Is contradictory to the government objectives to encourage transition</li><li>Some customers, particularly businesses, may delay transition.</li></ul>

What we heard

This reflects the participant endorsed session 4 snapshot summary - refer to [Appendix A](#).

The community forum did not support an exit fee as it was considered contrary to government policy and a disincentive to disconnecting.

4.5 Session 5 – Managing network disconnections and cost recovery

IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum level: **Involve** and **Collaborate**

4.5.1 Temporary and permanent gas disconnections

The community forum learnt about the difference between permanent and temporary disconnections and their implications. Participants were asked to vote on a series of questions as below.

4.5.1.1 Feedback on permanent and temporary gas disconnections

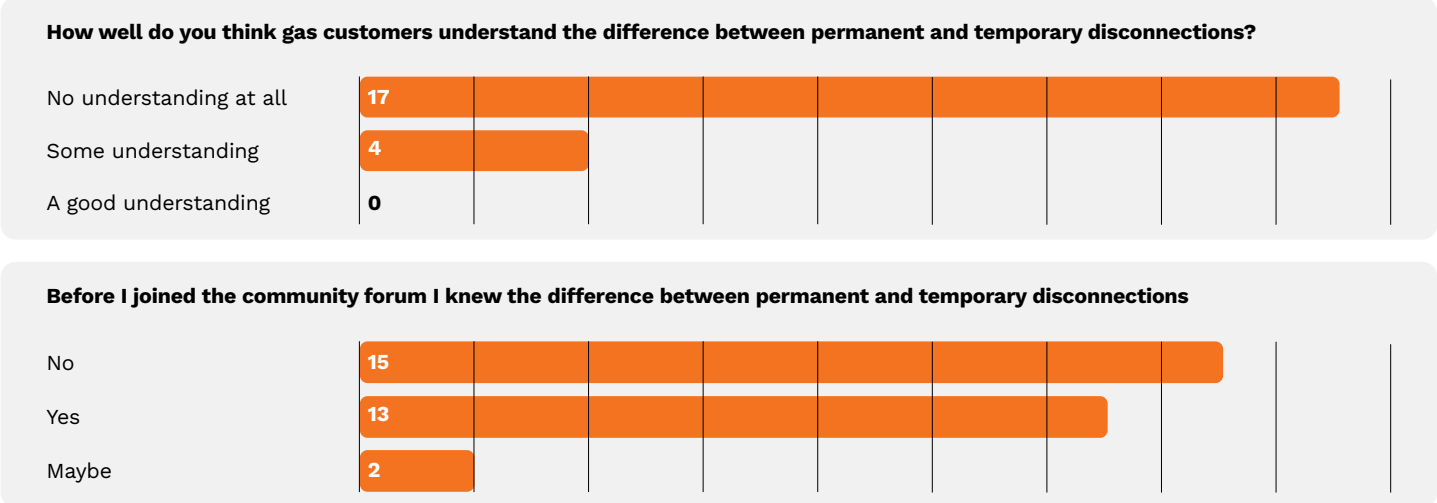
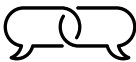


Figure 11. Response to questions on gas disconnections



What we heard

This reflects the participant endorsed session 5 snapshot summary - refer to [Appendix A](#).

Energy customers do not have a strong understanding of the two types of disconnections.

4.5.2 Gas network disconnections

4.5.2.1 Feedback on permanent gas disconnection costs

Participants considered the options to recover disconnection costs with respect to disconnecting customers versus those remaining on the network. The feedback is summarised below:

Table 12. Feedback on permanent gas disconnection costs

When disconnecting customer pays the larger proportion	
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Those unable to afford disconnection don't pay more over the longer term</li></ul>
Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Adds yet another cost when transitioning and affects people with less appliances more proportionally.</li></ul>
When remaining gas customers pay the larger proportion	
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Incentivises customers to transition faster and may encourage permanent disconnections</li></ul>
Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Participants were unclear on how much money is required for this option.</li></ul>

What we heard

This reflects the participant endorsed session 5 snapshot summary - refer to [Appendix A](#).

Participants generally felt a balanced (50/50) split of costs between customers disconnecting and those remaining on the network was reasonable. This was due to the associated cost levels being considered an acceptable amount to pay and not acting as a disincentive to disconnect.

Participants were then presented with the estimated bill impacts for different recovery options. There were mixed views on whether this changed their opinions about the most appropriate ways to recover disconnection costs.

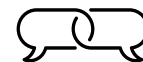
A summary of other feedback is below:

- Concerns were expressed about bill impacts and disconnection costs going up for those left on the network over future regulatory periods
- A higher upfront price may be a disincentive to disconnect and make it harder to communicate the safety implications
- Other thoughts at each end of the bill costs spectrum include:
  - \$0: annual average may not lead to informed decisions and people are less likely to disconnect if cost of the annual average bill is \$0
  - \$34: annual average incentivises people to permanently disconnect but leaves the cost up to the people left on the network which was not seen as equitable.

Participants were invited to provide other ideas for the recovery of disconnection costs, their feedback included:

- The ACT Government should contribute to the cost of disconnection – a policy decision on behalf of all taxpayers
- Allow Evoenergy to enforce permanent disconnections as it is safer
- Consider spreading the cost/payments over many years before the actual disconnection establishing a fund – like a ‘disconnection bank’
- Consider incentivising people to disconnect early by offering a ‘street/neighbourhood price.’





## What we heard

This reflects the participant endorsed session 5 snapshot summary – refer to [Appendix A](#).

Participants had mixed views on whether knowing the potential bill impacts changed the opinion that a balanced approach should be adopted to recovering disconnection costs.

## 4.6 Session 6 – Support for customers and community forum report

IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum level: **involve** and **empower**

### 4.6.1 Supporting customers through the transition

Participants were asked if Evoenergy should seek additional funding for programs to support customers during the transition, what priorities they have for supporting customers and who should be responsible for implementing them.

#### 4.6.1.1 Feedback on supporting customer options through the transition

There were mixed views on seeking additional funding. The predominant view was that Evoenergy should seek additional funding to support customers and investigate what support already exists. There were others that opposed the idea on the basis that it was Government policy and therefore not Evoenergy's responsibility.

Shared responsibility – there was a dominant theme that Governments (ACT and Federal) and retailers also have an important role in communicating to customers alongside Evoenergy.

Clear, accessible information – it was suggested that communication material should be easily accessible and understandable. Ideas included the CBR Newsletters, information on bills, community education campaign, advertising, and online content.

### 4.6.2 Community Forum Report to Evoenergy

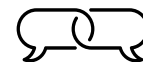
The Community Forum Report to Evoenergy was prepared by the community forum. Working as a whole group, the draft report was revised, edited and finalised to the satisfaction of 32 participants. It is an independent record of the collective views of the participants.

The report includes feedback and suggestions in the areas of customer impacts, the cost of the transition, the regulatory environment and customer values and overarching priorities.

*The forum recognised the uncertainty associated with the speed of this transition and encourages flexibility as we respond. Considering this, the Community Forum identified the following priorities:*

- *More information should be provided to the community about the energy transition and its impact on customers.*
- *Evoenergy has a role to encourage customers to move off gas, while not disadvantaging customers who may not be able to transition as easily, including vulnerable customers.*
- *The cost of the transition should be shared fairly across all energy consumers.*
- *We support a move away from separate gas and electricity networks to consider the energy system as a whole, including the impacts on the electricity network and its costs to customers.*
- *The transition is ACT Government policy, and the ACT Government should be taking a greater role in facilitating the transition.'*

A copy of the complete Evoenergy Community Forum Report is included at [Appendix C](#) and is also available on [Evoenergy's website](#).



## 4.7 Session 7 – Draft five-year gas plan development including preliminary bill impacts

IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum level: **Involve** and **Collaborate**

### 4.7.1 Consideration of another capital base recovery option

The community forum considered another method of capital base depreciation, the sum-of-the-years' digits. It was presented by Evoenergy in response to previous feedback on the alternatives of straight-line depreciation or customer weighted depreciation.

#### 4.7.1.1 Feedback on sum-of-the-years' digits depreciation option

Participants considered the advantages and disadvantages of the sum-of-the-years' digits depreciation option on different types of customers and sharing the financial burden. The feedback is summarised below:

**Table 13.** Advantages and disadvantages of sum-of-the-years' digits depreciation option

Sum-of-the-years' digits depreciation approach	
<b>Advantages</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A fairer and more equitable distribution of costs</li> <li>• Many considered it a good compromise between the other depreciation options</li> <li>• Some participants felt the increased upfront costs could be a positive incentive for customers to transition earlier.</li> </ul>
<b>Disadvantages</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher upfront costs might cause bill shock and hardship, particularly given the current high costs of living.</li> </ul>

Additional comments included that the community forum suggested Evoenergy consider not recovering all capital costs, and that the costs be recovered from all energy customers, not just gas.

#### 4.7.1.2 Alignment with Community Forum Report to Evoenergy

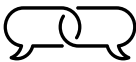
Participants were asked to consider whether this sum-of-the-years' digits option aligns with the community forums priorities in the Community Forum report to Evoenergy. Feedback is summarised below:

- Participants felt that it aligns with the forum's priorities and preference to share the cost of transition fairly.

#### 4.7.1.3 Sharing the recovery of capital costs

Participants were asked if there is anything else they think Evoenergy should consider with respect to sharing the recovery of capital costs. Feedback is summarised below:

- Provide more information to customers about the transition and how to be energy efficient
- Incentivise early conversion of smaller, cheaper appliances such as hot water and cooking to encourage the transition
- Consider recovering costs from non-gas customer sources, e.g. electricity customers or the government
- Challenges associated with transitioning of apartments, and implications for the future profile of gas customers
- Consider applying different cost recovery options for business versus residential customers
- Implications for NSW customers.



What we heard

This reflects the participant endorsed session 7 snapshot summary - refer to [Appendix A](#).

The community forum generally preferred the sum of years' digits method. Most agreed that it aligned with the priorities identified in the Community Forum Report to Evoenergy and shares the costs fairly.

4.7.2 Tariff structures and rebalancing

Building on feedback from the community forum, Evoenergy presented some options to rebalance the current tariff structure for consideration and further feedback.

4.7.2.1 Feedback on tariff rebalancing option

Participants were asked to consider what they thought were the advantages and disadvantages of the tariff rebalancing options and to share any other ideas. The feedback is summarised below:

Table 14. Advantages and disadvantages of tariff rebalancing option

Tariff rebalancing option	
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Is fairer and benefits customers that are using less gas.</li><li>Closer to a user pays approach.</li></ul>
Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Could unfairly disadvantage larger households.</li><li>A lower cost could discourage gas customers from disconnecting.</li></ul>

There were mixed views when it came to commercial customers. Some people felt it wouldn't impact commercial customers as they can pass on increased costs and get a tax deduction. Others worried that passing on increased costs to the end users was a further negative impact on households.

4.7.2.2 Other considerations for tariff rebalancing

Participants were asked if there is anything else they think Evoenergy should consider regarding rebalancing of tariffs. Feedback is summarised below:

- Consider having less tariff blocks, or wider blocks
- Don't always assume that a small gas user is necessarily a vulnerable customer, other size households may also need extra support
- Consider the age demographic of gas customers as older customers may be more reluctant to transition
- Homes that are due for a new meter should be offered free disconnection instead of investing in a new meter
- Take into consideration which tariffs are more likely to be adopted and passed directly on by retailers
- Perhaps it is better to incentivise the purchase of new appliances rather than shift behaviour using the bill.

What we heard

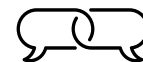
This reflects the participant endorsed session 7 snapshot summary - refer to [Appendix A](#).

The community forum was generally positive about suggestions to rebalance tariffs, however, there was also a theme that the impact was so small within the overall context of a household gas bill, as to be insignificant, and therefore unlikely to change behaviour.

4.7.3 Reflections on participation in the community forum process

At the end of the session participants undertook a personal reflection activity about what they enjoyed and what could be done differently in delivering the community forum. Feedback from participants can be read in section 6 of the report.

The second phase of engagement including sessions 4 to 7 were focused on informing the five-year gas plan, including the release of a [draft five-year gas plan](#) for public consultation.



## 4.8 Session 8 – Draft five-year gas plan publication and initial reflections

IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum level: **Inform**

### 4.8.1 Overview of draft five-year gas plan

Evoenergy presented the draft five-year gas plan to the community forum at a shorter online session following publication of the draft five-year gas plan for public consultation. The community forum was asked to consider and provide initial feedback on the draft plan and identify areas for further discussion, noting that further opportunities for feedback would be provided in subsequent sessions.

#### 4.8.1.1 Initial feedback on key elements of draft five-year gas plan

The initial feedback on the draft five-year gas plan is summarised below.

- The flatter tariff structure was welcomed although there was discussion about the general cost impact on smaller customers and some interest in further reduction in the lower consumption blocks
- A desire for more government support for the costs of transition.

The following areas were raised for further discussion:

- Rules and costs for disconnections
- Sharing transition costs across gas and electric customers
- Exploring the AER framework and hybrid price/ revenue caps.

#### What we heard

This reflects the participant endorsed session 8 snapshot summary - refer to [Appendix A](#).

Participants welcomed how their feedback had been integrated into the draft five-year gas plan.

## 4.9 Session 9 – Revisit adjusting gas network prices, sharing of network cost recovery and permanent disconnections

IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum level: **Involve**

### 4.9.1 Feedback on the draft five-year gas plan

The community forum was provided an opportunity to revisit the questions asked in session 8 with respect to the draft five-year gas plan. The feedback is summarised below.

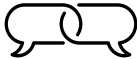
#### 4.9.1.1 Further thoughts and feedback on the draft five-year gas plan

Participants provided the following further feedback on the draft plan:

- What would be the impact of a change in government on this plan?
- Need to create more incentives to get off gas
- Pleased to see engagement with ACT Government on disconnection costs
- What is Evoenergy doing about the feedback we gave about not recovering 100% of asset costs?

Participant feedback: *'Evo has conducted a consultative approach throughout the process and incorporated feedback accordingly.'*





Participants identified areas of the plan that they would like to discuss further, including:

- Approach to disconnections
- Involvement of the ACT Government
- Understanding the demand forecasts better
- Sharing the cost of transition across gas and electricity customers, or ACT Government ratepayers.

### What we heard

This reflects the participant endorsed session 9 snapshot summary - refer to [Appendix A](#).

The majority of members felt that the community forum feedback has been responded to well by Evoenergy within the current Government policy and regulatory confines.

## 4.9.2 Consideration of revenue cap and implications

The community forum was provided an opportunity to revisit the questions asked in session 8 with respect to the draft five-year gas plan. The feedback is summarised below.

### 4.9.2.1 Feedback on the revenue cap

In session 9, Evoenergy explained to the community forum that the draft five-year gas plan includes a revenue cap approach to adjust prices based on actual declining demand.

The community forum was asked to rank what was important to them when considering annual price adjustments. The graph below shows the results with the most important attribute listed as 1 and the least identified as 6.

#### Adjusting pricing - what is most important to customers

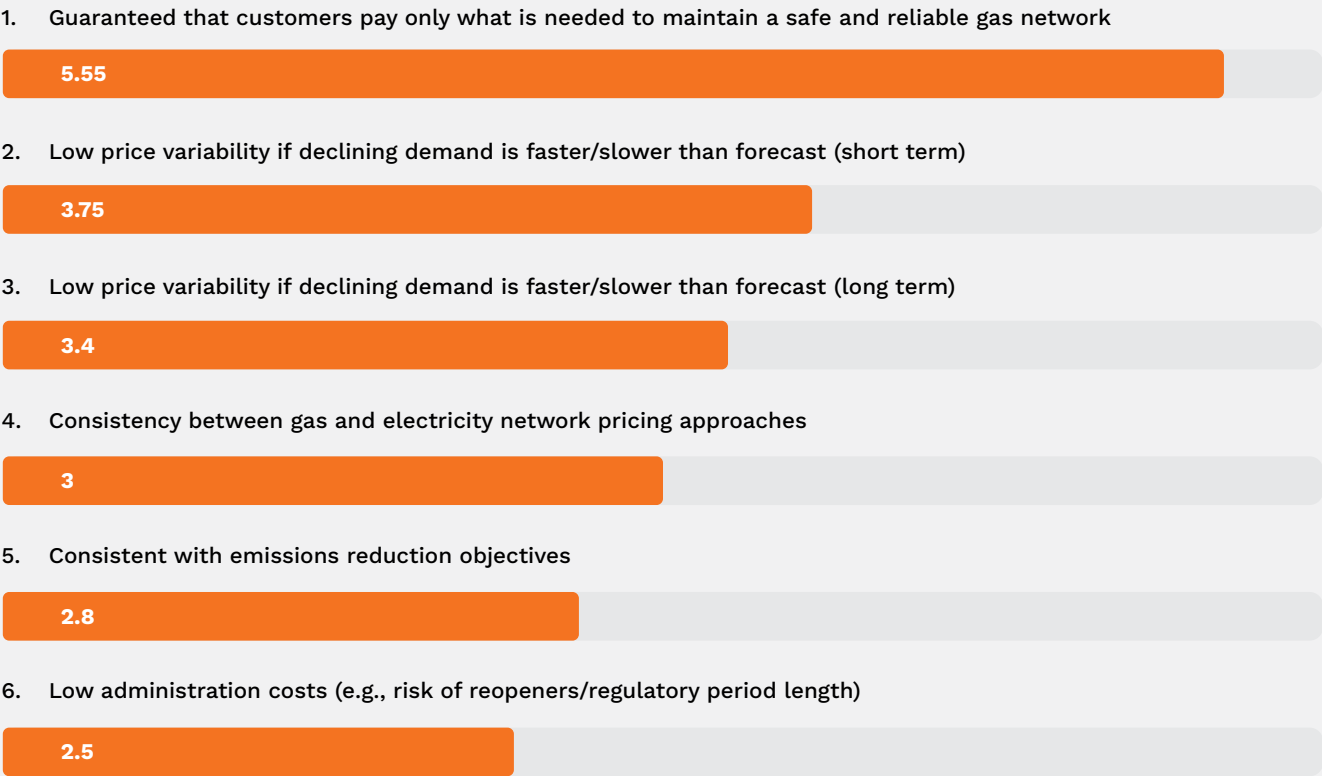
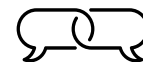


Figure 12. Adjusting pricing – what is more important to customers (20 responses)



#### 4.9.2.2 Views and areas of concerns regarding the revenue cap

The community forum was asked to share views and any concerns they had regarding the use of a revenue cap. The feedback is summarised below:

- General support for the approach
- Provides the greatest certainty for customers and Evoenergy
- Long-term government policy is not certain and could be subject to change
- Mixed views on the speed of the transition and concern that a faster exit from the network would see an increase in longer term prices.
- Ideas to address concerns included:
- Clearly communicating the revenue cap to customers
- Alignment of ACT and Federal Government energy policies particularly focused on helping low-income earners.
- Regular and frequent review of the demand and prices approach.

#### What we heard

This reflects the participant endorsed session 9 snapshot summary - refer to [Appendix A](#).

Participants prioritised certainty when adjusting prices with a preference that customers pay only what is needed to maintain a safe and reliable gas network. Followed by low price variability if declining demand is faster or slower than forecasted.

#### 4.9.3 Consideration of fair sharing of network costs

The community forum considered the different approaches to depreciation across different customer types and what might be a fair sharing of network costs. The forum was presented with bill impacts on different customer types across 5-year and 10-year scenarios to inform their discussions. The forum considered whether the annual bill increases proposed in the draft five-year gas plan to recover asset costs was considered reasonable, compared to bill increases under a straight-line approach.

The feedback is summarised below.

- Concerns were raised about the practicality of the discussion with so many unknowns, assumptions and potential future government policy changes
- Some queried whether the electricity network has the capacity to receive all the new customers coming on board and how much those costs may go up
- Questions were also raised about apartments and renters and possible other policies to support. Some feel that the ACT Government should play a role in cost recovery impacts as the drivers of the policies
- Some suggested that it would be helpful to see analysis of periods beyond 10 years
- There were shared concerns around the impact on families during the current cost of living crisis.

#### What we heard

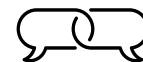
This reflects the participant endorsed session 9 snapshot summary - refer to [Appendix A](#).

There is general support for the depreciation method in the draft five-year gas plan for recovering asset costs on the basis of it being considered the most fair and equitable approach.

#### 4.9.4 Feedback on permanent disconnections

The community forum considered the impacts of a targeted approach to permanent disconnections for each different customer type. This included providing feedback on whether it is considered fair and equitable for the disconnecting property owners to pay for a permanent disconnection. The feedback is summarised below:

- Exceptions should be available in financial hardship cases
- A suggestion that charging for disconnection was not appropriate as it is not included in the connection agreement
- ACT Government should pay the cost of disconnection as the land belongs to the Government
- There was a suggestion that when selling a property who pays the disconnection costs could become part of the sale negotiations
- Safety in restaurants, apartments and basement gas connections was identified as important.



## What we heard

This reflects the participant endorsed session 9 snapshot summary - refer to [Appendix A](#).

There is general support for the proposed targeted approach to disconnections.

## 4.10 Session 10 – Access arrangement proposal positions and initial feedback

IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum level: **Involve**

### 4.10.1 Proposed disconnections charges and safety approach

Evoenergy presented its proposed approach to recovering disconnections costs, including indicative charges for the 2026-27 year adopting a targeted approach to permanent disconnections. They presented the community forum with a proposal to undertake a safety control program to increase customer awareness of gas network safety and help customers make informed disconnection choices. The community forum provided direct feedback as follows.

#### 4.10.1.1 Feedback on proposed approach to disconnections charges and safety approach

Evoenergy presented the proposal to recover the costs of a gas safety control program as part of the temporary disconnection fee, estimated to be an additional \$29 per disconnection. The community forum was asked if they supported this approach to collecting the safety control program costs and for any ideas they have for the program?

The community forum provided the following feedback on collection of the charge within temporary disconnections costs:

- The cost is reasonable and collecting from disconnecting customers is appropriate
- Suggestion that there could be a role for the Government to fund the safety control program as it related to community safety
- There was one comment that the cost of permanent disconnections should be spread across all customers, not just gas customers.

The community forum was asked for ideas for the gas network safety program. The following ideas were provided:

- Promotion through community newsletters, local magazines and community events
- Reaching out to culturally and linguistically diverse community leaders to spread the information across their communities
- Posters and bus or tram advertising
- Social media and a catchy campaign – the ‘dumb ways to die’ campaign was referenced
- Information included on energy bills and through the retailers
- Ensure there is a large label on the meters that have been temporarily disconnected
- Provide clear information such as definition of permanent and temporary disconnections
- Ensure information is provided when selling or renting the home.

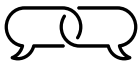
## What we heard

This reflects the participant endorsed session 10 snapshot summary - refer to [Appendix A](#).

Community forum members supported Evoenergy’s proposal to undertake a safety control program to build customer understanding and to recoup the cost of this program as part of the temporary disconnection charges.

### 4.10.2 Approach to adjusting prices and minimising price variability

Evoenergy reminded the community forum of the priorities identified by the forum with respect to annual price adjustments – that customers only pay what is needed to maintain a safe and reliable network; low price variability; and consistency of approach between gas and electricity pricing.



Evoenergy presented its approach to manage price variability under a revenue cap with respect to:

- Demand forecasting
- Tariff rebalancing and price stability
- Jurisdictional charges

**1.1.2.1 Feedback on proposed approach to demand forecasting**

Evoenergy presented its approach to demand forecasting which is driven by customer research. The community forum provided the following feedback:

- The additional efforts by Evoenergy to forecast more accurately and over 20 years was welcomed
- Seems a sensible approach and provides more transparency
- The shorter the forecast obviously more certainty
- Need to consider if changes to government policy, such as incentivising batteries will have an impact on customer behaviour.

**1.1.2.2 Feedback on proposed tariff rebalancing and price stability approach**

Evoenergy presented its revised approach to flattening tariffs which represent a shift away from plans to reduce the fixed charge and instead only reduce the Block 1 tariff as a more stable and balanced approach to flatter prices.

The community forum provided the following feedback:

- This seems like a reasonable adjustment, provides a solid base of the fixed charge as customers leave the network
- While it is a gradual change in tariffs it is a move in the right direction away from encouraging people to use more gas
- Important to continue to adjust the steps every five years
- There was one comment that there should be a larger reduction in the block 1 tariff.

**1.1.2.3 Feedback on adjusting for government charges**

Evoenergy presented a proposal to refresh the forecast of government taxes and levies annual annually instead of every five years.

The community forum was very supportive of this proposed change on the basis that it provided much more certainty and the ability to adjust as required.

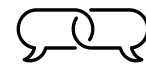
**What we heard**

This reflects the participant endorsed session 10 snapshot summary - refer to [Appendix A](#).

The community forum supports Evoenergy’s approach to demand forecasting based on more customer research. Community forum members agree with plans to flatten the tariff structure by reducing the block 1 tariff.

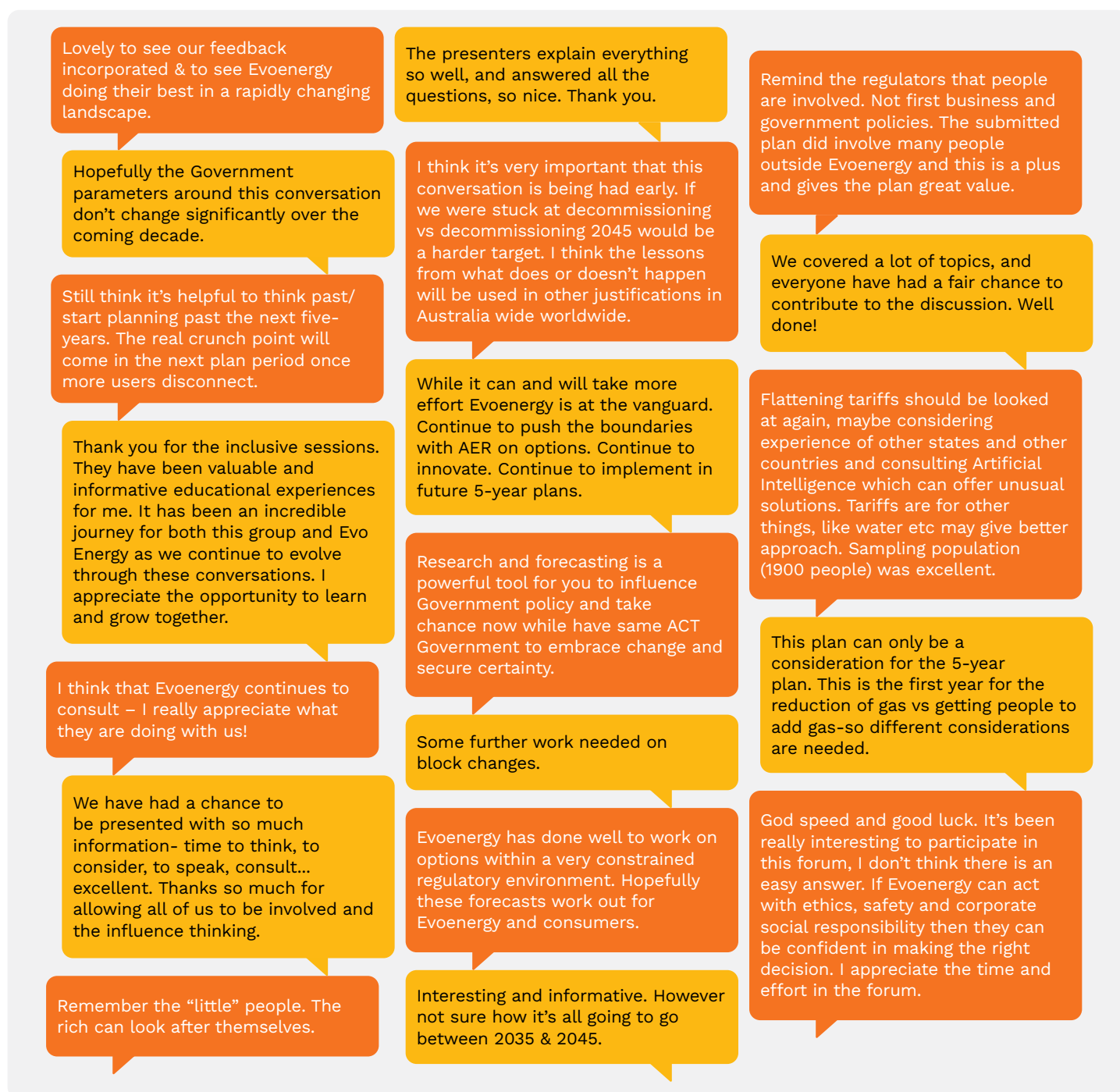
The community forum supports suggestions to adjust government charges on an annual basis allowing greater responsiveness to changes in government policy.





### 4.10.3 Final thoughts

The community forum was asked to write down any final departing thoughts they had at the end of session 10. The feedback is reflected below:



**Figure 13.** Community forum final thoughts

## 4.11 Future sessions

Following submission of Evoenergy's five-year gas plan there are plans for two community forum sessions. These sessions will be used for further engagement as required and provide an opportunity to inform the community forum of feedback from the Australian Energy Regulator.

The third phase of engagement including future sessions 11 and 12 will focus on further engagement to inform Evoenergy's revised five-year gas plan.



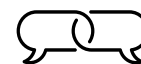
forum bingo someone who ...

- |                               |                            |                           |                           |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Lives in NSW                  | Has a pet                  | Has climbed Mt Kosciuszko | Isn't on Facebook         |
| Has been in a hot air balloon | Plays a musical instrument | Lives with their parents  | Plays football (any kind) |
| Has coached a sporting team   | Owns a business            | Owns a motorbike          |                           |
| Lives in a rural area         | Owns a bike to work        | Was born overseas         |                           |
| Speaks a foreign language     | Has been on a cruise       |                           |                           |

**Reporting by the  
community forum**

**5**





## 5. Reporting by the community forum

### 5.1.1 Snapshot summaries

As part of the delivery of each community forum session, the facilitators draft a 'Snapshot' summary of discussion as the session progresses. This is presented to the group at the end of the session for revision and modification. After the session the draft Snapshot is provided to all participants via email and through the communication platform Slack. Participants are invited to edit or amend the Snapshot as required. At the subsequent session of the community forum, the amended Snapshot is shared with the group for final consideration and with the broader community through the Evoenergy website.

Copies of the snapshots for sessions 1 – 10 are included at [Appendix A](#).

### 5.1.2 Community Forum Report to Evoenergy

The Community Forum Report to Evoenergy was prepared by the community forum. Working as a whole group, the draft report was revised, edited and finalised to the satisfaction of 32 participants. In line with Evoenergy's commitment to empower participants, the report was not modified, and it stands as an independent record of the collective views of the participants.

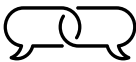
The report includes feedback and suggestions in the areas of customer impacts, the cost of the transition, the regulatory environment and customer values and overarching priorities.

A copy of the complete Evoenergy Community Forum Report is included at [Appendix C](#) and is also available on [Evoenergy's website](#).

# feedback on our gas network



Effectiveness of the community forum



## 6. Effectiveness of the community forum

The community forum is being delivered in a manner that supports the building of understanding of the energy sector and the associated capability and capacity of members to contribute effectively to discussion. To achieve this a wide range of engagement tools and activities are used throughout the sessions. These include:

- In-person and online options for all sessions to maximise accessibility for all
- Context setting presentations
- Videos
- A site visit
- Question and answer sessions
- Story-wall– a place at each meeting where people can leave their questions or feedback. Written responses, including links to further information, is provided to all questions and shared with participants.
- Digital polling for people in the room and online using Slido
- Small group discussions and worksheets to capture feedback
- Whole of group discussion and reflection.

Communication Link and Evoenergy have a commitment to evaluating effectiveness of its engagement and ensure continuous improvement in engagement work. To evaluate the effectiveness of the engagement tools and activities, a post-session survey is undertaken at the conclusion of each session.

Feedback obtained in the post-session evaluation is used to continue to refine the design and delivery of the community forum to ensure clear understanding of the complex tasks and that all participants have an equal opportunity to contribute to the discussion and associated feedback to Evoenergy.

The amalgamation of the data across all ten sessions is outlined in the following charts. Across all sessions participants’ feedback shows:

- The information presented was easy or somewhat easy to understand (69%)
- The ability to participate and contribute to discussion was very easy or easy (83%)
- The information provided was transparent (85%)

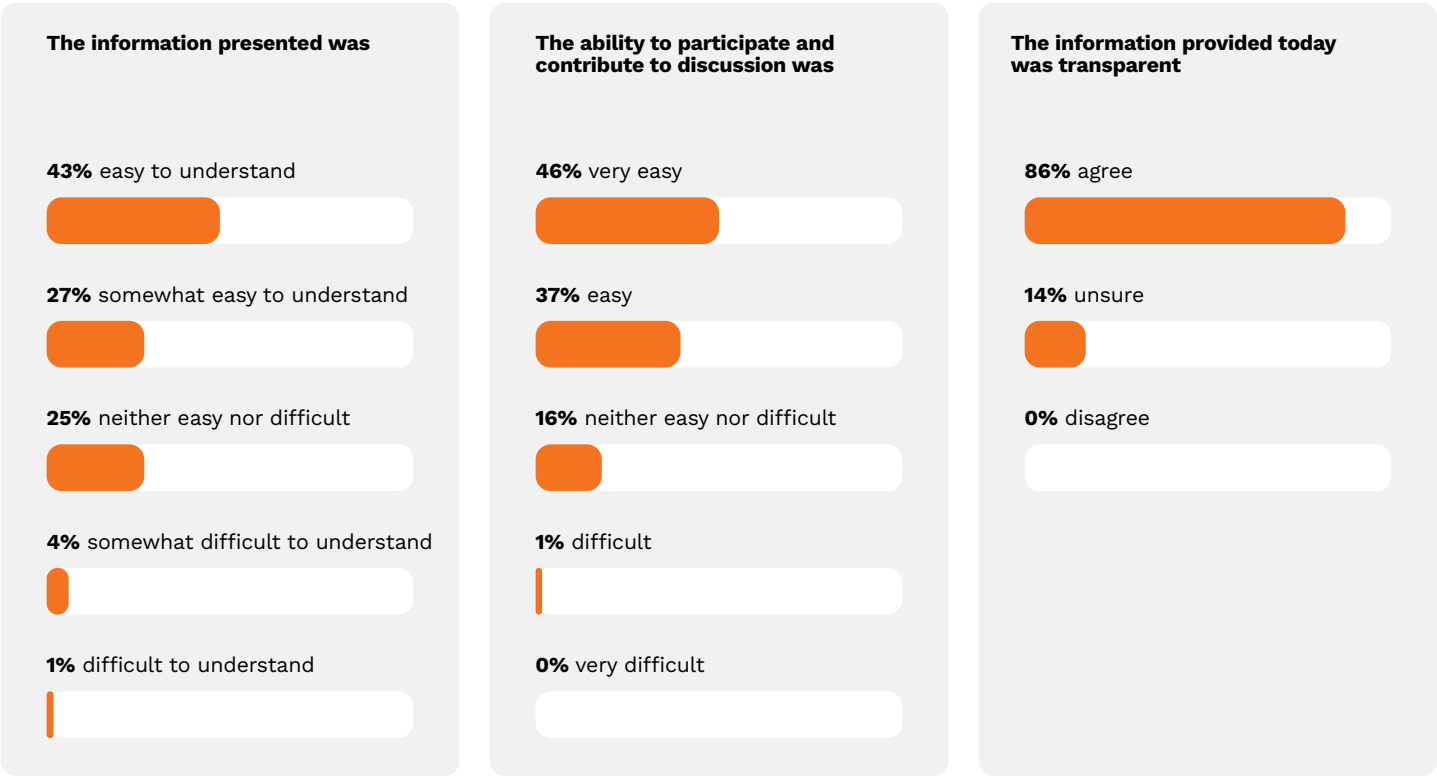
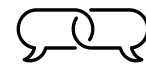


Figure 14. Feedback from post-session participant evaluation





### 6.1.1 Reflections on participation in the community forum process

At the end of the session 7 participants undertook a personal reflection activity about what they enjoyed and what could be done differently in delivering the community forum.

Participants shared the following highlights of their involvement:

- Understanding the complexities of transitioning away from gas, learning about the regulatory framework, cost factors, tariffs, and infrastructure, along with Evoenergy's responsiveness to forum discussions.
- Gaining knowledge about gas networks, electrification projects, disconnection options, and government policies while discussing and sharing perspectives with diverse participants.
- Genuine opportunities to share views, hear diverse opinions, and contribute to decisions affecting the community, including the impact on vulnerable populations.
- Site tour, engaging presentations, and meaningful interactions with Evoenergy representatives and forum participants.

Participants shared ideas for how they would like to see things done differently or more of in the future:

- Venues with better parking and easier access, alongside longer weekend sessions or more late afternoon options.
- In-person sessions are preferred for collaboration, but online flexibility is appreciated. Encourage diverse group discussions and provide more recaps and preparatory materials.
- Provide more preparatory materials before sessions and more recaps and additional time during complex discussions and activities to provide feedback.
- Involve more Government representatives such as from ACT Government as early presenters or observers.

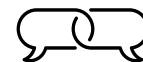
The feedback is reflected below:



**Figure 15.** Community forum reflections

At the end of session 7, participants were asked if they would like to continue to be involved in the community forum. Almost everyone (26 out of 32 participants) said they want to continue to be involved with 28 members who remain active in the forum for sessions 8 to 10.





# Appendix A Snapshot Summaries



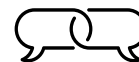
## Session 1: Community forum summary

<p><b>Session 1</b> <b>4 May 2024</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introductions, values and principles</li> <li>• Gas network and Evoenergy</li> <li>• Uncertainty and the energy transition</li> <li>• Site tour</li> </ul> <p><b>Attendees</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• #32 Forum members</li> <li>• #2 Observers from the Energy Regulatory Advisory Panel</li> <li>• #8 Evoenergy staff</li> </ul> <p><b>Presenters</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• John Knox, CEO</li> <li>• Peter Billing, General Manager Evoenergy</li> <li>• Bruce Hansen Group Manager Gas Networks (site tour)</li> </ul> <p><b>Facilitator</b> Helen Leayr</p>	<p><b>Outcomes</b></p> <p><b>Values</b> Community and family, Communication and collaboration, honesty, transparency and genuine, fairness and equity, kindness and compassion and adaptability and empathy.</p> <p><b>Values as they relate to gas</b> Equity and ability to transition, transparency and fairness of fees, costs, timelines and information, we all contribute and are in it together and effective communication.</p> <p><b>Operating principles</b> <i>Participants considered how they wanted to work together:</i> Respect, open mind, being ready to share, listening, considering ideas, listening, honesty, tolerance, sense of humour, anonymity, transparency, focus and everyone has a voice.</p> <p><b>Reflections and learnings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to Evoenergy and its network, including a site tour</li> <li>• Getting to know each other</li> <li>• Storywall questions</li> </ul> <p><b>Next steps</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Join Slack</li> <li>• Values and principles shared (via Slack)</li> <li>• Session 2, 9 May 5-8pm, Rex Hotel</li> </ul>
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## Session 2: Community forum summary

<p><b>Session 2, 9 May 2024</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn about revenue recovery options</li> <li>• Consider options, including managing uncertainty and risk</li> <li>• Provide feedback</li> </ul> <p><b>Attendees</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• #34 forum members</li> <li>• #3 observers: #2 Energy Regulatory Advisory Panel; #1 Australian Energy Regulator</li> <li>• #9 Evoenergy staff</li> </ul> <p><b>Presenters</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Megan Willcox, General Manager Economic Regulation</li> <li>• Gillian Symmans, Group Manager Regulatory Reviews and Policy</li> <li>• Ashlyn Napier, Principal Regulatory Economist</li> </ul> <p><b>Facilitator</b> Helen Leayr, Communication Link</p>	<p><b>Revenue recovery options</b> Following presentations to explain the options between a revenue cap and price cap and the potential impact on customers, small groups considered a range of impacts for different customers using personas. In the Slido poll generally, about half the room thought a revenue cap was most appropriate, a third preferred a price cap and the remaining didn't know yet. The group then considered different scenarios and the potential views of different customer types, and generally felt the <b>price cap</b> was most appropriate for individual customers particularly over a 5-year period.</p> <p><b>Managing risk while considering customer values</b> The group completed worksheets. The groups were asked to consider how to best manage risk while considering customer values. The groups were asked; How should Evoenergy reflect the values you have identified as they consider the revenue recovery options? On balance, what do you think is the best option – consider Evoenergy, the customer and the broader community? The group highlighted the values of fairness and considered the cost impacts on customers, particularly those more vulnerable. There were mixed views on which is most appropriate between the revenue cap or the price cap. This will be discussed further in session 3.</p> <p><b>Making the transition</b> The group considered how quickly you would shift your energy use from gas to electricity with consideration of a slow transition (10 years or more), medium transition (5-10 years) and fast transition (in the next 5 years). A slower transition was the most likely option, followed by a medium transition and a faster transition being the least likely option. Roughly a third of votes were not sure.</p> <p><b>Next steps</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Session 3, 20 May 2024</li> <li>• Keep in touch via Slack</li> <li>• In session 3 revisit tariff variation mechanisms and responses from the last activity</li> </ul>
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# Appendix A Snapshot Summaries



## Session 3: Community forum summary

### Session 3, 20 May 2024

- Recap revenue recovery: longer term perspective and a hybrid approach
- Revisit activity 3 from session 2
- Learn about tariffs
- Consider tariff options

#### Attendees

- 33 forum members
- #3 observers: Energy Regulatory Advisory Committee; Australian Energy Regulator
- 8 Evoenergy staff

#### Presenters

- Megan Willcox, General Manager Economic Regulation
- Lev Yulin, Group Manager, Regulatory Pricing
- Ashlyn Napier, Principal Regulatory Economist

#### Facilitator

Helen Leayr,  
Communication Link

**Activity 01: Feedback on tariff principles:** Groups were asked to provide feedback on Evoenergy's **tariff principles** including what's important and was anything missing. The group highlighted the need for a focus on equity and the long-term view (beyond 5 years) to consider those left behind. There was a suggestion to include consultation with the community as a principle and consider the relationship with the principles and emissions reduction.

**Activity 02: Feedback on tariffs:** Groups were asked to provide feedback on **tariff structures** and how network costs could be shared across different customer types. Lower network costs for residential options were suggested and incentivise costs for commercial. Groups explored block charges including the exploration of other potential block options and the impact changes have on existing users with consideration of those on a lower income. Lower fixed charges were considered, however, acknowledgement of lower fixed charges may also keep people on the network longer.

**Revisiting the price and revenue cap discussion:** Participants spent time revisiting revenue recovery options and the feedback captured during the last activity in session 2. The group considered a **longer-term view of the price or revenue cap**. Most participants said their view on the preferred option did not change when considering long-term. Evoenergy presented a possibility of a **hybrid option**. Feedback included it being an option worth considering, could balance risk, and a preferred option for some. There was also feedback on it possibly being confusing, complicated or difficult to explain, and could benefit Evoenergy over customers. Participants also said they were interested in more information on hybrid and forecasting.

#### Next steps

- Session 4, 27 July 2024
- Update session 2 dashboard summary based on today's feedback
- Keep in touch via Slack



## Session 4: Community forum summary

### Session 4, 27 July 2024

- Reference Service Proposal update
- Recap revenue recovery
- Consider the challenge and approaches

#### Attendees

- 29 forum members
- 3 observers: Energy Regulatory Advisory Panel; Australian Energy Regulator
- 8 Evoenergy staff

#### Presenters

- Megan Willcox, General Manager Economic Regulation
- Andrew Ponsonby – Principal Economic Modeller
- Alexis Hardin – Manager Regulatory Finance and Strategy

#### Facilitator

Helen Leayr,  
Communication Link

### Recovery of network investment costs: Introduction

#### Group activity 2: Consider the depreciation approaches

Participants recognised it as a challenging situation, but it is important to find a balance. Some participants said this is a policy-driven decision and that the transition will impact everybody in one way or another. Some said that residential customers should be considered differently than commercial customers. Participants also raised industry capacity and human impacts.

Participants need accessible information to make an informed decision to make a choice. Opportunity to share information in more ways to communicate longer-term impacts. People may not be aware of the impacts of the transition.

Participants said it is important to bring all players together in the conversation. It is hard to pick one approach over the other without all players at the table.

Questions were raised on whether Evoenergy needs to recover 100% of costs. There were also discussions around how different approaches may provide more or less incentive to transition.

#### Group activity 3: Consider an exit fee

Customers expressed the opinion that an exit fee was contrary to the government policy to encourage transition away from gas. Some participants said that an exit fee disincentivises leaving early and questioned the need to add an exit fee on top of already significant transition costs.

### Potential approaches to address this challenge

#### Group activity 1: Consider the challenge

Participants said it was important that in addressing the challenge, Evoenergy consider the costs for those left on the network, and prioritise clarity and information for customers (e.g., central point, Q&A sessions). Groups discussed sharing the costs fairly as the transition is a government-agreed position. Some felt it was not fair to leave those left on the network to shoulder more of the cost, others feel the cost should not be borne by those who have made the transition already.

There was discussion about the need to recover all network costs. Some suggested this was not feasible. The groups were interested in network ownership and the relationship between Evoenergy and the ACT Government, and the other ACT taxes.

One idea shared such was that universities as centres of research and development being pushed to transition early to lead the way, rather than being large customers and considered harder to transition.

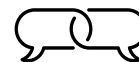
Groups discussed the ethical considerations of reaching net zero as a social policy and the impact relating to the broader cost of living. The group considered how the Government's policies and incentives can encourage people to get off the gas early and what role Evoenergy and pricing should play as incentivisation.

#### Next steps

- Session 5, 1 August 2024
- Update session 4 dashboard summary based on today's feedback
- Keep in touch via Slack







# Appendix A Snapshot Summaries



## Session 5: Community forum summary

### Session 5, 1 August 2024

- Disconnection options and approaches to recover disconnection costs

#### Attendees

- 28 forum members
- 3 observers:  
Energy Regulatory Advisory Panel;  
Australian Energy Regulator
- 8 Evoenergy staff

#### Presenters

- Bruce Hansen, Group Manager Gas Networks
- Megan Willcox, General Manager Economic Regulation

#### Facilitator

Helen Leayr,  
Communication Link

### Temporary & permanent disconnections

#### Group activity 1: Consider methods of disconnection

Participants shared a mixed response to whether they knew the difference between permanent and temporary disconnections before joining the community forum. Roughly half of participants shared that they were aware, and the other half shared that they were not aware.

Participants felt that gas customers have no understanding at all about the difference between a permanent and temporary disconnection.

#### Group activity 2 & 3: consider permanent disconnection costs

A 50/50 split was considered a fair approach by a number of groups. There was concern around bill impact and disconnection costs going up for those left on the network over future regulatory periods. It was suggested disconnection costs be kept to a minimum through efficient scheduling of disconnections, reducing retailer 'mark-up' etc. Some thought that as a Government policy, every resident in the ACT should pay. It was suggested that the ability to temporarily disconnect not be available to customers.

A higher upfront price may make it harder to communicate the safety risk, and if it costs are too high, customers will not want to pay which may be a disincentive to disconnect. There were concerns that higher disconnection costs when compared to the cost of changing appliances may mean those with only one appliance may not disconnect to avoid the cost.

The idea of a 'disconnection bank' was suggested. Where disconnection cost is calculated on a per customer per year basis. The customer pays an annual proportion of that total cost until they leave the network and then they pay the balance. Over time the balance goes down - like forced savings.

It was also suggested to incentivise people to disconnect early by offering a 'street/neighbourhood price' that reflects the fact that if everyone gets off at once there is a saving shared by everyone.

### Other potential options to address the network cost recovery challenge

#### Group activity 4 & 5: Other ideas to address the challenge of recovering network costs

Increased pricing and operational synergy between gas and electricity networks. A suggestion that the structure of the energy ownership should change - e.g. electricity and gas be considered one.

Encouraged conversations within ACT Government to consider the energy transition holistically.

Participants challenged what would happen if Evoenergy did not recover all their costs and suggested it was unreasonable to expect to do so.

It was suggested that the transition may happen at a faster pace than Evoenergy was expecting. Evoenergy should play a role to incentivise customers to transition.

Participants asked what will happen to assets when they are waste and from a customer perspective, they don't want to be taxed multiples times.

Ideas that were prioritised by the group: the current regulatory framework is no longer appropriate; that Evoenergy transition faster than the Government timeframe be innovative/revolutionary; the disconnection bank idea and managing transition on a suburb-by-suburb basis, bringing together all the energy (gas and electricity) to be considered as a whole; do not recover all 100% of assets; ACT Government pay more of the costs.

### Next steps

- Session 6, 15 August 2024
- Update session 5 dashboard summary based on today's feedback
- Keep in touch via Slack



## Session 6: Community forum summary

### Session 6, 15 August 2024

- Prepare the Community Forum Report to Evoenergy

#### Attendees

- 27 forum members
- 4 observers:  
Energy Regulatory Advisory Panel;  
Australian Energy Regulator and  
Energy Consumers Australia
- 8 Evoenergy staff

#### Presenters

- Barry Harvey, Market Transactions Manager
- Gillian Symmans, Group Manager Regulatory Reviews and Policy

#### Facilitator

Helen Leayr,  
Communication Link

### Group activity 1: Supporting customers during the transition

#### 1) Should Evoenergy seek additional funding for programs to support customers during the transition?

Participants were split with some suggesting Evoenergy should seek funding, others felt Evoenergy should not add further to customer costs and that the responsibility for funding these types of activities rests with others. It was suggested it should be a shared responsibility across Evoenergy, State and Federal Government. It was also suggested that the retailers had a role to play in funding and delivery of customer communication.

#### 2) What are your priorities for supporting customers and who should be responsible for implementing them?

Participants felt clear communication is key and shared suggestions such as effective advertising, education programs and that information is included with the bills, noting that people are time poor. A mixed view was shared about whether the Government or Evoenergy should be responsible.

It was suggested that customers could be supported by reducing the ability of retailers to unnecessarily increase costs.

### Group activity 2: Finalising the Community Forum Report to Evoenergy

Participants prepared a Community Forum Report to Evoenergy that summaries and outlines priorities for Evoenergy's 2026-2031 gas network access arrangement regulatory proposal. The report is an independent record of the collective views of the participants. It will be provided directly to Evoenergy, who may share it with regulators, government and other industry organisations.

**As a group participants reviewed an initial draft prepared by Communication Link. They considered what was missing, what needs changing and what needs improving. There were a range of edits made to the document.**

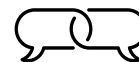
The Community Forum Report will be distributed as a draft for review by participants for any final corrections. Participants agreed that one week would be provided for participants to review the draft. It was agreed that the document did not require any graphic design.

### Next steps

- Session 7, 14 November 2024
- Update session 6 dashboard summary based on today's feedback
- Share updated community forum report with members for final review
- Keep in touch via Slack







# Appendix A Snapshot Summaries



## Session 7: Community forum summary

### Session 7, 14 November 2024

- Provide update on current thinking in response to engagement feedback.
- Discuss another capital asset base recovery option.
- Seek feedback on tariff rebalancing options.

#### Attendees

- 28 forum members
- 2 observers: Consumer Challenge Panel, Australian Energy Regulator
- 10 Evoenergy staff

#### Presenters

- Megan Willcox, General Manager Economic Regulation
- Gillian Symmans, Group Manager Regulatory Reviews and Policy
- Alexis Hardin, A/g Group Manager Regulatory Pricing and Finance

#### Facilitator

- Helen Leayr, Communication Link

### Asset Recovery

#### Group activity 1: Capital asset base recovery option

##### What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of the sum of years' digits option?

- Participants considered the different types of customers and sharing the financial burden.
- The preferred position is a middle road approach being more equitable.
- Having a cost upfront is a disincentive for people to switch, others thought it might encourage early transition.

##### Does this option align with the community forum's priorities in your report? Why or Why not?

- Is in keeping with the forum's preference to share the cost of transition fairly.
- The group highlighted the point made previously that Evoenergy reconsider recovering all costs.

##### Is there anything else Evoenergy should consider? Why?

- Consider the cost in the first year being higher and the impacts of this with cost-of-living crisis.
- Consider NSW customers as they stay on the network beyond 2045.
- Explore incentivising cheaper transitions first to encourage small steps – e.g. gas cooking.
- Charging only gas customers is inequitable. Consider the role of ACT Government.

### Reflection Activity

At the end of the session participants undertook a personal reflection activity about what they enjoyed and what could be done differently in delivering the Community Forum.

### Tariff structures

#### Group activity 2: Tariff structures and rebalancing

##### What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of the tariff rebalancing options?

- Some thought that the approach was conservative with not that much difference between options, but pleased to see Evoenergy took on feedback.
- There was acknowledgment of the number of competing principles Evoenergy is trying to balance.
- Some groups preferred option 2 (20%).

##### Is there anything else Evoenergy should consider? Why?

- The group wondered which tariff structure retailers might be more likely to adopt.
- The group considered how the financial incentives displayed in the bills is perhaps not the right spot to display the incentives. One idea shared includes providing incentives through stores such as a discount when appliances are bought – e.g., at Harvey Norman.
- It was suggested that vulnerable customers may also include large families.

### Next steps

- Update session 7 dashboard summary based on today's feedback
- Keep in touch via Slack
- Wait for information on 2025



## Session 8: Community forum summary

### Session 8, 6 March 2025

- Present an overview of the draft five-year gas
- Understand any future areas of interest

#### Attendees

- 23 forum members
- 1 observer: CCP
- Evoenergy staff

#### Presenters

- Gillian Symmans, Group Manager Regulatory Reviews and Policy
- Megan Willcox, General Manager Economic Regulation

#### Facilitator

- Helen Leayr, Communication Link

### Comments and feedback on the draft plan

- Participants were pleased to see how their feedback was incorporated into the draft plan including lower fixed and block 1 charges.
- Participants commented on the higher percentage increase in bills for smaller residential gas users compared to larger residential, commercial, and other user types.
- Concerns expressed that smaller customers would have a higher share of network changes in their bill due to lower consumption.
- Interest in a potential future model where charges for the initial consumption blocks are reduced, benefiting smaller users more.
- Interest in ideas about different categories of permanent disconnections (basic vs. complex) to potentially lower costs in simpler cases.
- Support for a greater contribution from the ACT Government regarding assistance with the gas transition.
- Overall support for the draft plan and the way it reflected forum feedback.

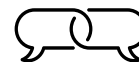
### Areas we would like to discuss further

- Further discussion of rules and costs for disconnections including different categories for permanent disconnections.
- Sharing transition costs among all customers, both gas and electric.
- Discussion on AER framework and hybrid price/revenue caps.

### Next steps

- Session 9, 27 March 2025 – 5.00 - 8.00pm, The Rex Hotel
- Provide feedback on the [draft plan](mailto:GN26feedback@evoenergy.com.au) [GN26feedback@evoenergy.com.au](mailto:GN26feedback@evoenergy.com.au)
- Keep in touch via Slack





# Appendix A Snapshot Summaries



## Session 9: Community forum summary

### Session 9, 27 March 2025

- Feedback on draft plan
- Revisit revenue recovery options, network cost recovery options and permanent disconnections

#### Attendees

- 24 forum members
- 3 observers: Australian Energy Regulator, Consumer Challenge Panel
- 8 Evoenergy staff

#### Presenters

- Ashlyn Napier, Principal Regulatory Economist
- Gillian Symmans, Group Manager Regulatory Reviews & Policy

#### Facilitator

Helen Leayr,  
Communication Link

### Activity 1: Comments and feedback on the draft plan

Do you have any further feedback on the draft plan? How well do you think Evoenergy responded to feedback from the community forum? Are there any areas of the draft plan you would like to discuss further?

Forum members would like to further explore the approach to disconnections and the possibility of cost sharing across electricity and gas users. Some members would like to see more open communication and engagement with stakeholders about an individual's role in the electrification of the ACT.

Majority of members felt that the feedback has been taken on board well within current Government policy and regulatory confines.

Some raised whether a change in Government policy will have an impact down the track on the draft plan while others expressed interest in seeing the data behind disconnection numbers to better understanding whether Evoenergy is on track.

### Activity 2: Proposed revenue cap

What are your views on the revenue cap / concerns you about the use of a revenue cap? Do you have any ideas / considerations for how these concerns could be addressed by Evoenergy?

Members are generally supportive and prefer the revenue cap. Some concerns were raised about the revenue cap potentially causing a significant increase in price with a mass reduction exiting the network. There was support for clearly communicating the revenue cap to customers, with some calling for Governments to consider reducing costs further for low-income earners. Others felt cost recovery was a good focus rather than potential profits and highlighted the importance of regularly reviewing the plan to reflect current Government policies and situational prices.

### Activity 3: Approaches to depreciation

Are the annual bill increases proposed in our draft plan to recover asset costs reasonable, compared to bill increases under a straight-line approach? Why / why not?

There is general support for the annual bill increases chosen by Evoenergy with the information currently available. Concerns were raised about the practicality of the discussion with so many unknowns, assumptions and any future policy changes. Some queried whether the electrical network has the capacity to receive all the new customers coming on board and how much the costs will go up. Noting high electricity costs may disincentivise people to move off the gas network.

Questions were also raised about apartments and renters and possible other policies to support. Some feel that the ACT Government should play a role in cost recovery impacts as the drivers of the policies. Some suggested that it would be helpful to see analysis of periods beyond 10 years. There were shared concerns around the impact on families and the current cost of living.

### Activity 4: Approach to permanent disconnections.

Given our intention to seek a targeted approach to permanent disconnections, do you think it is fair and equitable for the disconnecting property owners to pay for a permanent disconnection? Why / why not?

Some members believe it is fair and equitable for the disconnecting property owners to pay. There was also a suggestion that when selling a property who pays the disconnection costs could become part of sale negotiations.

### Next steps

- Update session 9 dashboard summary based on today's feedback
- Keep in touch via Slack



Official



## Session 10: Community forum summary

### Session 10, 22 May 2025

- Outline proposed disconnections approach and costs
- Share final thinking on adjusting gas network prices
- Share stakeholder feedback on draft plan
- Share our proposal positions

#### Attendees

- 22 forum members
- 3 observers: Australian Energy Regulator, Consumer Challenge Panel
- 11 Evoenergy staff

#### Presenters

- Ashlyn Napier, Principal Regulatory Economist
- Lev Yulin, Group Manager Regulatory Pricing and Analysis
- Gillian Symmans, Group Manager Regulatory Reviews and Policy

#### Facilitator

Helen Leayr,  
Communication Link

### Activity 1: Approach to recovering costs for the gas network safety control program through disconnection charges

Do you support the proposed means of collecting the costs (approximately \$29 per disconnection) from customers that are temporarily disconnecting?

Participants felt that the fee was reasonable and are comfortable with the proposed means of collecting the fee as part of the temporary disconnection costs. There were also suggestions for exploring funding through ACT Government and subsidies.

What ideas do you have for Evoenergy's proposed gas network safety control program?

Participants shared the following ideas; TV adds, retailers sharing information, community events and newsletters, rental agreements, engaging with culturally and linguistically diverse leaders, posters, online mapping tool, public transport advertising and creating a catchy campaign that people will easily remember. Further ideas were shared about ways to clearly identify a temporary disconnection including large labels with a warning about live gas, painting the meter red and having customers sign waivers to acknowledge they understand the type of disconnection they have.

### Activity 2: Proposed revenue cap

What feedback do you have on our proposed approach to minimise price variability under a revenue cap?

- A demand forecast driven by customer research
- Flatter tariffs – balancing demand uncertainty
- Updating forecasts for ACT Government taxes and levies

Agreement that the approach to demand forecasting based on customer research was an improvement, suggesting it provides more comfort to customers about the planning.

It was agreed the tariff balancing was reasonable and suggested the move was in the right direction and provided a good signal to customers. Other participants thought there is more to be addressed, questioning whether a gradual 10% reduction in block 1 charge was enough, suggesting it could be greater.

Participants were comfortable with the approach to adjust government charges on a yearly cycle to align with the ever-moving Government policy cycle. The yearly approach was considered sensible by participants as it allows for flexibility to adjust pricing and shows transparency which gives customers more confidence in decision making.

### Activity 3: Final thoughts - 'Signing off with...'

Before Evoenergy lodges the gas five-year plan – do you have any final thoughts?

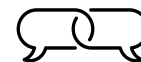
Participants expressed their thanks towards Evoenergy for engaging, keeping them informed and being able to influence conversations in the community forum process. Some reflected on how much they had learnt as a part of the process and others encouraged Evoenergy to continue to push the boundary and be innovative in their approach. A couple participants suggested further work is needed on block charges and flattening tariffs.

### Next steps

- Update session 10 dashboard summary based on today's feedback
- Keep in touch via Slack
- Next session: 30 October 2025



Official



# Appendix B Guest Speaker Series Summaries

## Community Forum Guest Speaker Series

Session #1: Integrated Energy Plan – Wednesday 3 July 2024



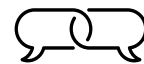
<b>41</b> people attended	<b>24</b> members attended	<b>17</b> project team members and observers	<b>12</b> questions on: electric vehicles, gas transition and decommissioning the gas network, upskilling, green gas, wood heaters, zero emissions, vehicle to grid technology, green gas/hydrogen production, biofuels and combating misinformation.	The first of our speaker series explored the ACT Government's recently released <b>Integrated Energy Plan (IEP)</b> which outlines the path to electrification.
<p>Guest speakers Rachael de Hosson and Amarjot Rathore from the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD) provided an update on Canberra's long-term pathway for the transformation of the ACT's energy system to achieve net zero emissions by 2045.</p> <p><b>Key topics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The ACT's commitment to reaching net zero emissions by 2045</li> <li>The IEP outlines the pathway and principles of the transition to electrification</li> <li>Addressing barriers to electrification</li> <li>Prioritising a fair and equitable transition</li> <li>Making a plan to decommission the gas network</li> </ul> <p>"Session was awesome, learned a lot!"</p> <p>"Thank you!"</p>	<p><b>Principles for the transition</b></p> <p>Community and stakeholder consultation identified the following guiding priorities for the transition.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clear and implementable pathway</li> <li>Enabling Canberrans to act</li> <li>Prioritising those most in need</li> <li>Secure and reliable energy systems</li> <li>Removing barriers to the energy transition</li> </ul> <p><b>Key steps to the transition to electrification</b></p> <p><b>1. Navigating the transition across key community areas</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Households</li> <li>Priority households</li> <li>Business and industry</li> <li>Transport</li> <li>Complex buildings</li> </ul> <p><b>2. Enabling the transition – to ensure we have the right skills and energy infrastructure for our future energy needs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Skills and workforce</li> <li>Ensuring 100% renewable electricity for the ACT</li> <li>Fit for purpose network</li> <li>Managing the gas network</li> </ul>	<p><b>Key issues and challenges</b></p> <p>In the presentation and discussion the following challenges and issues were raised.</p> <p><b>Costs and affordability of the transition</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The cost of electrifying appliances and homes</li> <li>High cost of electric vehicles and charging infrastructure</li> </ul> <p><b>Equity and fairness</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transition to net zero is fair and equitable for everyone</li> <li>Financial and logistical barriers for vulnerable groups</li> </ul> <p><b>Transitioning apartments and complex buildings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Technical feasibility and access limitations</li> <li>Challenges of transitioning apartments within buildings managed by strata committees</li> <li>High costs of transitioning complex buildings</li> </ul> <p><b>Misinformation and awareness</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concerns about misinformation and public misconceptions about incentives available as a part of the IEP</li> <li>Misinformation about the accuracy of smart meters</li> <li>Education is needed to build confidence in the transition</li> </ul> <p><b>Safety and environmental concerns</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Safety of electric vehicle batteries and fire risk</li> <li>Health impacts of wood heaters</li> </ul> <p><b>Additional information and links provided</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>IEP</li> <li>Wood heater replacement program</li> </ul>		

## Community Forum Guest Speaker Series

Session #2: Perspectives of vulnerable energy customers - Wednesday 17 July 2024



<b>37</b> people attended	<b>25</b> members attended	<b>12</b> project team members and observers	<b>10</b> questions on: energy efficient upgrades, appliance and installation costs, incentives to improve energy efficiency, smart meters, connection fees and Government assistance programs	The second of our speaker series presented the perspectives of vulnerable customers in the ACT energy transition.
<p>Guest speakers Jana Farook and Dr Devin Bowles from the ACT Council of Social Service (ACTCOSS) shared insight into the challenges and potential solutions surrounding the energy transition for vulnerable consumers.</p> <p>"Very informative."</p> <p>"Thanks Jana and Devin, it's been fantastic to hear from you both."</p> <p><b>Additional information and links provided</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Energy equity in electrifying ACT households</li> <li>Towards energy equity</li> <li>Supporting a fair, fast and inclusive energy transition in the ACT</li> </ul>	<p><b>Key topics</b></p> <p><b>Vulnerability in the Energy Market</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Who is vulnerable:</b> People with varied incomes, renters, those with disabilities, and domestic violence survivors are more likely to struggle with energy costs</li> <li><b>Impacts:</b> High energy bills can lead to social isolation, health problems, housing instability, and financial stress</li> </ul> <p><b>Energy transition and vulnerability</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Transition risks:</b> The shift to renewable energy could make things harder for low-income households and renters if we don't plan carefully</li> <li><b>Transition benefits:</b> However, a well-managed transition could save people money on their energy bills, improve health, and create jobs</li> </ul> <p><b>Solutions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Targeted support:</b> We need to help those most in need to afford the transition by expanding assistance programs and offering more help to renters</li> <li><b>Government action:</b> Regulations may need to change to make it easier for renters to upgrade their homes and for landlords to invest in energy efficiency</li> <li><b>Consumer protection:</b> We need to make sure consumers are protected as new technologies are introduced, so they don't get taken advantage of.</li> <li><b>Nationwide effort:</b> We need to think about how to support vulnerable customers across Australia, not just in the ACT</li> </ul>	<p><b>Key issues and challenges</b></p> <p><b>Costs and affordability of the transition</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High upfront cost of electrifying homes</li> <li>Barrier to participation for low incomes</li> <li>Potential for price increases/gouging for energy efficiency upgrades due to government incentives</li> </ul> <p><b>Equity and fairness</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Logistical barriers for vulnerable consumers</li> <li>Renters often lack the ability to improve energy efficiency independently</li> <li>Eligibility for government assistance programs beyond concession card holders</li> <li>Alternative support methods besides low-interest loans</li> </ul> <p><b>Challenges with apartment complexes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coordinating energy upgrades in apartment buildings with diverse ownership structures</li> <li>Limited incentives for strata management organisations to undertake upgrades</li> </ul>	<p><b>Regulatory framework</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The existing regulatory framework may not be sufficiently flexible to manage the changing energy landscape</li> <li>The need for a framework that encourages innovation, supports consumers, and ensures equity</li> </ul> <p><b>Government support</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The current level of government assistance is insufficient to fully support vulnerable households during the transition</li> <li>Greater federal investment and leadership are needed</li> </ul> <p><b>Communication and trust</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clear and transparent communication about the transition is crucial</li> <li>Consumers need understandable information about costs and benefits</li> <li>Inconsistent advice from installers can erode trust in the process</li> </ul> <p><b>Stranded assets</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The potential for remaining gas users to bear the burden of inflated costs</li> <li>Regulatory changes may be necessary to address stranded assets</li> <li>The need for a fair and equitable distribution of costs and benefits during the transition</li> </ul>	



# Appendix B Guest Speaker Series Summaries

## Community Forum Guest Speaker Series

Session #3: National energy transition and the ACT – Wednesday 24 July 2024



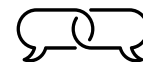
<b>42</b> people attended	<b>27</b> members attended	<b>15</b> project team members and observers	<b>11</b> questions on: electric batteries, energy policy, role of Government in the transition, communicating the energy transition, ACT household rebates, managing fear of transition	The third and final of our speaker series explored the national energy transition and where the ACT fits into the equation.
<p>Guest speaker Rosemary Sinclair, Chair of the Evoenergy Energy Consumer Reference Council, presented and explored the complexities of the national energy transition, including the ACT's unique role at the forefront of the transition. Rosemary also explored the evolving role of consumers and the need for a flexible regulatory framework.</p>		<p><b>Key topics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>Technology:</b> The energy transition involves a rapid evolution of technologies, particularly the rise of consumer owned resources like rooftop solar, batteries, and electric vehicles. These changes are reshaping the energy landscape and how energy is generated, distributed, and consumed</li><li><b>Consumers:</b> There will be a shift from consumers as passive recipients to active participants in the energy market. It will be increasingly important to engage with consumers to help them understand the transition, address their concerns, and build trust in the energy sector</li><li><b>Regulatory Framework:</b> A key discussion centered on the need for a flexible and adaptable regulatory framework. The current framework, designed for a more traditional, centralised energy model, may need significant adjustments to accommodate the changing landscape</li><li><b>ACT at the forefront:</b> The ACT is positioned as a leader in the energy transition, with a clear government policy framework and strong consumer support. The ACT is seen as a model for broader, nationwide discussions on the transition</li></ul>		
<p><b>Action items</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>Evoenergy:</b> Continue engaging with consumers to understand their concerns and priorities</li><li><b>ACT Government:</b> Lead the way in developing regulatory frameworks that support innovation and a just and equitable transition, considering consumer needs and affordability</li><li><b>Energy Sector:</b> Prioritise building trust with consumers through clear communication and transparency, especially regarding costs and benefits</li></ul> <p>The meeting emphasised the importance of ongoing dialogue and collaboration among consumers, the energy sector, and governments to ensure a successful and equitable energy transition.</p> <p>Marianus link      NCE Roadmap</p>		<p><b>Key issues and challenges</b></p> <p><b>Costs of transition</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>High upfront costs associated with electrifying homes</li><li>Impacts on low income households</li><li>Costs as a significant barrier to participation in the transition</li><li>Potential price discrepancies between ACT and NSW, likely influenced by government incentives</li></ul> <p><b>Consumer confidence and trust</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Declining confidence and trust in the energy sector especially for those under financial pressure, fueled by price hikes and uncertainty about the transition</li><li>Consumers are less likely to participate in the transition if they are not confident in the process</li></ul> <p><b>Adapting regulatory frameworks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The need for a flexible and adaptable regulatory framework that encourages innovation, supports consumers, and ensures equity</li><li>The current framework, designed for a more traditional, centralised energy model, may not be suitable</li></ul> <p><b>Communication and education</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Clear communication and education around the transition are essential to build understanding, address concerns, and build trust with consumers</li><li>Lack of clear and consistent information from installers can further erode trust in the process</li></ul> <p><b>Stranded assets</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The need for regulatory changes to address the potential for stranded gas assets and the resulting cost burden on remaining users</li><li>Ensuring a fair and equitable distribution of costs and benefits during the transition</li></ul>		

"Yes, Rosemary is brilliant."

"Awesome answer."

"Very well put."

"Very informative. Thank you, Rosemary."



# Appendix C Community Forum Report to Evoenergy

## Evoenergy Community Forum Report

The Community Forum was formed by Evoenergy to provide customer and general community feedback to inform the development of Evoenergy's 2026-2031 gas network access arrangement regulatory proposal.

The Community Forum was made up of 32 diverse members of the Canberra and Queanbeyan community.

The Forum met six times, including a site visit. Meetings were held in person or a hybrid mixture of online and in-person participation. Meetings included presentations from a range of Evoenergy representatives, the opportunity to ask questions, workshop activities and whole-of-group discussions.

In addition to the Forum meetings, participants had the opportunity to hear independent presentations by the ACT Government, ACT Council of Social Services and the chairperson of Evoenergy's Energy Consumer Reference Council.

This Report has been prepared by the members of the Community Forum as an independent summary of our key areas of discussions and conclusion.

### Our priorities for the 2026-31 gas network regulatory proposal

This regulatory proposal occurs within the context of the ACT Government's Integrated Energy Plan which is at the forefront of Australia's transition and guides a program of transition away from gas to electricity in the ACT. The forum recognised the uncertainty associated with the speed of this transition and encourages flexibility as we respond. Considering this, the Community Forum identified the following priorities:

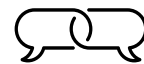
- More information should be provided to the community about the energy transition and its impact on customers
- Evoenergy has a role to encourage customers to move off gas, while not disadvantaging customers who may not be able to transition as easily, including vulnerable customers
- The cost of the transition should be shared fairly across all energy consumers
- We support a move away from separate gas and electricity networks to consider the energy system as a whole, including the impacts on the electricity network and its costs to customers
- The transition is ACT Government policy, and the ACT Government should be taking a greater role in facilitating the transition.

### Customer impacts

It was recognised by the Community Forum that the energy transition will impact different customers in different ways. During our discussions, we identified the following priorities:

- The energy transition is fair and equitable for all energy customers
- Customers need more information about the transition and the associated costs to make informed decisions. This should be provided by energy retailers and government, as well as the gas network
- It may be appropriate to tailor approaches to different customer segments, such as residential customers, commercial customers, large customers and those that may find it harder to transition (e.g. renters or apartment owners)
- Consumer protections need to be clearly articulated and enforced in the ACT to ensure people are given appropriate advice and price gouging is avoided.





## Appendix C Community Forum Report to Evoenergy

### **The cost of transition**

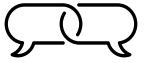
The transition away from gas comes with costs for both customers and the network owners. The Community Forum has the following suggestions with respect to recovering the costs of transition:

- The cost of transition should be fairly distributed across all customers, both those leaving the network early and those remaining on the network for longer periods
- Predictability and certainty over the longer term, beyond five years, is important when considering prices and the structure of tariffs
- We discussed the various revenue recovery options and had mixed views about the benefits of price cap and/or revenue cap and hybrid
- We discussed the various tariff blocks and agreed that there were options that should be explored in recognition of desires for people to move off gas. Different pricing structures between residential and commercial should be considered
- The ACT Government should play a larger role in funding the transition, thereby sharing the costs across all ACT taxpayers
- The costs of disconnection should not act as a disincentive to transition away from gas. Some forum members suggested that the cost of disconnection should not be borne by the disconnecting customer. Evoenergy should explore innovative ways to keep the cost of disconnection low. It was suggested that the costs of disconnection could be shared across neighbourhoods or paid for by customers over several years
- The exit fee was not supported by the Community Forum
- The majority agreed that Evoenergy should consider the option of not recovering 100% of the cost of its network assets as it is a business risk that should not be borne by customers alone.

### **About the regulatory environment**

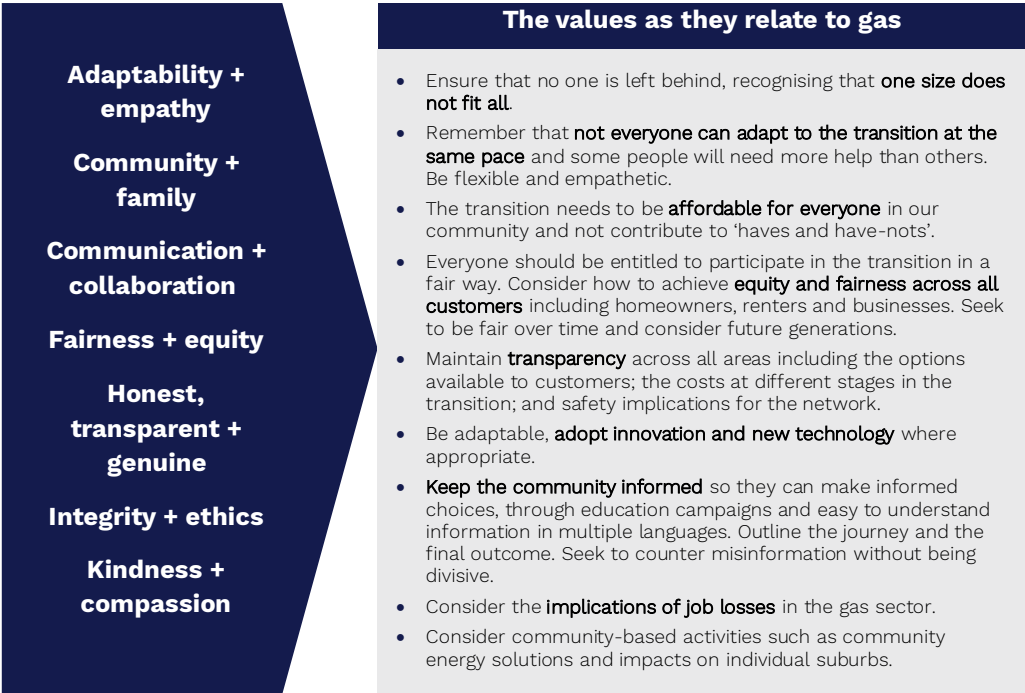
During our discussion the Community Forum identified the following with respect to the regulatory environment:

- The current regulatory framework is no longer appropriate and is not fit-for-purpose to facilitate the energy transition
- Planning needs to extend beyond the five-year regulatory period
- We suggest that, because the ACT is at the leading edge of the transition, the AER be innovative in its thinking around a consolidated energy framework and increased pricing and operational synergies between the gas and electricity networks should be explored.



# Appendix C Community Forum Report to Evoenergy

**What we value**  
In the first meeting of the Community Forum we identified the following values, including how they related to the gas network. These should be considered by Evoenergy as it makes its plans for the future.





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