Jemena Gas Networks (NSW) Ltd

2020-25 Access Arrangement Proposal

Attachment 2.2

JGN's customer engagement

Jemena
bringing energy to life

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hear every voice, know where you stand

STRAIGHT TALK

A member of RPS Group Plc

JEMENA CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT

Report

Report

April 2019

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Jemena Customer Engagement Report

Client
Jemena

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Jemena Gas Network (JGN), is required to develop and submit a Revenue Proposal to the Australian Energy Regulator (AER) every five years. This Proposal details Jemena's priorities, expenditure requirements and prices for the period.

Jemena delivers both gas and electricity and its electricity business is required to demonstrate how the company has consulted with, and considered and reflected the feedback of, customers in the preparation of the electricity Revenue Proposal. Jemena resolved, for the 2020-2025 Gas Revenue proposal, that it would undertake consultation with gas customers and reflect the outcome of that consultation in their submission to the AER.

Jemena determined that it wanted to take a highly proactive, customer-focused approach to engagement with customers and engaged Straight Talk, part of the RPS Group, to provide advice and support in the design, facilitation and reporting of engagement activities.

Jemena and Straight Talk determined that this would mean:

- Reflecting IAP2 Core Values and Spectrum in design and implementation
- Engaging with authenticity and meaning so that feedback would have real influence on decisions
- Ensuring all customer voices – particularly those that are often not heard – were able to contribute
- Using engagement to build capacity and ultimately cultural change within Jemena so that it could become a customer-focused network.

Since September 2017 Jemena has been working with customers in several different forums, utilising best practice engagement techniques, to understand customer priorities, values and concerns. Importantly the program focusses on identifying areas within the Revenue Proposal that customer feedback could genuinely inform and influence.

The program of engagement activities developed by Straight Talk and Jemena occurred in three distinct phases and included engaging with key customers segments across Jemena's customer base. These included:

- Household customers in metropolitan and regional NSW
- Small business owners and operators in metropolitan and regional NSW
- Customers of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds in metropolitan Sydney
- Customers who are socially and economically disadvantaged in metropolitan Sydney and Wollongong
- Older customers
- Customers with embedded networks.

Best practice – IAP2 Core Values and 'deliberation'

The program was designed to both reflect and embed the International Association of Public Participation's Core Values and current best practice in community engagement.

The seven values identify not just the right of people affected by decisions to have input to those decisions; but that they should be involved in designing how they are engaged, what they are engaged on and that the limits or influence should be clear.

Deliberative approaches to engagement on complex issues has been recognised as innovative and best practice however there has been some confusion of what deliberative engagement is and how it can be best used in utility engagement.

Deliberative engagement is built on four separate pillars:

- Random selection so that the voices of every day customers (not those with an interest or passion) are heard
- Demographic representation of a given community so that a microcosm of a larger community can be represented
- Access to information and the time with which to consider, weigh up and make informed decisions
- Decision making (deliberation) as a group – each participant bringing their individual skills, knowledge and experience but making decisions on behalf of the wider community, for the benefit of all.

Deliberative approaches were included in our design, but we also recognised that such activities don't work for everyone – people with English as a second language, who are not confident or articulate or who have a cultural background that is not from the white or western Europe parts of the world do not necessarily thrive in such environments.

We therefore designed a comprehensive, customer focused approach which incorporated the principles of deliberation when and where appropriate, supplemented by specific, and sometimes unique, activities for specific customer segments.

Finally, we trialled a 'deliberative virtual focus group', running a group discussion with participants of the five geographic forums to test that we had heard their priorities with accuracy in preparation for the final deliberative forums. Utilising video conferencing this approach provided us with rich feedback and participants with confidence that they were shaping the process they were involved in.

Jemena's Customer Council provided an invaluable 'sounding board' for the engagement approach as well as allowing the team to connect with and form partnerships with Council of the Ageing and Ethnic Communities Council, who helped us with specific engagement activities.

Activities were designed specifically for each customer segment with a focus on ensuring that customers had the information they needed to be able to engage in a meaningful way, cognisant of the implications of their decisions; and that the advice and direction sought would have genuine influence over the decisions that Jemena took regarding its Revenue Proposal.

Phase one (September to December 2017) therefore focused on identifying information that could:

- Help inform the design of phases two and three
- Indicate customers awareness and understanding of gas, its distribution, pricing and market operation
- Identify customer priorities for how Jemena approached decisions that would influence future pricing

- Contribute to and shape customer-facing documentation that would be used for further engagement.

Phase two (May to September 2018) identified:

- Where customers went for information about gas, pricing and distribution (if at all)
- Customer priorities for key values that they wanted Jemena to consider when making decisions
- Exploration of those values, particularly as they related to future pricing and potential trade-offs between price and reliability
- Customer preferences about the future of gas and their expectations for gas use in the future
- Directions from customers on their preferences regarding asset investment and maintenance and cost recovery over a shorter or longer timeframe
- Preferences for proposals to 'smooth' bills within the next price determination period.
- In addition, a wealth of information relating to general customer perceptions, trust and confidence in the current energy market system, including regulation, pricing and information, was identified.

Phase three (February to May 2019) will allow all customer segments to come together, and review Jemena's proposal with a view to understanding the competing needs and priorities they may have. It also identifies areas of commonality and difference and confirm the final approach Jemena will present to the regulator with the final submission.

Traditional engagement approaches of large scale telephone surveys, small, one-off focus groups and larger, one-off 'deliberative' approaches were not considered robust or rigorous enough to provide the depth of information that Jemena was seeking. This is because the nature of the gas network is both complex and highly opaque to everyday customers, and requires a level of explanation, exploration and interrogation to be able to understand the inter-relationships, challenges, tensions and complexities of a highly regulated, government-controlled market environment.

Several in-depth, comprehensively deliberative processes were developed which would allow small, broadly representative groups of customers to meet several times, to absorb and examine the concepts Straight Talk and Jemena were presenting and importantly to question and challenge these, prior to making any decisions or recommendations. Importantly, multiple, divergent views and opinions were presented so that customers had access to the full spectrum of views to consider. This included short video presentations by groups as diverse as St Vincent de Paul, the Public Interest Advocacy Centre and the Alternative Technology Association.

These activities were supplemented with shorter, more focussed activities for other customer segments - such as CALD and small business customers - who are traditionally time-poor and experience other barriers to traditional engagement practices.

Vulnerable customers engaged through a highly supportive, in-depth technique called Study Circles, meeting over consecutive weeks to explore and understand their experience of gas, pricing and the current energy environment and the priorities that are of importance to them. This allowed them to build confidence as well as understanding and enhanced the quality of feedback and input they contributed to the program.

Main issues across all engagement streams

This comprehensive approach elicited some clear, unambiguous directions for Jemena

- Price remains a major concern for all customers and some customers are particularly impacted by the rapidly increasing costs of gas and electricity
- The key principles of fairness, reliability and the environment are what customers want to see considered and where appropriate reflected in future planning and decisions
- Customers understand well the inherent value within the assets of the gas network and agree - in fact, they expect - that Jemena will actively seek to identify and develop ways in which this value can continue to be leveraged for the future
- While customers are sensitive to price, particularly in the immediate to short-term, they understand the business model that Jemena operates under and that decisions about asset renewal and maintenance need to be made now, even though the future is uncertain
- Customers want to be able to understand the financial implications – on individual bills and cumulatively - before they are able to provide feedback. (Jemena developed options which demonstrated this clearly, using average bill amounts, and detailed modelling for considering the impacts of these over time)
- Overall customers preferred an asset investment that could be summarised as 'Big pipes'. This arose out of options for continuing to build for a thriving, growing network or to pare this back with more modest investment given the future isn't certain. The risks of both options were clearly demonstrated, together with cost implications in "dollars of the day" as outlined above. Customers don't like the concept of re-work and would rather Jemena invest as it has been doing, aware of the risks that might entail.
- However, when it came to cost recovery remaining at the current asset life of 50 years, or being shortened to 30 years in recognition of the uncertainty of the future, customers chose the shorter timeframe. There was concern about the 'worst case scenario' and, in particular, those least able to leave the network, being 'stuck' with the decisions of today. Again, these options were explained in dollar terms, over the short and longer time period, and with risks of each option similarly modelled
- Customers want Jemena to continue considering cost, reliability and fairness as the three most important priorities when making decisions. They expect safety as a minimum not to ever be compromised and they want to know Jemena care about the impacts on customers of all their decisions
- Customers also want Jemena to play a much more active role within the industry, to influence and help protect customer rights and outcomes from the less-regulated retail sector. In particular, customers were confused by the role of retailers and their ability to control pricing in an opaque manner – in particular, that they do not have to pass on the savings that Jemena, the transmission pipelines, or the producer may be passing through. Customers want Jemena to actively promote when they are managing to keep prices down in order to make it more difficult for retailers to not pass this on.

Unsurprisingly, specific customer segments are experiencing gas and gas pricing quite differently.

Vulnerable customers are having to significantly plan and alter day-to-day activities in order to reduce the impact of energy bills in general and of gas. This included:

- Not having people to dinner or tea but instead doing that at a local club, which was heated
- Showering in the local municipal swimming pool facilities to save the money on water heated by gas at home
- Not using gas heating as much as possible, wearing more clothes and using rugs and blankets instead.

Almost all vulnerable customers were utilising bill smoothing options from retailers (and many were on hardship arrangements), however these have their own drawbacks – many of these customers were not aware of the details of the plan they were on and that they needed to regularly review and re-negotiate in order to ensure they remained on a competitive offer.

Most customers paying regular automatic debits were significantly in credit – up to and over $1000 – and this was both resented and confusing, particularly for low income households where every cent counts.

Customers felt there was insufficient communication from retailers to alert them when their plan was changing, at the end of a negotiated period, leaving many unaware they were paying more than they needed to.

While many people were aware of the emergency payment support options available from non-government organisations, the significant shame and embarrassment of this option, particularly in a regional location where there is little anonymity, made this avenue of support unattractive except as a last resort.

Older customers on embedded networks experienced frustration and high costs mostly associated with the decisions made at construction regarding the placement, quality and efficiency of the system and pipes. Savings at construction stage – including un-insulated pipes, few centrally located boilers in remote and often exposed locations within the development and the distance between heater and individual units – meant that a large amount of water was needed before hot water could be accessed and inefficiency in heating and transfer resulted in significantly higher costs for the individual customer. Many reported paying more for gas with less appliances and less people using them in a retirement village, for example, than their previous experience of a family home with children.

Older customers, in particular, struggle with accessing information and negotiating with retailers, having little or no access to or familiarity with online options. They resented having to spend significant amounts of time locating, interpreting and comparing information before actually negotiating a better outcome.

Newly arrived migrants were the most efficient at identifying and negotiating competitive rates for gas, primarily because their motivation was higher – every cent saved here is able to help loved ones at home in their country of birth. They accessed information not through the internet or advocates but by comparing bills and relentless negotiation, switching providers every 6 – 12 months in order to maintain the best offers. Their poor English and unfamiliarity with the Australian system and market made this a complex and exhausting, but ultimately worthwhile, exercise.

We found little difference in the concerns of customers from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds from other customers, although the experience of conducting engagement in language with newly arrived migrants was highly worthwhile for customers and the project team. Newly arrived migrants are generally well-connected and supported with support agencies and these do an excellent job in supporting and coaching them in the myriad of new systems and approaches in Australia. However, once they are settled, it is likely that, depending on who in the family has responsibility for household bills and their level of English proficiency, they will experience similar frustrations and limitations in access to information as other customer groups.

Small business operators are experiencing significant stress as a result of rising energy costs and gas costs for businesses that rely on it impact directly on their bottom line. While significant small to medium size industries, such as the prune industry, reported high degrees of satisfaction with the responsiveness of Jemena to their specific needs (Jemena installed increased capacity to facilitate better supply the Griffith-based industry), they also identified they were not enjoying the competition benefits of the market from retailers, with little or no interest from retailers in providing better prices and packages.

Restaurants, dry cleaners and other small businesses were frustrated but largely unaware of options to re-negotiate and, like most other customers, very disillusioned by retailers lack of interest in supporting existing customers, allowing them to lapse onto non-competitive plans, while focusing their marketing on potential new customers.

In terms of the broader energy industry and environment, customers are confused, angry and frustrated by the complex regulation and operation of the quasi-market approach adopted in Australia. They don't see it delivering benefits for customers and they find it very difficult to navigate. Customers, before engaging with Jemena:

- Mostly did not seek out or were not aware of other sources of information about pricing or 'deals'
- Resent that they have to negotiate with retailers in order to get a better price. In particular, customers felt quite aggrieved when they realised that others had better pricing from the same retailer in the same regional location
- Are frustrated by the non-consistent language and terminology across different providers and parts of the energy sector which makes it hard to understand the implications of offers and to be confident negotiating.

In terms of the process, customers were universally enthusiastic about having the opportunity to engage with Jemena and that Jemena were prepared to listen.

Customers did not approach the process with trust or excitement; the early sessions of each engagement were distinguished by intense interrogation of who Jemena is and their values—including direct questions about the Managing Director's salary, their foreign ownership and position on coal seam gas. They were sceptical about why the engagement was being sought and what difference it would make. Video of sessions has helped to document both the content of discussions but also the shift in customers as they realised that the process was genuine and meaningful.

Jemena like most businesses delivers profits to its shareholders. However, it has also made a decision to be a values-led organisation and has pursued a rigorous, robust approach to engaging with customers in an open, transparent and respectful way. Straight Talk is confident that this process, with its multiple channels, customer segmentation and high level of involvement of staff from across the organisation has met Jemena's goal of demonstrating best practice and delivering sound feedback that can be relied upon.

2. INTRODUCTION

Jemena Gas Networks (JGN) has sought to consult with customers as it prepares its revenue proposal; and for the revenue proposal to reflect the priorities of customers. The proposal is submitted to the Australian Energy Retailer (AER) for approval and evidence of the process, participants and outcomes are presented in this report to support the proposal.

JGN determined that it not only wanted to consult its customers - it wanted to engage with customers to reflect that customers are at the heart of everything they do.

This goal will necessitate a significant cultural shift within and across JGN and so the process of engagement to inform the development of the 2020 - 2025 Revenue Proposal was identified as a key tool to contribute to this cultural change.

Straight Talk (part of the RPS Group), was engaged to work with Jemena on designing an engagement program that would:

- Meet best practice in engagement and regulatory requirements (acknowledging these are not mandatory for gas) and inform the Revenue Proposal
- Reflect engagement industry best practice in design and implementation
- Create opportunities for staff across JGN to participate and learn about customers, engagement and engagement techniques
- Challenge traditional approaches to engagement with innovation, creativity and energy.

Phase One engaged with customers directly to:

- Shape and help develop the customer-facing information on engagement that Jemena would use across the whole program
- Identify values and priorities to shape the engagement program.

The culmination of Phase One was the Engagement Strategy for Phases Two and Three, and two customer-facing documents developed with customers - Voice of the Customer and Customer Engagement Plan.

Phase Two engaged with customers deeply so that they understood JGN's business, challenges and the wider energy environment. Customers identified:

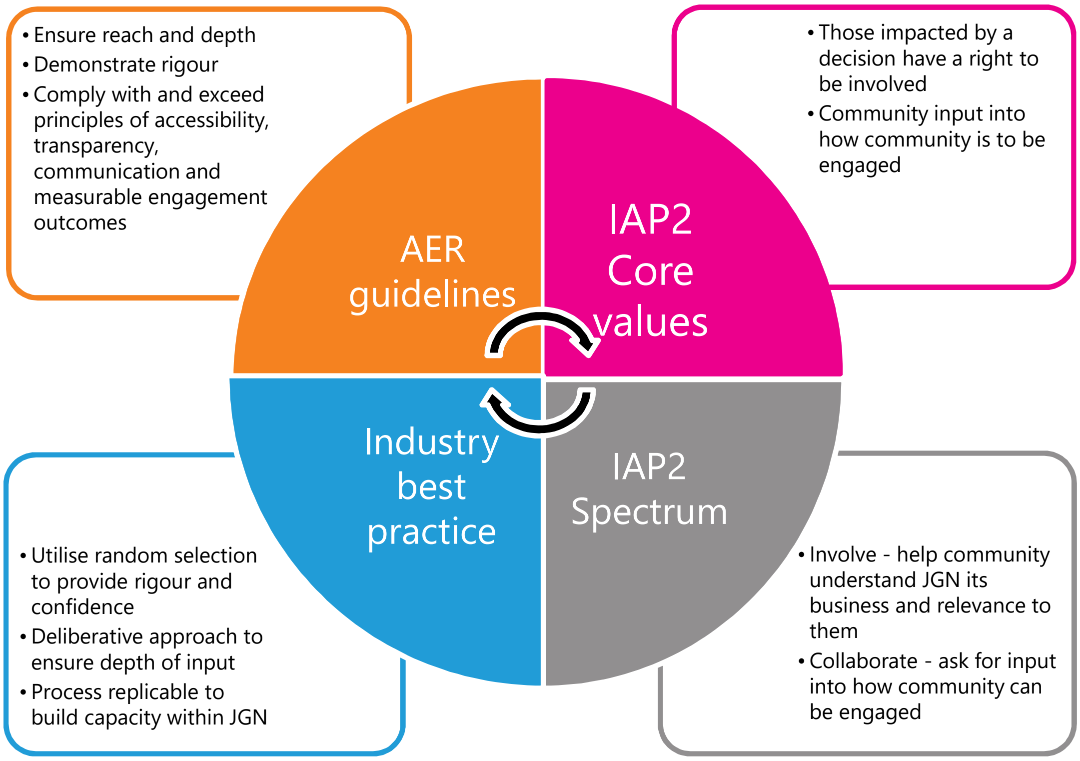
- Key values and priorities for customers
- Preferences and directions for JGN to pursue
- Behaviours for JGN staff that customers believed reflected their values and priorities.

In Phase Two we continued the commitment to working with customers to help shape and have input into the process of engagement by working with a cross-section of participants to test whether we had accurately captured their feedback and whether proposed material and activities would work at the final, third forum.

Phase Three brought a wide cross-section of stakeholders and customers together to test whether the directions and priorities of the Revenue Proposal accurately reflected what they had told us so far.

This report provides details of how the engagement approach was designed and why this approach was chosen together with the outcomes from each activity. It presents the feedback from customers at each stage and demonstrates how this has directly informed and shaped the Revenue Proposal.

Importantly, Straight Talk and Jemena designed, iteratively and together, a values-based, best-practice approach to engagement.



Using the Core Values of the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2), Straight Talk designed Phase One activities and the detailed Engagement Strategy for Phases Two and Three.

IAP2, the industry association for engagement, is the recognised leader for engagement tools. The IAP2 Core Values identify seven elements that best practice engagement should include:

1. Public participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.
2. Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.
3. Public participation promotes sustainable decisions by recognising and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers.
4. Public participation seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.
5. Public participation seeks input from participants in designing how they participate.
6. Public participation provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.
7. Public participation communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.

These seven Core Values shaped the engagement program at every stage and the way in which JGN and Straight Talk implemented, facilitated and reported back to participants during the program.

Innovation and best practice in engagement are reflected in the growing use of deliberative approaches. Deliberative approaches, in their true form, feature a number of distinct, essential elements:

- Random selection of participants (broadly demographically representative of a particular community or geographical area)
- Access to a range of information, including information identified by participants as necessary in order to reach decisions
- Time to consider, weigh-up and deliberate on different options before reaching a thoughtful, considered position or decision.

Many engagement programs claim to be deliberative because they have one or more of these elements; a robust deliberative process, however, has one other, defining feature:

- The concept of mini-public, where the group is facilitated to bring individual skills, knowledge and experience but to make decisions as a group on behalf of the wider community that they represent.

It is this, final feature, that makes deliberative processes special - that sets them apart from other engagement or consultation processes.

It is through the process of considering what is in the best interests of everyone - as opposed to what is in 'my self-interest' - that leads to the value and singular uniqueness of deliberative processes.

Why is this important?

Because the significant challenges of engaging on energy, where a shared network pricing system means everyone shares the pain and gain of each major decision, demands an engagement approach which is robust and can withstand the scrutiny of cynical stakeholders and a rigorous regulator.

Because JGN needed to be confident that the priorities and values that this process identified reflected the long-term interests of all customers - not just those that were in the room.

And finally, because JGN wanted to put the customer at the centre of everything they do; and if they couldn't be confident that their customer engagement program did that, then they couldn't ask the rest of the organisation to continue to make the cultural changes they had been committing them to since 2015.

Jemena has a diverse customer base, both in geography but also in market segmentation.

Engagement with large, industry-based customers was undertaken directly by Jemena through formal channels (including an industry forum) and through informal connections and relationships.

However, reaching small business customers, and customers of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those experiencing social and economic disadvantage and older people all required specific activities to ensure their voices were heard. Traditional engagement methods often don't attract such participants, as they can be time poor and lack the confidence or the skills to feel comfortable participating.

A range of specific approaches were employed to reach these groups, each tailored to meet specific needs:

- Small business customers were engaged through focus groups held regionally and in the metropolitan area
- Focus groups with CALD customers were recruited and facilitated through the ECC, using facilitators with appropriate language skills and the translated outcomes informing this and other reports

- Study Circles were used to reach customers experiencing social and economic disadvantage. This engagement methods uses multiple sessions to identify the experience of participants and explore solutions. Study Circles were held during Phase One in Wollongong where over three weeks 15 people met with us to explore their experience of gas pricing and usage; the experiences of other and finally what this means and suggestions which could make the management of gas easier and less stressful.
- In Phase Two, two Study Circles were held in Western Sydney with older participants and newer arrivals to Australia, to understand how they access information, manage their costs and providers and what support they need
- Engagement activities were held in ten different locations across metropolitan and regional NSW. Locations were chosen based on customer income, gas bill and gas consumption factors to ensure we spoke to customers across the full range of gas affordability and uses.

In this way, a comprehensive and rigorous methodology was developed which could deliver robust results and outcomes and inform not just the Revenue Proposal but the wider Jemena business as it wrestles with significant challenges in an uncertain energy future.

This next section provides a summary of the key themes, the approach, activities and outcomes from all engagement activities conducted for Jemena between 2017 and 2018.

- Chapter 2 provides details of the methodology and rationale for each activity and approach
- Chapter 3 provides details of the methodology
- Chapter 4 provides theme outcomes across all activities - the key, broad 'take outs'
- Chapters 5 - 18 detail each element of engagement - approach, engagement, participation and outcomes
- Lessons learned have been captured and reported in Chapter 19, and
- Customer priority quotes are captured in Chapter 20.

All notes, mid-report findings and details of run-sheets and materials presented and used during activities can be found in the Appendices.

Across the board, participant numbers include:

Community	Forum 1	Forum 2	Forum 3
Goulburn	**16**	**19**	**16**
Griffith	**13**	**15**	**11**
Western Sydney	**19**	**19**	**17**
Newcastle	**25**	**25**	**18**
Bathurst	**22**	**23**	**18**
Study Circles – over 55s / low income	**15**	**15**	
Small Medium Business Enterprises – Griffith	**6**		
Small Medium Business Enterprises - Sydney	**10**		
Volume Boundary Meters Retirement Living	**12**		
1:1 Interviews – Small Business Customers Sydney (CALD)	**23**		
Phone call with Customers	**7**		
CALD Arabic workshop with household customers	**13**	**13**	
Customer Council	**9**		
Total			**168**

3. METHODOLOGY

The engagement methodology needed to provide Jemena with the information it required to help shape the revenue proposal; but we also wanted it to reflect best practice in community engagement and so the IAP2 Core Values provided a guide for how we could design the program and its key elements.

In addition, best practice engagement tends to:

- Provide multiple opportunities or avenues for feedback, so that a variety of perspectives can be heard
- Ensure that all relevant voices are heard; for Jemena, this meant identifying key customer segments and then targeting engagement activities, so they were appropriate to each
- Include an experience of engagement that is fun, engaging and interesting as well as meaningful, with the level of influence of feedback clearly communicated
- Be anchored in a respectful dialogue that reflects the value of participation and develops genuine trust and respect for all parties as the process unfolds.

The three-phase approach was adopted to:

1. Provide Jemena with a customer-led approach to engagement from the beginning. All phase one activities were focused on identifying and understanding what was important to customers about gas supply, reliability, pricing and planning, and understanding how customers wanted to engage
2. Provide a deep, robust and rigorous approach to working with customers – to provide them with the information they needed for them to engage in thoughtful consideration and deliberation about the best future choices for all customers. Phase two featured five deliberative forums across metropolitan and regional NSW, where participants met three times - for a total of 15 hours - to explore, interrogate, discuss and advise on potential investment decisions for Jemena
3. Bring all the diverse views of customers and stakeholders together before finalising the Revenue Proposal so that collectively, a microcosm of the customer base could together understand the various impacts, priorities and ultimately final shape of the proposals Jemena would be submitting, based on their feedback.

A comprehensive methodology of three phases, each building on the outcomes of the previous phases and incorporating a strong commitment to an action-research approach to reflection, refinement and learning, was developed. It included:

Traditional market and social research methodologies of focus groups and surveys - to provide a base-line and to capture rich, qualitative feedback on specific issues from specific customer segments. Both these engagement activities are 'one-offs' - they capture a 'moment in time' response and, while they are valid from a research perspective, these methods alone would not provide the depth of exploration of the complex challenges that was needed to really inform Jemena's future directions.

Deliberative processes, utilising the concepts of thoughtful, reflective and deliberative consideration of issues, group decision-making and 'mini-public'. Deliberative approaches assume that a group of everyday citizens, when given access to the information they need, and when facilitated to consider all perspectives, not just that of their own, will reach sensible, considered decisions that are in the best interests of everyone - not just a few. Such an approach would allow us to work with the same group of people over a period, so they could interrogate the information, identify what was important for them to know as well as to understand and therefore be able to wrestle with the highly complex trade-offs required for the future planning of energy infrastructure.

Study Circles, a small group process which brings people together specifically to address a problem or issue over several sessions. We chose to use a Study Circle approach for working with vulnerable customers - customers experiencing social and economic disadvantage - because traditional engagement methods mitigate against their effective participation. With a Study Circle approach, with its gentle, cascading approach to 'what does it mean for me?'; 'what does it mean for others?' and 'what should be done?', allows participants to contribute at their own pace, build up confidence, trust and group cohesion and develop shared views based on shared experiences, not necessarily values.

Interviews were also held with customers that were time-poor or had a specific contribution or perspective we needed to hear.

Finally, we developed a new approach, Deliberative Forums, where we brought together randomly selected participants to provide feedback on and contribute to the development of key customer facing documentation for Jemena. Over three separate meetings, the same group were able to review and see the changes and influence they were having as Jemena sought to accurately reflect their priorities in plain language that most customers would be able to understand. This was a key deliverable in phase one.

Underpinning these activities was a complex suite of information developed specifically for the program, in the form of:

- Infographics
- Fact Sheets
- Presentations
- Videos
- Games
- Voting exercises.

Our approach was informed by Jemena's Customer Council, key stakeholders such as the Public Interest Advocacy Centre (PIAC), the AER's Consumer Challenge Panel representatives and, importantly, the Ethnic Communities Council of NSW (ECC) and Council of the Ageing (COTA). These stakeholders were able to shape the process at all stages throughout the journey.

The following table illustrates how each customer segment was engaged:

Participant group	Focus group	Deliberative forum	Study circle	Interviews
Household customers 18 - 80 years	Phase one: deliberative focus groups met 3 times to input to material and documentation	Phase one: Forums held twice across two consecutive weekends to introduce Jemena, planning, pricing, governance and seek advice on priorities. Forums held in Dubbo and Sydney concurrently Phase two: Forums held three times to explore the themes of fairness, price, reliability and service as well as future investment decisions and options for investment recovery. Forums held in Goulburn, Griffith, Western Sydney, Newcastle and Bathurst		
Small business customers	Phase two: focus groups in Sydney and Griffith			
Vulnerable customers (socially and economically disadvantaged)		All forums included participants who were on government payments (disability, aged, carer) as well as waged participants	Phase one: study circle in Wollongong met three times, once a week for three weeks, to explore the experience and impact of pricing and priorities for stage two Phase two: study circle met twice in Western Sydney to explore the themes of Fairness, Pricing, Reliability and Environment	
Embedded network customers	Phase two: focus group with residents of two embedded networks within retirement villages exploring the experience of service, pricing and priorities.		This was a hard to reach and vulnerable group.	
CALD customers	Phase two: Engaging with those more vulnerable and hard to reach customers through in-language Arabic workshops			Phase two: interviews with CALD small businesses enterprises

Finally, the methodology was overlaid with the IAP2 Core Values to ensure that best practice engagement was being achieved.

The following table illustrates this:

Core Value	Phase one activities	Phase two activities
Those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process	Customers across metropolitan and regional NSW involved in deliberative forums Socio-economically disadvantage customers participated in Study Circles Small business customers participated in focus groups	Older people participated in Study Circles People of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds participated in focus groups Small business customers participated in focus groups in metropolitan and regional locations
The publics contribution will influence the decision	Customers worked with Jemena to design the customer facing documentation for engagement through design focus groups Customers identified the priorities for engagement and information they needed through deliberative forums which shaped Phase Two	Deliberative forums over three separate day long meetings identified priorities, values, principles and finally options for future investment
Promote sustainable decisions by recognising and communicating the needs and interests of all participants including the decision makers	Jemena's requirement to engage by the AER, the regulatory environment and details of Jemena's business owners was requested by and provided to deliberative forums	Presentations by stakeholders including PIAC, Energy Networks Australia, were provided to deliberative forums Impacts on vulnerable customers, regional customers and Jemena were explained and presented at deliberative forums Benchmarking of Jemena's efficiency against other energy businesses and details of Jemenas ownership was requested by and provided to deliberative forums
Seek out and facilitate the involvement of those affected by or interested in a decision	Participants were randomly selected by a third-party market research firm and their contribution recognised by stipend payments for all activities in Phase One	Participants were randomly selected by a third-party market research firm and their contribution recognised by stipend payments for all activities in Phase Two
Seek input from participants in designing how they participate	All Phase One activities were designed to help inform the design and content of Phase Two	Participants across the deliberative forums were brought together by 'video focus group' to ensure that we had accurately captured their priorities and issues for the third and final deliberative forum
Provide participants with the information they need to participate in meaningful way	All activities except focus groups were held more than once to give participants a chance to identify the information they needed so they could participate Observers from PIAC participated in providing an alternate perspective on information during deliberative forums	Participants were asked at both forums 1 and 2 what additional information they felt they needed and this was provided Observers from the Consumer Challenge Panel, PIAC and the AER participated in providing alternate perspectives on information during the deliberative forums

Core Value	Phase one activities	Phase two activities
Communicate to participants how their input affected the decision	Participants were provided with copies of the final documentation they contributed to	Participants were notified by email with a link to this report and the Draft Revenue Proposal, so they could provide feedback should they wish. We also plan further engagement to facilitate feedback on our submission to ensure we have implemented customer concerns.

Each element of the engagement program involved customer engagement activities utilising a variety of techniques to gain qualitative feedback from participants. The Straight Talk team and JGN worked closely in preparation and during each session to ascertain feedback and hear first-hand community feedback. Sessions were designed to maximise the opportunities for learning, exploration and interrogation of the subject matter, as well as to ensure trust and cohesion as a group. In addition, key partners were engaged in order to reach and effectively engage with two groups identified by Jemena's Customer Council as requiring specific attention - older people and people of cultural and linguistically diverse backgrounds. The NSW Council on the Ageing and Ethnic Communities Council worked closely with us to design and, in the case of the ECC, facilitate specific groups.

It is important to note that a highly collaborative approach was taken by the Straight Talk and JGN teams so that all activities were designed and delivered together, with key senior Jemena staff from the executive as well as day to day operations active in all deliberative processes and observing all others.

Each engagement activity in Phases One and Two are described below and detailed run sheets of our program can be found in appendix D. Information, presentations and materials for activities can also be found in the appendices D and E.

All recruitment was undertaken by an independent market research firm specialising in recruitment for deliberative processes - our partner - Jetty Research.

Phase One

Four Deliberative forums with household customers

Deliberative forums were held on two consecutive Saturdays with the same participants in central Sydney and Dubbo.

These sessions focussed on understanding what customers understood about gas, Jemena and Jemena's role and the impact of pricing on their everyday household management. The groups identified the key elements of importance to them that they believed customers would want to understand, and/or have taken into account, as Jemena plans for the future.

The first session also provided opportunities for participants to identify the additional information they required, which was provided at the beginning of the second session.

Jemena provided staff for each session drawn from across the organisation - from senior management and executive level through to local depot employees. These staff acted as table scribes and facilitators and were available to both answer questions but also hear first-hand the concerns, issues and priorities of everyday customers.

Three Study circles with vulnerable customers

16 participants were recruited and met three times across three consecutive weeks in Wollongong, south of Sydney. The group included younger and older participants all either living on government subsidies or identifying as experiencing economic stress.

Each meeting focused on one key question, exploring the experiences of participants and what this meant for how they made decisions about energy usage, navigated and negotiated the energy retail environment and what they identified as important to help people manage their gas usage and bills better.

Each week they were asked to undertake some 'homework', which consisted of some questions for them to ask friends, neighbours, relatives and colleagues. This feedback was also incorporated to extend and deepen the conversation and to help the group consider the wider implications beyond the impact on themselves.

Three Deliberative focus groups with household customers

A deliberative focus group was recruited to meet three times to review and provide feedback on, and contribute to, the development of two key, customer-facing documents Jemena wanted to develop.

This group provided Jemena with valuable insight into the complexity of the language it was using; its focus on what it wanted to say, rather than what customers wanted to know; and the complexity of the issues and the need to communicate in plain English, using diagrams and visual cues effectively and efficiently.

Phase Two

15 Deliberative forums with household customers

These groups were conducted in five communities: Griffith, Goulburn, Bathurst, Newcastle and Western Sydney. We spoke to over 100 customers in total (note that doesn't include the non-English speaking backgrounds and small to medium businesses) Each group met three times - in April and May, and again in August and September.

The forums consisted of randomly selected participants, broadly demographically representative of Jemena's customer base in age, gender, household type and education. The groups were asked to develop recommendations based on their own individual experience and knowledge, but on behalf of the wider community they represent. This meant they were tasked with considering, and deliberating on, what is best for everyone, not what is best for them individually.

The forums were held in five different locations in New South Wales because this reflects the geographically diverse customer base of Jemena. It also reflects the different climates and agricultural industry uses of gas. Furthermore, different areas of the state experience varying levels of service through the network, so the diverse geographic locations were also to ensure all the voices were captured in the conversations.

Below is an outline of the session methodology.

Session one

This session covered an introduction to deliberation, mini-public, deliberative democracy principles, critical thinking; connecting with each other and building trust in the group. This was done through showing videos on the topic area and exploring fun related icebreaker activities where participants ranked their cost of living priorities and compared and discussed the gas appliances in their homes. The session also covered capacity building so individuals had the knowledge and background to fully participate. This included an introduction to Jemena, introduction to the gas supply chain, the regulation of the gas industry and breakdown of the billing process. Participants were also asked to reflect on their initial perceptions of Jemena and how much they trusted the organisation; and to explore Jemena's current customer priorities for the next five years. Finally, participants were asked about what further information they felt they needed to be able to discuss priorities for Jemena at the next session.

Session two

The second session commenced with Jemena presentations answering questions as requested by the group. Participants also shared their learnings from the first session. The results of the prioritisation exercise in each of the other locations was shared, then compared by the groups. This session included an exercise on 'bill shock' or the cost of living and at what point households would feel the pain with a high or unexpected bill. There were presentations and table discussions on key issues around fairness including depreciation, contributions to the costs of new connections, vulnerable customers and equitable pressure in the network. This session also included information on the future of gas (including use of hydrogen), and a prioritisation exercise around the future of gas. Participants also explored perceptions of safety; customer perception of the gas service; discussion about long-term interests of customers; and a check-in on levels of trust work towards measuring the rapport gained. Session two included presentations by Gavin Dufty (St Vincent De Paul), Elon Musk, the Australian Technology Association, the Australian Independent Energy Market Operator (AEMO), via video.

Session three

We developed the direction for this session in partnership with a smaller group of customers from the forums, to ensure good value for their time and that it also reflected their priorities and needs. This session started with a check in and welcome back; including a fun quiz where participants refreshed their knowledge about the topic area and warmed up into the session. Presentations at this final session were focussed on three key areas influencing bills - asset renewal and investment; asset depreciation and timing; and smoothing the bill path. Activities included voting and table discussions. After this was all considered, the team presented the four scenarios the group could have chosen, and the likely impacts of each; and then participants were given the opportunity to reconsider their votes. Finally, forum participants were encouraged to think back to the customer priorities from forum one (price, reliability, environment and fairness) and provide Jemena with direction on what they should consider, on behalf of customers, when making decisions about these areas.

Jemena provided staff for each session drawn from across the organisation - from senior management and executive level through to local depot employees. These staff acted as table scribes and facilitators and were available to both answer questions but also hear first-hand the concerns, issues and priorities of everyday customers.

All the sessions were recorded by our videographer partners (O'Neill) who produced summary films of each location of the first two forums, and an overall consolidated video for the forums. They also produced a video of each of the individual forums in September plus the overall summary of the project. The videographer also captured stills from each session of staff engaging with Jemena customers, and delivered two edits of different lengths for Jemena's internal purposes showcasing the project.

Study circles – over 55s customers and low-income families

We hosted two forums with randomly selected participants, held at Parramatta with a mix of participants from across Western Sydney, including some participants who work for NGOs such as the caseworkers from SydWest Multicultural Services and Harris Park Community Centre, over 55's and other participants who were new arrivals.

We sought advice from the Council on the Ageing NSW (COTA) regarding the location for the study circles.

Based on the experience of our previous forums and study circles, we adapted the approach to formally include a senior Jemena staff member in the sessions to answer potential questions from the participants. This allowed participants a chance to ask questions directly of Jemena – letting people have a chance to 'grill' the organisation if they want. It helped with the flow of the discussion, understanding of the issues and helped to build trust in the process.

Below is an outline of the methodology utilised:

Meeting one

During this session we hosted an introduction to the study circle concept and purpose; explored participants previous experiences with focus groups, and understanding personal experiences around gas, bill shock, and where participants receive their information from. We hosted an ice breaker activity where participants ranked their household bills, and the appliances they use. We also provided an introduction to Jemena, the gas supply chain, regulation and the need to engage. We also gave the participants opportunity to ask questions of Jemena. We then handed out homework, in the form of a notebook for participants to have conversations with family, friends and colleagues about their impressions, experience and perceptions of gas.

Meeting two

This process reintroduced participants to the concept of study circles, and checked in on feedback from family, friends and colleagues from the previous week. There was a presentation of how other customers feel about their energy supply and participants' views on that; some education on the energy made easy website and exploration of that. Jemena also answered questions from the last session.

Participants were shown a video from St Vincent De Paul on fairness, and had a discussion of fairness including the questions on connections (who pays?), capital contribution, vulnerable customers, and gas pressure across the network.

Finally, discussions about how to best engage with older customers, vulnerable customers and customers like new migrants with poor English and appreciation of how Australian infrastructure works identified a number of suggestions for Jemena to either consider and/or raise within the broader industry.

Focus group - Volume Boundary Meters exploration with older customers

We held one forum with participants at the suburb of Kirrawee, (Sutherland Shire, Sydney) with residents of Donald Robinson Village and Woolooware Shores, retirement communities operated by Anglicare. Both communities represented slightly different socio-economic segmentations and had significant issues with metering and retailers in the past.

It's important to note these customers had centralised hot water systems, and it was important to hear what specific feedback, concerns or benefits they experienced from this arrangement. It was also important to consider how such metering should be done in the future, as this group was not represented in any of the other forums, interviews, workshops or study circles.

Participants were lead through an explanation of focus groups and why we were consulting with them. The intention was to understand participants personal experiences of financial security and insecurity, understand motivations, barriers and challenges amongst retirement living communities regarding gas and power costs. We also explored where participants get their information from, their experiences with retailers and gas supply.

Their feedback was also sought on the best way of working with and understanding key concerns of elderly customers. We explored with customers their perceptions of embedded networks or volume boundary metering solutions for developers when they build new retirement communities or apartment blocks and whether, how, and if this worked for residents and individual customers.

Focus groups – small business customers (Griffith and Sydney)

We conducted focus groups to identify small business owners' experience with gas and their future priorities. As experiences are likely to be different in regional and metropolitan areas, we conducted focus groups in Griffith and Sydney.

The groups consisted of small business owners with a mix in business type and size (within the small business category). We made some adjustments according to the location between metropolitan and regional communities. Griffith also included some major agricultural producers who are large users of gas, and who had interactions with Jemena in the past such as the Prune Growers Association. (Jemena had worked closely with the industry to upgrade supply, so they could operate within their short production timeframe (5 weeks annually) efficiently).

We knew that businesses were time-poor, and it would be challenging to gather participants for focus groups. Therefore, we held them at a time when participants would be most likely to be available (in the evenings) and enlisted the support of local peak organisations, such as the Griffith Chamber of Commerce, and local government City of Parramatta where the groups were held, to spread the word and promote the sessions.

We held a two-hour focus group in each location. The following topics were explored including the participants experience with gas – What are their issues and concerns? What's working for them? Themes included: getting connected; management of costs; service level; communication with Jemena; perceptions of renewable energies and the future gas usage. We also conducted a check in on whether participants would like to stay in touch with Jemena – and if so, how.

Interviews – small business customer (CALD) conducted by the Ethnic Communities Council (ECC)

We partnered with the ECC to design, develop and deliver 1:1 interviews with representative CALD businesses in Sydney, focusing on the North West, Bankstown, Norwest Business Park and Western Sydney areas. In a similar manner to the focus groups for businesses, the discussion guide explored impacts of fluctuating gas prices on the business, how businesses in the CALD communities receive their information, how they use gas, and perceptions of gas in the future. We also collected information on how they used gas in their home country, and their susceptibility to bill shock. Interviews were conducted in language and translated by the EEC for use by the project.

Focus groups – household customers (CALD) (x 2 forums, held at Fairfield) conducted by the Ethnic Communities Council

Two focus groups with CALD household customers who have recently arrived in Australia and part of the same language group were held during Phase Two. These customers were not represented in the first phase of the engagement and we wanted to identify if there was a major difference in how this group handles and views gas and energy related issues and whether their experiences were different. We partnered with the ECC to determine which language group to approach and selected recent arrivals from Arabic speaking communities. ECC recruited a group of 13 participants from western Sydney who met twice in the same month with a focus group meeting that is two hours long. We met at a location in Fairfield where the community felt most comfortable - close to Settlement Services International and other programs they have visited. We co-designed the engagement process with an educator from the ECC and the focus group was run in-language. The Jemena team provided Arabic speaking and writing staff for the day to explain technical concepts and make the group feel more comfortable. The groups followed a similar approach to others, exploring individual participants experience of gas, knowledge of Jemena, the gas distribution network and impacts of pricing. Concepts of fairness and the experience of participants before they came to Australia were also canvassed.

Phone call with customers - a specific focus group conducted via videoconference to ascertain feedback on the progress so far

This phone call involved customers from 5 communities across the state who had participated in the deliberative forums in April and May. The purpose was for the project team to test that the key themes we were taking forward to the third forum accurately reflected what participants believed their groups had said; and to ascertain whether this small group thought our 'plan of action' for the third and final forums was appropriate.

Presentation and facilitation at two Customer Council meetings (June and October)

We attended and facilitated discussion at two Customer Council meetings, in June and October 2018. We provided an overview of the engagement, discussion about the major findings at the point in the program and ascertained feedback from the Customer Council.

In October, we invited three participants from the Western Sydney forum to give their feedback on their experience and participation in the process. We asked them to reflect on their own learnings, the learnings of the group, having their say throughout the process and how this would be implemented. These facilitated sessions within the agenda of the broader Customer Council meetings allowed for detailed feedback on the engagement process, program and results to be fully across the results so far, to ask questions, to challenge the process and provide rigour around the results of the program.

4. KEY, BROAD 'TAKE OUTS'

Details of feedback at each location, for each activity, follows in subsequent chapters, but a snapshot of what we heard across all activities, and rates of participation etc, is presented here. The 'headline' with a summary explanation is provided:

1 Price is still the most important thing. Customers are very anxious about price and are feeling the impact of rapidly increasing energy prices acutely. Vulnerable customers are going to extreme lengths to manage and decrease their bills - some change retailers, renegotiating their contracts, every six to 12 months, for example. Other people don't entertain at home - they go to the club where it is cheaper to buy a meal and be warm than it is to cook and heat the house at home. One participant showered at the local swimming pool rather than use her own gas water heater as it was so expensive.

However, reliability and the importance of being able to access a service as and when it was needed, was still extremely important and customers struggled with the concept of declining reliability, even if it meant lower or no increases in their gas bill.

2 Customers expect Jemena to NOT compromise on safety. Safety is a primary concern, and most discussions about safety were split between those saying it absolutely had to be number one, and others saying it was so important it couldn't possibly be any other way and so therefore, customers didn't need to express it. Gas is recognised as volatile and potentially unsafe and customers do not want Jemena to do anything that jeopardises their or Jemena's staff safety and well-being.

3 Reliability is hard for customers to understand because most of them have never experienced a reduction in reliability. The trade-off between price and reliability is clear for all utilities, however for the gas network it is very difficult for customers to imagine an un-reliable gas network - they have absolutely no experience of anything but steady and regular supply. We found it hard to agree on how we could best illustrate the impact of lower reliability and it was very hard for customers to engage with this concept.

4 Customers expect Jemena – and other parts of the energy industry – to be innovating and planning for the future. Despite the public narrative about the future for energy, customers are very clear - they expect energy companies to be investigating and investing in alternative energy futures. For customers it is not a question of 'whether' so much as a question of 'which' energy future to be investigating.

5 Customers appreciate the value of the assets that Jemena has and their long life; they think it is sensible for Jemena to seek ways to ensure that the network remains utilised. Customers had no problem with the concept of the value of the network asset and that this should be maximised and that by doing so, the model of Jemena slowly recouping costs over time could be fairly maintained (as opposed to a future where customers were rejecting gas, leaving those least able to choose left on an increasingly expensive system). They related this to their own long-term investment decisions and 'good business'.

5 The environment is important to customers. They want Jemena to be responsible now and proactive for the future to protect the environment. Customers had some disagreements about the *priority* of the environment now - particularly in terms of cost impacts on customers - but there was universal support for a responsible and proactive approach to environmental protection and management both now and in the future. Customers want to know that the future will not be compromised because of decisions that are made now and this was reflected in the issues of coal seam gas, the sale of gas off-shore and concern about the reliability of adequate gas resources being raised.

6 Customers of CALD backgrounds, those who are socially and economically disadvantaged and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders all find it very difficult to navigate the energy system, albeit for different reasons.

CALD customers tend to use established service and support organisations to introduce them to and help them understand the Australian system, and support to these organisations should be continued so they can, in turn, continue to provide a valuable service. Newly arrived migrants tended to find information about gas and electricity from each other, by comparing bills and deals, rather than accessing any publicly available information. Clearly this is because literacy and language barriers make other forms of information onerous and difficult. There were some anecdotal suggestions that some energy retailers may have been taking advantage of individual customers and these have been referred to the Public Interest Advocacy Centre.

Customers who are socially and economically disadvantaged find the complexity of the bills -language, format and content - as well as the complex retail environment for energy overwhelming and difficult to navigate. Importantly, very few individuals identified this; but it was evident from the conversations and assumptions they had that this was the case. Information needs to be clear, consistent and ideally available in formats other than digital, or through support organisations, to help these customers. They were mostly aware of the emergency provisions through St Vincent De Paul or similar services, but were not accessing support to re-negotiate current providers. Most were on regular payments (fortnightly) and of these, the majority were carrying a significant credit - in the order of $700 - $1000. Needless to say, these customers would benefit tremendously from accessing this money and not having it tied up with an energy retailer that is a) earning interest on it and b) not sharing that with the customer.

Finally, ATSI customers have a range of structural, cultural and linguistic barriers to accessing information and being able to effectively negotiate and navigate the energy environment. Place based, culturally appropriate programs to help ATSI communities and customers are needed.

7 Customers are confused by the regulatory system and are not convinced the system as it is now actually delivers the best outcomes for customers. They think it is delivering profits for companies instead. This was consistently raised by all participants across all activities. They couldn't understand what the regulator, market operator, rule maker (AEMC) or other bodies actually do to help keep prices down or support customers in making decisions about energy. The inconsistency in language, format and information that is used by different retailers and parts of the energy system; and the fact that retailers could charge a 'connection fee' which was three times the amount that Jemena actually charges were two examples they gave as to how the system is failing.

8 Customers want to be able to access information about energy easily. Every group expressed confusion, frustration and dissatisfaction with the opaqueness of the energy market and energy industry when it comes to information.

While there is widespread, mainstream media coverage about the pressures on prices, the challenges to gas and electricity production and transmission, customers said it was very hard to locate information that was relevant and when they did, it was very difficult to understand and navigate.

Very few - a handful - of participants across all activities were aware of or had accessed the Energy made Easy website. Most customers relied on their retailer 'to do the right thing' and, upon comparing bills with other participants, were angry when they realised that they were not offered better deals when they were available. The lack of loyalty and a pro-active retail market segment with the customer at the centre were significant issues of concern for customers.

9 Information about energy should be consistent regardless of retailer. Customers are frustrated that the language, information, format and layout of bills from different retailers are not consistent, making it hard to compare and make informed decisions. Customers think this is done deliberately, as it advantages the retailer, not the customer.

Some participants agreed that information on the bill should be consistent, so customers can easily compare and make informed choices

10 There is a strong loyalty to gas and customers struggle with the concept that gas is a choice. If they make the choice for gas they believe it is essential. Participants were selected because they are current gas customers; and, while some had recently made the choice to connect (to new homes, for example), most customers felt that since they had gas, it needed to always be available, like electricity. This is in contrast to how Jemena view their service, which is as an energy source of choice.

11 There remains confusion about Jemena's role in customer service because there is no 'visibility' of what Jemena does; but if there is a problem, Jemena fixes it. The vast majority of participants across all activities were unaware of Jemena or its role before this project; and were surprised to see Jemena identified on their bills in case of service faults, as they had not noticed this before. The majority of participants had never had any interaction with Jemena and, as their first point of call would be the retailer they were confused about how important customer service should be to Jemena. This contradicted their expectations about Jemena's responsiveness and role should there be a problem, once they understood the demarcation; and resulted in a fairly low score for customer service which may not accurately reflect the importance of prompt, safe service responses should it be required.

Overall the outcomes across the board throughout all these methodologies make for successful individual outcomes, and you can read about them in detail in the remainder of this document.

Above: Newcastle and Goulburn and Deliberative Forums

5. CALD ARABIC LANGUAGE WORKSHOPS WITH HOUSEHOLD CUSTOMERS

Introduction

This report gives details of the community engagement workshops held in-language in Arabic by the educators at the Ethnic Communities Council (ECC) with support from Jemena and Straight Talk during August 2017 at the social enterprise Lost in Books at Fairfield. 13 people participated over two sessions, mostly Syrian and Iraqi refugees, who had been in Australia between 2-6 years reflecting a variety of age groups and demographics including families. Four Arabic-speaking or reading Jemena employees also participated and two non-Arabic speaking Jemena employees also attended.

In terms of format of the workshops, some concepts were explained in more detail and in more visual terms than other workshops, the transport of gas (images of the pipeline from the centre of Australia) and details relating to the production chain (explained by the Jemena team through an apple farming analogy). In addition, most of the workshop reference materials were translated for participants into written Arabic including scripts from the videos shown, the priorities exercise and the modifications made to the homework to make it more visual.

Methodology

Session one focused on participants current experiences with gas and electricity, how it sits in terms of household budget pressures. Attendees also focused on their previous experiences of gas in their countries of origin, and reflected on how they received information now, and how they would like to receive information. Participants also ranked gas in terms of the overall household budgets (like the deliberative forum sessions and study circle sessions) and detailed what gas appliances they have. This session also focused on rapport building, with the facilitators and with each other and the Jemena team, to ensure good foundations for session 2. Homework tasks were set at the end of the session to allow for the learning to continue and key questions were asked with the team taking away these questions to prepare for the next session.

Session two was held in a fortnight following session one. Participants shared their homework feedback as an icebreaker exercise and a way of refocusing on what they had learned. The early part of the session also focused on rebuilding rapport with each other, the Jemena team and the facilitators. The Jemena team answered many questions in the session suing visual aids, particularly around the source of gas supply and other information. Homework was shared as an icebreaker. Participants looked at priorities and ranked them as a group and overall, and key questions were deliberated in the groups around vulnerable customers and capital expenditure. The group also voted on the bill path.

The Jemena team also completed an explanation of the gas production process, and the customer path, and the analogy to explain this is summarised below:

- Alhoush - I am the shop owner, and I need to arrange to have apples in my store, I need to find a farmer who grows apples, and truck companies to bring the apples to my store
- Alex - I am the farmer - I grow 2 varieties of apples, and I send them to the market on a large truck to be sold
- Ahmed - I drive the large trucks and I collect apples from the farm to take to market-
- Syed - I am the delivery van driver, I have an order from the shop to pick up 2 red and 1 green apple
- Alhoush - my order has arrived and is ready for my customers
- Kate - I am the customer, I pay the shop owner for my apple (give Alhoush money)

- Alhoush - As the shop owner I need to pay all the people who got the apples to the store, including myself ($20 for Alex, $10 for Ahmed, $20 for Syed and $20 in your own pocket)

Themes

Overall Findings

After conducting the first workshop, they have discussed with their relatives and friends whether using gas or electricity, all had similar opinion regarding the preferable option which but there is a lack of information in Arabic Language regarding this.

- Attending workshops (face to face) much more beneficial for them than media.
- They have no idea about the energy website
- They cannot distinguish which is the best retailer offer due to language deficiency.
- They are all OK with paying $7 per year
- They are all OK to pay $1 for vulnerable customers per year but they do not know how Jemena will identify them, so the concern was spending the collected amount may go for some people that not in need.

Learning and knowledge

Participants felt their skills and experiences were greatly expanded by exposure to the concepts discussed in the workshops and the education gleaned as a result. Attendees also detailed they prefer face to face or social media in terms of finding out further information from trusted community sources as their preferred method. Television advertising or community radio advertising was also mentioned as a way of reaching this community, or flyer drops. Unequivocally, attendees agreed that they appreciated the way the information about gas was imparted.

- *"Learned new information about gas bill"*
- *"New and useful information"*
- *"Interesting and useful information about gas was learned and presented. Also, the way everything was explained was very clear and straightforward. Thank you."*

Many questions were answered during the workshop by Jemena including questions about why the gas price is so high, who controls the gas price, and if there would be a reduction of gas price in future. Because participants were not very familiar with the gas supply chain in Australia, this was addressed in an easy to understand manner (pictures and images) in the workshops. Information was imparted including the Energy Made Easy website but unfortunately this community found it very difficult to understand and navigate, even with the google translate option.

Below: Mariette Mikhael, Ethnic Communities Council Educator who ran the workshops in collaboration with Jemena and Straight Talk, and the Jemena team demonstrating examples of the supply chain.

Sharing Experiences

In addition, in the countries the participants had come from, prior to the war, gas was cheap, but afterwards more expensive (although they all agreed it was still more expensive in Australia). In the Middle East, gas was primarily used for cooking, and in Syria all the gas had come from bottles. Many preferred to pay their bills at the post office. A participant shared their view (and others in agreement) that they would like the opportunity to shop around for prices and contracts, however found this to be challenging because of the language barrier.

Support of vulnerable customers

Many participants in this group were struggling to cope with bills coming from everywhere to their households. As a result, they were really prioritising rent and utility bills, with their other expenses following that. However, they all agreed that gas was cheaper than electricity in Australia. Overall, gas came in the middle of expenditures for this group. This group did agree their use was seasonal. As a result, most participants unequivocally agreed to pay the extra dollar per year to fund the program for vulnerable customers (like the study circles workshops).

It's clear from the feedback gleaned that this group struggle and are in need of support but also feel strong connection to their communities. They feel they need to be giving back to the community as a result. You can see the breakdown below of different household expenses in this group as compared to the overall average of research for the project, across the different forum types. You can see gas ranks much higher with this group than the regional and metropolitan household customers who were consulted as part of this project.

	CALD Workshops	NSW
1	Mortgage / rent	Mortgage / rent
2	Electricity	Electricity
3	**Gas**	Groceries
4	Transport	Transport
5	Healthcare	Healthcare
6	Groceries	**Gas**
7	Phone / internet	Phone / internet
8	Education	Education

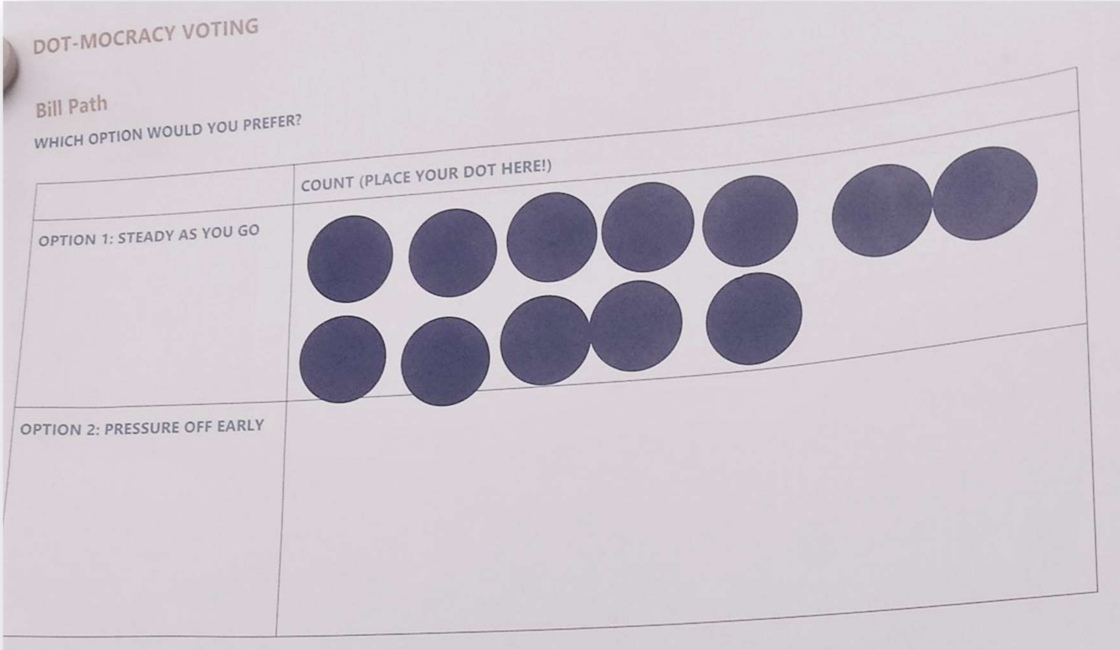
Priorities for the Future

Participants were asked to rank and prioritise the different elements for the future overall, as other groups had also been asked to. The major difference was where safety sits within these, as compared to the other groups, which is understandable given the participants backgrounds and demographic. Safety is never taken for granted in the countries these community participants are drawn from. In addition, the environment came up strongly which is definitely a cultural indicator of where these participants are drawn from - from areas that are often rural or remote, deeply connected to the land and always mindful of giving back to 'mother earth'.

Prioritisation	CALD	NSW
Price	**1**	**1**
Reliability	4	**2**
Safety	**2**	**3**
Fairness	6	5
Environment	**3**	4
Customer Service	5	7
Aesthetics	6	6

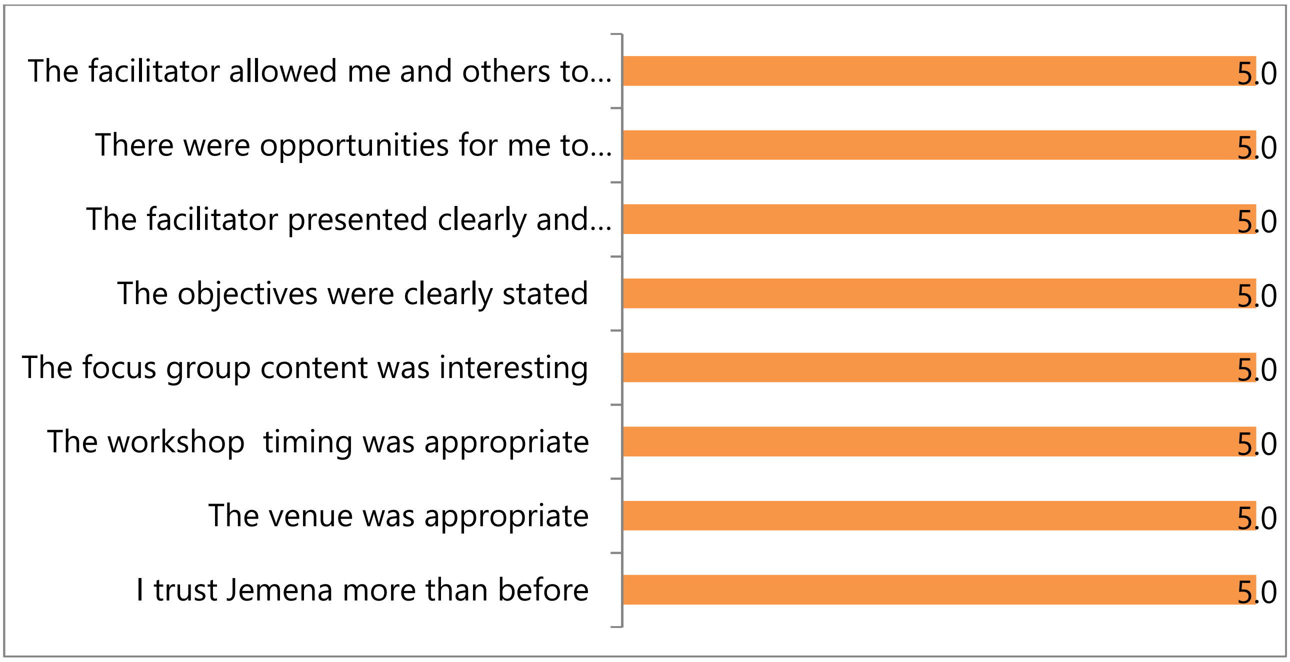
Dotmocracy voting - Bill Path, 30 / 50-year assets and vulnerable customers

The group voted around bill path and prior to this feedback this included an explanation of the voting. Participants were given the opportunity to consider and provide feedback around both options. As you can see from the results below, the feedback was a definite 'yes' on option one - the 'steady as you go'. This aligns with how the other groups were voting in forum three. The group also voted that yes, Jemena should depreciate its assets over a 30-year period (as opposed to a 50-year period), which will increase Jemena's bill portion by $7/annum per customer. Like the other forums, participants also agreed they would be happy to pay extra to support vulnerable customers.



Workshop feedback

In terms of individual feedback, participants were very complimentary about the workshop design, format, experience and outcomes. Even with a simplified feedback form, participants still felt strongly, and the average was 5 out of 5 for all the categories across the workshop (where 1 is not agree and 5 is strongly agree)



The average ratings for all the statements were all 5 in a 5-point rating scale where 5 equalled 'strongly agree' and 1 'strongly disagree' and there was no deviation.

Improvements

When asked whether they had any suggestions about how the forum could have been improved, participants mentioned the following:

- *"The workshop was good"*
- *"The workshop was interesting and perfect"*
- *"Nothing needs improving. Everything was useful and well presented"*
- *"Can it be done at schools as well"*

Most valued

When asked what they valued most about the forum, participants mentioned the following:

- *"The workshop was very useful and clear. Thank you."*
- *"The entire workshop was on point and very clear"*
- *"It was also very useful"*
- *"The entire workshop"*
- *"Everything"*
- *"Everything"*
- *"Everything"*
- *"Interesting and useful information about gas was learned and presented. Also, the way everything was explained was very clear and straightforward. Thank you."*
- *"New information about the gas company / bills"*

- *"It was a good and useful workshop"*
- *"New information I received"*

Additional comments

When asked if they had any additional comments about the project, participants mentioned the following:

- *"Thank you for your time and effort for organising this workshop / lecture"*
- *"I would like to thank you for organising this workshop which was very useful as well as showing us the best you have to offer. Thanks again!"*
- *"No further enhancements are needed in the future"*
- *"Most thankful"*
- *"Thank you for giving us this opportunity to come"*
- *"Thank you very much for all the efforts"*
- *"It was a pleasure being part of this workshop and thank you very much to everyone who organised it"*
- *"Many thanks to everyone who took part"*
- *"Learned new information about gas bill"*

6. 1:1 CALD INTERVIEWS - BUSINESSES

Introduction

One-on-one face to face interviews were conducted in Arabic, Hindi, Cantonese and Mandarin in June-September 2018 by the educators at the Ethnic Communities Council (ECC) restaurant and hospitality businesses. These interviews focused on users of mains gas, primarily food businesses, catering operations and restaurants or takeaway services, located across Sydney. Suburbs targeted included Canley Heights, Auburn, Norwest, Campsie, Kogarah, Waitara, Asquith and Hornsby. The aims were to:

- Introduce and explain who and what Jemena is
- Uncover the customer's understanding of Jemena
- Understand experiences in business and key issues of pricing, fairness and costs
- Understand personal experiences of financial insecurity, CALD communities and what it means to face this, plan for and adapt to rising power and gas costs.
- As preparation, the ECC educators shared the Jemena videos 'connecting your home with gas' and 'your network your say', an information sheet about Jemena and useful links for example the energy made easy website to assist with capacity. This was done prior to commencing the interviews.

What we heard

For many, the bill shock price point was similar to the domestic users (at the $50-$100), they all indicated they are sensitive to price increases, which indicates the margins in small businesses are tight. Many are heavily reliant on gas to operate the business. Some had very different experiences of gas in their country of origin, with gas being cheaper and clear lines for customer service. In a similar way, there was not a great awareness across these CALD communities about Jemena's role because of the different arrangements in their country of origin.

Where do participants get their information?

Those interviewed stated their information about gas and connections comes from family and friends. A few detailed they also searched online for information. Some found it difficult to compare the different deals and wanted more personal attention when it came to information from the gas providers. Being time-poor, participants currently pay their bills via Bpay and online. Others preferred written communication about their bills.

- *"I got the information about gas via my family and friends."*
- *"Found the information through friends and wasn't difficult to find it."*
- *"From friends"*

- *"From online...there was lots of information."*
- *"I got the info from an internet café."*
- *"It was difficult to compare the information, because the information was all different."*
- *"I need information about price and prefer to get a letter about changes from gas company."*

What's the experience with gas in their country of origin?

Participants found their experience with gas in the country they've come from was somewhat different to Australia and reflected on this as part of their experience. A couple of participants had only previously used bottled gas either in their homes or business.

- *"In Korea, cheap price, fast customer service when some problem"*
- *"Gas price in China is cheaper than the price here. But there is not much difference in the way of service or payment."*
- *"Gas price in Taiwan is cheaper than here, but the services are both very convenient. However, gas price here changes frequently, it's now even dearer than my electricity cost."*
- *" I don't know the price in China now, so I can't compare. But the gas connection fee is very expensive when the property needs long pipes to connect with the gas point."*

Where does gas sit in the business budget or bill management?

Many participants stated they were very sensitive to fluctuations in cost. All require gas for cooking and preparing large quantities of food, or they prefer to use gas. For others, they feel the price of gas is less variable, or expensive than electricity. There was a variety of scale of users across the interviews.

- *"At the moment, it is less sensitive than electricity price."*
- *"It's less sensitive than the electricity price. If the gas price goes up it would decrease my profitability."*
- *""It is a small amount in my budget."*
- *"Gas cost takes a very big part of my business's running cost. I am very sensitive to the price of gas; price increase will greatly impact my standard of living and future of my business."*
- *"Regardless gas price, I am happy with gas service. It's very convenient to use gas."*

When asked at what point would the gas bill prompt participants to change their lifestyle, a range of $100-$20 was touted, with most at the $100-$50 range.

Understandably, participants acknowledged small businesses would be more sensitive to price shock.

- *"The cost increase has a negative impact on the operation of small businesses."*
- *"I think all shop need cost management."*
- *"I feel the price increasing always not good."*
- *"Because gas is still cheaper than electricity, I will continue to use gas."*
- *"I'm very sensitive to the price, if the price increase, it would be burden."*
- *"Sensitive to any price. We need gas to run so there is not much control even if goes up..."*

What about appliances?

When asked about what would influence their decision about replacement of appliances and whether to stay or leave gas?

Cost of appliances influences many participants decisions about whether to say or leave the gas network. Many participants indicated their costs were seasonal. Others indicated their appliances were used daily and had no seasonal effect.

- *"It will go $50 higher"*
- *"Our appliances are needed daily - no seasonal effect"*
- *"If broken or too expensive suddenly"*

Many of the businesses interviewed use gas for kitchen appliances, or within specialist cooking. Others were highly reliant on gas as an energy source or prefer gas due to the price or preferred it in the cooking process.

- *"Near top as needed to run business"*
- *"Cooktop and oven"*
- *"Gas was already there..."*
- *"Grills, oven fryer and flat grill"*
- *"I have a stove, an oven and four Chinese woks. They are around four to five years old. I chose gas appliance because they are more efficient. I would only replace my appliance when they are too old or not working properly. I think I will need gas for my business anyway."*
- *"Sensitive to any price. We need gas to run so there is not much control even if goes up."*
- *"I have one big bread oven, four Chinese woks and one deep frying pan. They are around 26 years old now which I choose when I start my business. I wouldn't replace them for electrical ones, because the new appliances will cost a lot of money, electricity is not cheap as well."*

What about outages?

Many were satisfied with the current state of the timing and duration of outages. Most participants had never experienced an outage. One participant had experienced an outage and recommended the Jemena number be displayed in a prominent location near the gas metre, because of the infrequency of use. Like the other groups, the retailer was their first port of call, and it took them a while to realise it was Jemena they should contact.

- *"I'd recommend Jemena to provide customer service centre number beside gas metre, this is particularly helpful when we have emergency."*
- *"About 3-4 years ago, I had gas leaking one day. It took me quite a while to contact Origin, then find out it's Jemena which I should contact. Now since the incident was long time ago. If same thing happens, I will have to get all the trouble to find out that number again."*
- *"I am very happy with my current experience. I'd never had any service interruptions."*

- Understandably in many other countries the gas provider also issues the bills, so this is a point of confusion for people who have only been living in Australia a few years, as demonstrated by the comment below:
- *"In China, our gas provider also issues bills, so I thought it's also my gas bill company supplies my gas. I don't know about Jemena."*

What about regional users?

The CALD businesses were mostly ambivalent if there should be a difference offered in the serve levels or price offered to regional areas. This could indicate the experience of these businesses being based in metro areas and limited experience or awareness of the differences in services. One believed it should be higher, perhaps due to the distances involved! Another interviewed believes it should be lower!

- *"I'm not sure. "*
- *"I don't know."*
- *"I have no idea."*
- *"I think price offered to regional areas should be the same. They shouldn't be disadvantaged due to their location."*
- *"I think price offered to regional areas should be a little bit higher."*

What about new connections?

Similar to the question asked at the gas deliberative forums and study circles, this question asked about customers who were connecting to the gas network for the first time. The question was, should they have to make an upfront cost, should this be the whole cost, part of the cost, or none at all? There was a range of views ascertained through participants in answer to this question - ranging from no opinion, to company pays, to share the costs. Many thought it should be shared across the customer base.

- *"Since a customer have to pay the fee continuously after connecting, I prefer that the customer does not pay for the initial installation."*
- *"I think the installation cost should be borne by the company."*
- *"I think customers don't want to pay."*
- *"Should be free"*
- *"Should connect with no charge"*
- *"Partially share the cost."*
- *"It seems like customer or company need a government subsidy like an electrical facility."*
- *"Customer pay some costs"*.
- *"I want to be paid by Gas company full payment for the connecting."*
- *"Not sure how the line goes but maybe shared within the network fairly "*
- *"I think gas equipment must already be installed to use gas. I think the cost should be paid by the gas company"*

- *"Only pay for gas usage"*
- *"Payment across the term of contract"*
- *"The upfront cost should be spread out through the contract term to reduce the impact of setting the business."*
- *"New customers who wish to connect to gas network for the first time should pay part of connection cost. Gas company can pay the other half. I think this is fairer way because gas company would like to attract customers too."*

What about renovations?

There were a range of responses to this question. It was asked, when customers are renovating, with the disconnection and reconnection to the gas network, who should pay (and how should the costs be recovered)? Participants ranged from the area of the 'user pays' camp, particularly if the disconnection is temporary, right through to the provider should pay as a reward for customer loyalty, as demonstrated by the comments below.

- *"New customers who wish to connect to gas network for the first time should make an upfront cost for the whole connection cost. But for existing customers who temporally disconnect and reconnect, there should be no service charge."*
- *"I think customer does not have to pay until the gas reconnect from the point the gas disconnected, and customer have to pay from the reconnection point as the starting point."*
- *"The cost recovery should be shown on the invoice after connection"*
- *"I prefer paid by gas company full payment."*
- *"If the customer does a renovation, I think the customer should pay for it."*
- *"During renovation the customer is still responsible for existing connection."*
- *"For existing customers who temporally disconnect and reconnect, it can be done in the same way as new customer. It's fair for everybody."*

Notes on User Pays

It was noted some of these interviews the outcomes were mixed around the user pays scenarios, and with slightly different outcomes and feedback. For example, with the cost of new connections, and the cost of connection and disconnections whilst renovating, many believed they shouldn't have to pay anything. Some were from countries where the connection fees were paid for by the company and believed the company should bear it all. Others agreed that the customer could pay something. Please note the 1:1 interviews were a slightly different research technique compared to the other consultations methods and so could be a contributing factor. Here's some examples of the sentiment:

- *"Yes as Jemena mentioned the background from home, there is no such connect/disconnect term. It's my experience too, if any other reason to pay it would have been very small amount (Iraq)."*
- *"First of all, in Korea, most of the residents have no experience of having to pay for the installation because the gas facilities are already installed. The purpose of the answer is that the initial installation is the concept of invest by the supplier therefore the company or the government will have to bear the*

cost. Renovating on the other hand, is a customer's choice, reason and convenience therefore a customer needs to pay or partially pay."

- *"In my belief, for renovation, it should be considered as a loyalty to their Gas providers, so they don't have to pay when renovating".*
- *"I have had enough of connect / disconnect fees, the company should pay that, as we are going to be one of their customers..."*

7. PHONE CALL / VIDEOCONFERENCE WITH CUSTOMERS

Introduction

Straight Talk conducted a focus group via videoconference in August with seven participants from five communities to specifically test the following options:

- Seek feedback on the write-up from the first two sessions and whether this was an accurate representation of what we heard
- Seek feedback on the draft customer priorities and the wording of these
- Seek feedback for the options to be tested at forum three and how this might work.

This document is a summary of the themes discussed and the feedback gleaned.

Major themes

Building trust

Participants felt that Jemena had taken major steps to address customer needs by hosting the forums and that they had a responsibility to the people of NSW as the infrastructure providers.

- *"Jemena is in a trust position for the NSW people as a regulated body. You are entrusted with our infrastructure – it belongs to everybody."*
- *"If only more companies did this."*

Focus on The Impact on Communities

When considering what was to be covered in forum three in terms of impact on the bill, in terms of incremental amounts proposed, for example $2 or $7 annually, participants felt as long as they had an idea of the broader impact not just on their household, but on the community, over many years, then this would a way of making the conversation relatable and receiving meaningful feedback about future bill pricing. They felt the activities in forum three should reflect this and be communicated in a way that talked about impact in a broader way, over a long period of time.

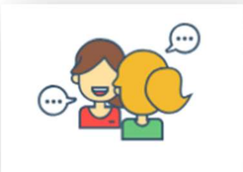
- *"As long as there's transparency, it's clearly…that's what you're aiming for, so, then we've decided to do this, and why…if you come to me with those figures I would say, no big deal."*
- *"However, ultimately it has the same impact on me, as an individual, than it does on as a community as a whole, and I think, for me it needs to be presented in a way for people where they see the individual impact, and the impact on a community as a whole"*
- *"Maybe put forward that it is only $2 per person, then that as a whole it's hundreds of millions of dollars…"*

Authenticity and Transparency

Participants appreciated the level of honesty, openness and transparency throughout the process and really thought this to be hugely impactful. Most agreed that increasing awareness about gas and the education of how the gas supply chain works has been important in their own personal customer journey.

- *"I think that by having those statements and the forums that you guys are doing, it ensures that the community and the people that are there but also the Jemena are making those decisions based on their customers' needs. (…) I think that what it does, it's almost an assurance that you guys have made those decisions based on what the customers are telling are important, not just on your own business model, and what's important to the business and to the growth and the profit or whatever it might be."*
- *"I think in terms of being transparent, I think it's really important."*
- *"Well, honestly? I had never thought about the future of gas until I turned up to this forum."*

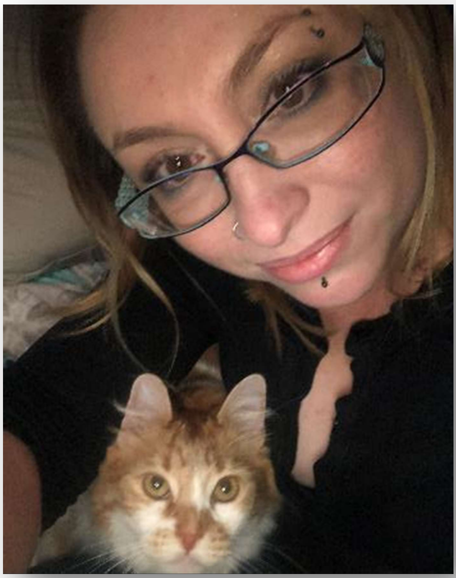
Using Simple Language That Is Understood

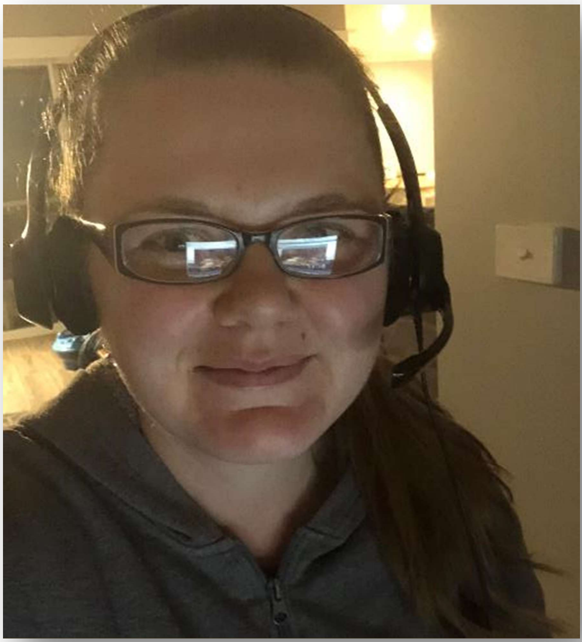


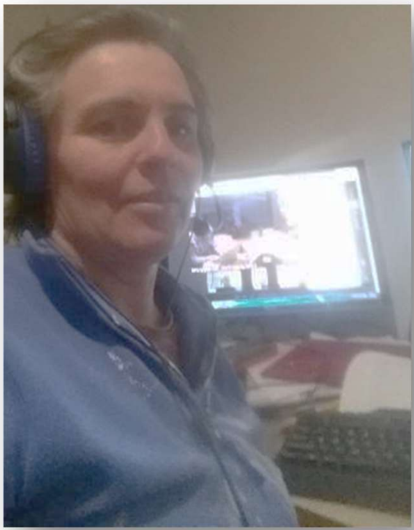
Participants agreed that the customer priorities tested at this session needed to be revised to accurately reflect what customer said. Some went as far as suggesting they used customer language and making sure this is reflected.

- *"If you change the language from what it is now, I don't think it will represent the way customers talk. I think it's written in the views of what I've heard."*
- *"I think the language or accuracy needs to be rewritten so it reflects what we said"*
- *"This is ensuring the future of Jemena as well. If you provide a product without giving any consideration to your customers, then you are ultimately over time you'll lose them because they're not front and centre and what we've talked about in all the forums"*

A transcript of the customer call will be available in the appendix. The following includes images from the call.



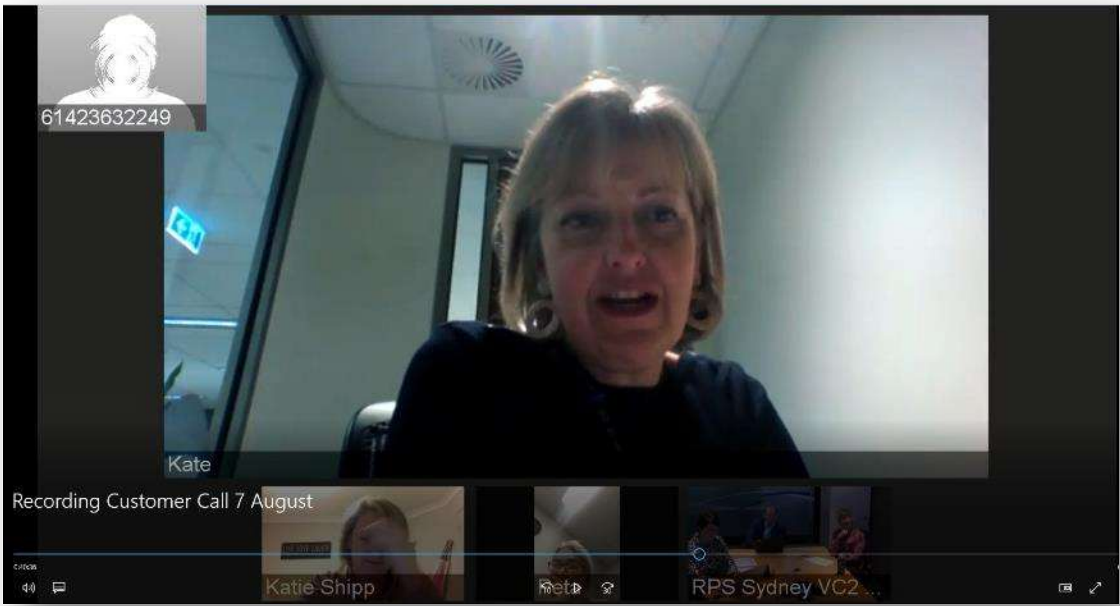





61423632249
Peta
Katie Shipp
Kate


RPS Sydney VC2 - Pitt St meeting room 4
Recording Customer Call 7 August
Katie Shipp
Kate
Peta


61413767272
LIVE LOVE LAUGH
Katie Shipp
RPS Sydney VC2 ...
Kate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Recording Customer Call 7 August
Katie Shipp
RPS Sydney VC2 ...

8. CUSTOMER COUNCIL CONSULTATIONS

Introduction

This outlines the engagement and consultation with the Customer Council throughout the timeframe of this project, in particular, on Thursday 28 June. These sessions consisted of updates and presentations on the consultation themes so far, seeking feedback and perspectives on what had arisen in the consultation sessions, and seeking future directions across the engagement program.

Top themes

Prioritisation of key service attributes

When asked about the key service attributes attendees had ranked between price, reliability, safety, environment, customer service, aesthetic and fairness, the attendees agreed that different customers would want different things.

- *"Most mass market customers do not understand reliability and associated cost, may want to split into separate groups."*
- *"Customer service – there is confusion with retailer."*
- *"Separate price and reliability – split to get better feedback."*
- *"Very good idea to revisit this is future!"*
- *"Put questions to customers, deep conversations, ranking questions, discount safety and aesthetics."*

Energy choice in the home

It was noted that customers still see gas and electricity as discrete choices, and gas is cheaper than electricity. The feedback on the energy choices included thoughtful feedback on the way the service worked, the way the conversation would run, and when a hot water system breaks for instance, rushing to replace without assessing the implications Some of the comments on this are as follows:

- *"Useful to understand grassroots voice."*
- *"This is a tricky conversation to do well."*
- *"The bill and the service received"*
- *"When gas hot water breaks – not sure if customers think through the economics of this before making the decision."*

Price path options and your bill, and a fair way of managing uncertainty

Discussion of the price path and the way for households to manage uncertainty, the bills, the group discussed various aspects of feedback. Many indicated it would be good for customers to see projections of how their bill would appear in future, to see exactly how these items impacted the household bills. Some believed it would be easier for customers to absorb to see this hard and demonstrable data.

- *"Bundled?"*
- *"Easier topics for consumer"*
- *"Connections? How does this look on the bill?"*

Funding Research and Development

The discussions around Research and Development centred on the fact that customers expressed surprise when Jemena indicated that they spent very little on research and development. Some of the feedback related to the complexity of the situation and how it may need to be linked back to bill path or bill outcomes.

- *"R&D Part of doing business and part of sustainable competitive advantage so don't share?"*
- *"Part of lean competitive company should do it"*
- *"Relate to bill outcomes"*
- *"Very important to provide bill impact context / who pays"*
- *"Should shareholders or customers pay? Mostly they are telling us shareholders should."*
- *"How does this connect to bill outcomes, what does this mean for me?"*
- *"75 years – the future is no longer certain."*

Changes to High Rise Metering Market

Understanding the customer impacts of the high-rise metering market and what customer protections and changes would be required if they were to be within an imbedded network. Many of the customer council members agreed this subject was complex and that legislation would be needed to protect the consumer. Some comments that suggest this are as follows:

- *"Tricky content, really tricky."*
- *"[articulating] protections important. Legislation, embedded vs normal. Would this be useful? [It's an] Interesting one to talk about."*
- *"Not sure many people would choose EN if presented w/ current lack thereof!"*

Impact of a 'Just in Time' Asset Management Approach

Jemena team floated the themes of the consultation proposed for forum three, one example being in terms of asking for feedback on their approach for recovering the costs of investment and the timeframes. These are what would become the options of 'maintain 50 years recovery' or 'speed up recovery over 30 years' within forum 3Some of the Customer Council thought that it would be complex to explain to everyday customers, however, others thought an intergenerational approach would be one way of making sure themes were understood.

- *"Intergenerational fairness [is a] key angle. For example, how would this impact your children and grandchildren?"*
- *"Very hard for customers to understand"*

9. DELIBERATIVE FORUMS - OVERALL

WHO DID WE SPEAK TO AND WHERE DID WE GO?

We spoke with randomly selected Jemena household customers over May, June and August September, across the five communities of Griffith, Goulburn, Western Sydney, Newcastle and Bathurst. This section details the overall activity results, and some of the insights as to why participants voted the way they did, in a quick-glance format.

WHAT WE HEARD

Throughout forums 1, 2 and 3, household customers were exposed to an increasingly immersive series of deliberative questions designed to test and challenge, and deal with the very 'big' issues including decisions on millions of dollars of expenditure. On this front we were encouraged to see that forum attendees participated whole-heartedly and in a highly engaged manner.

Participants reached these conclusions as individuals and as a group and felt confident in their decisions because they had time to weigh up all the options and presented with the information and data. Some of the arguments we heard for and against each recommendation included:

FORUM THREE

Rethinking our Future Investments

Option 1: Big Pipes

Some participants were more conservative in their estimates than others to ensure the security fort the network. Others saw their communities still growing and the need to plan for that growth. Some cited the future costs of investment as reason to invest now.

- "More conservative approach appears better for everyone"
- "The right choice to be cautious"
- "50: because I think there's a higher probability that the gas network will thrive – people prefer gas for cooking, electricity prices are rising too much."
- "I think we still need infrastructure – we do need to plan for that growth – immigration still there."
- 'I support a conservative approach to investment. In saying that I don't think either option is right or wrong. Both present different challenges."

Option 2: Small Pipes

Many participants felt that investing upfront would be worthwhile for the future direction of the network, or that it was cheaper in the long run. Some felt the future was still unknown and so this was the reason they picked this option as an insurance policy or 'hedge' against uncertainty.

- "Price difference but worth more in long run"
- "It is still a gamble"
- "There is a lot of uncertainty in the future"

The votes are indicated below:

To help manage future uncertainty around the long-term viability of the network, JGN should change its asset investment strategy to plan for a shorter-term window (10 years) rather than assuming that customers will always use gas, and that the network has a secure long-term future.

	Goulburn	Griffith	Western Sydney	Bathurst	Newcastle	Total
Rethinking our future investments						
Option 1: Big Pipes	75%	64%	82%	39%	100%	72%
Option 2: Small Pipes	25%	36%	18%	61%	0%	28%

A New Approach to Recovering the Cost of Gas Pipes

Speed Up Recovery over 30 years

Some participants cited intergenerational fairness and being agile in response to changes as their reasons for speeding up recovery over 30 years. Others thought this recovery could mean more time and resources into researching future technologies.

- "30 year is a more measured approach so much change is coming"
- "Happy to give up something for my grandchildren to have a better life"
- "Quicker recovery would allow to look into the changes and R&D"

Maintain 50 years recovery

A couple of participants were wary of policy changes directing the timeframes for recovery or thought that gas would be used in the longer-term, and thus supported these as their reasons for maintaining the 50-year approach.

- "Reason didn't do 30 years – set by government, a bit cynical about whether that won't change"
- "I prefer gas and think people will be using gas in future"

- *"Carbon tax and government policy – how would this impact the future?"*

The votes are indicated below:

To help manage uncertainty around long-term viability of JGN's gas network, JGN should recover money spent on new pipes.

	Goulburn	Griffith	Western Sydney	Bathurst	Newcastle	Total
A New Approach to Recovering the Cost of Gas Pipes						
Option 2: Speed up recovery over 30 years	75%	64%	82%	83%	94%	81%
Option 1: Maintain 50 years recovery	25%	36%	18%	17%	6%	19%

Bill Path

Option 1: Steady as you go

Many participants felt that having certainty in the household budget counted for a lot, being able to plan, and feeling a responsibility for the future. Consistency was part of that.

- *"There's a lot of people take having certainly and comfort coming your way"*
- *"Steady bill – you know where you are at"*
- *"If you had a reduction in Year 1, you would just spend it. Better to have steady as you go"*

Option 2: Pressure off early

The minority of participants who thought the pressure off early option was preferable cited a preference for Jemena to keep the funds and reinvest it, and some were concerned that the retailer would not pass this saving on:

- *"Why not just keep it and reinvest it? Personally, I'd like you to keep it and reinvest"*
- *"Can't see [retailer] passing on reduction"*

The votes are indicated below:

JGN should phase its prices to achieve a smooth as possible retail bill path for customers between 2020-2025.

	Griffith	Goulburn	WS	Newcastle	Bathurst	Total average
Bill Path						
Option 1: Steady as you go	100%	100%	100%	94%	89%	96%
Option 2: Pressure off Early	0	0%	0	6%	11%	4%

FORUMS ONE AND TWO

In forum two, there were several open response questions asked that participants were asked to deliberate on and form their feedback on around fairness, the future pipes, costs of new connections, depreciation, vulnerable customers and instantaneous hot water. This was recorded as coding responses and comments as well as tally on tables, which captured overall the sentiment of participants. These findings are included below as percentages.

Q1: With uncertainty whether our pipes will actually be used beyond 2050, would it be fairer for current customers to pay more for new investments we make on the network relative to future customers?

After deliberation and discussion, in general forum attendees agreed across their tables that yes, this would be fair. A third of attendees want more information in order to decide. A selection of comments are included in the forum summaries. Please note this is included as a count total instead of percent, due to participants having multiple opinions on this topic.

	Griffith	Goulburn	Western Sydney	Newcastle	Bathurst	Total
Yes - Fair	**19**	**19**	**10**	**13**	**13**	**91**
No - Not fair	8	1	2	3	1	15
Communications and transparency comment	0	0	0	3	0	8
Undecided / need more information	4	10	7	2	3	27

Q2: Would it be fairer for new customers to contribute to the cost of their connection, when in the past they haven't had to contribute?

The majority of forum participants agreed that yes, it would be fair. Attendees compared this to practices in other industries, though they were concerned about the potential consequence of fewer people joining the gas network, and the subsequent impact on prices. Please note this is included as a count total instead of percent, due to participants having multiple opinions on this topic.

	Griffith	Goulburn	Western Sydney	Newcastle	Bathurst	Total
Yes - Fair	**12**	**15**	**15**	**22**	**28**	**105**
No - Not fair	5	3	6	10	9	34

Incentive suggestion	6	8	8	1	5	28
Undecided / need more information	4	3	5	5	4	22

Q3: Is it fair that everyone pays a little more to help fund programs led by Jemena to assist vulnerable gas customers? *

(*Note: Q3 asked in Griffith, Goulburn, Study Circles and Western Sydney only)

Generally, across all communities, although narrow majority answered yes, other answers were split into thirds between no – not fair, and identifying who is vulnerable, as you can see from the detail below, **and the overall theme was ensuring those who were vulnerable got the most benefit (**for example, selection **criteria).** This question did not have sufficient customer support to consider taking it forward in further consultation. Please note this is included as a count total instead of percent, due to participants having multiple opinions on this topic.

	Griffith	Goulburn	Western Sydney	Total
Yes - Fair	**23**	**8**	**21**	**61**
No - Not fair	16	3	2	21
Identify who is vulnerable	6	2	10	20
Undecided / need more information	8	3	10	28

Q4: Is it fair that the pressure in the network is lower in some areas than others meaning some customers can't use modern gas appliances, specifically hot water?

Many attendees needed more questions answered and more information prior to deciding on this. After deliberation, four of the six forums agreed no, this was not fair, that upgrades should happen because everyone should get the same service, however a third of respondents overall thought that yes, it was fair, provided households were made aware of the poor pressure prior to moving into the area. Please note this is included as a count total instead of percent, due to participants having multiple opinions on this topic.

	Griffith	**Goulburn**	**Western Sydney**	**Newcastle**	**Bathurst**	**Total**
No - Not fair	8	7	23	19	13	73
Yes - Fair	**5**	**7**	**7**	**8**	**7**	**37**
This is a complex question and I need more information and education	6	3	23	8	13	60

10. DELIBERATIVE FORUM - GRIFFITH

WHO DID WE SPEAK TO?

We spoke with randomly selected participants on 12 and 19 May and 25 August 2018 who are demographically representative of the Griffith area, including attendees from the nearby communities of Leeton and Narrandera.

THEMES

Authentic Listening

Participants stated they valued hearing from Jemena employees and the knowledge that was shared.

- *"Love how Jemena are interested in what the consumers concerns are and what is important to them"*
- *"That Jemena care what we thought"*

Fairness

Participants enjoyed debating the concepts of fairness at Griffith and felt that they would be more accepting of a fee increase if there was transparency of use. They also felt regional areas should have the same service level as the metropolitan areas:

- *"To take off pressure, bills could perhaps be more upfront about where the money is being distributed - used on. I would certainly be more accepting of the fee increase knowing it was fair and worthwhile."*
- *"Consistent maintenance/supply for regional areas – want same level of service that city dwellers get"*
- *"Fairness in price – to make sure country pays the same as city"*

Voting preferences for the forums two and three can be found in the deliberative forums - overall results chapter. Preferences on how participants use gas in their homes, their household bills and appliance preference can be found in the mid-summary report.

Workshop feedback

Overall there was a **very high** level of satisfaction with the workshop process with most scores being 4 and above out of 5 (where 5 equalled strongly agree and 1 equalled strongly disagree). Participants particularly valued the professionalism of the Some of the comments that demonstrate this are below:

- *'It was excellent, and enjoyable'*
- *'Having an opportunity to discuss my opinions and to test my opinions with interesting information'*
- *'The information I got from this workshop was awesome'*
- *'I have learnt a lot about energy which has been very interesting'*

11. DELIBERATIVE FORUM - GOULBURN

WHO DID WE SPEAK TO?

We conducted workshops with demographically representative participants in forums held on Saturday 12, 19 May and 25 August 2018, hailing from Goulburn and surrounding farming communities into the Southern Highlands.

THEMES:

Fairness and sharing views

Some participants indicated they changed their view over the course of the sessions on fairness - through sharing views with others that were different to their own. Many were surprised at all the different views across the group.

- *'Some people can afford it and some people can't.'*
- *'Continue to seek feedback from customers.'*

Price and Affordability

Participants mentioned affordability and price were key, however they were also focused on paying now for capital expenditure for the benefit of future generations, and remaining responsive to future participants:

- *'Jemena to remain flexible while keeping the consumer stable.'*
- *'Affordability stimulates future growth.'*

Voting preferences for forums two and three can be found in the deliberative forums - overall results chapter. Preferences on how participants use gas in their homes, their household bills, and appliance preference can be found in the mid-summary report, in the appendix.

Workshop feedback

Overall there was a very **high level** of satisfaction with the workshop process with majority of participants rating all aspects well above 4 in a 5-point rating scale (where 5 equalled strongly agree and 1 strongly disagree). Attendees had the following to say and were thoughtful about the forum process and outcomes.

- *'Be careful with analogies and how they translate to us. For example – using 'Big Pipe' and 'Small Pipe' steered my thoughts to the actual installation of pipes, this hindered my decision process and I had to reconsider later'*
- *'That I may have some small input into helping Jemena in their submission to the AER'*
- *'The 'dotmocracy' committing people to make a decision'*

12. DELIBERATIVE FORUM - WESTERN SYDNEY

WHO DID WE SPEAK TO?

We hosted participants demographically representative of Western Sydney, on Saturday 26 May, 2 June, and 8 September 2018. Participants were from Toongabbie, Epping, North Parramatta, Harris Park, Ryde and Seven Hills plus Baulkham Hills. A mix of age groups, genders and household types, participants languages spoken at home included Hindi, Malayalm, Teleguau, Bengali, Vietnamese, Russian, Phillipino, Chinese and Bangoli.

THEMES

Learning and education

Participants reflected on their learning about priorities, gas, gas pricing, and production over the course of the sessions. They also indicated they potentially take the gas service for granted.

- '*Fairness for future generation – long term view*'
- '*I learnt a lot of new things and that it is hard to make some of these decisions*'
- '*A great deal better informed regarding gas supply as opposed to the retailer marketing information*'

Transparency

This theme emerged across many comments. Participants agreed that in relation to operational and capital expenditure, as well as treatment of vulnerable customers, transparency was key. Some comments on this topic:

- '*I don't mind companies making profit, but at the end of the day it should be fair*'.
- '*Visibility to improve familiarity*'
- "*I appreciate that a company actually values real customer feedback enough to hold a session like this.*"

Voting preferences for forums two and three can be found in the deliberative forums - overall results chapter. Preferences on how participants use gas in their homes, their household bills, and appliance preference can be found in the mid-summary report, in the appendix.

Workshop feedback

Overall, there was a **high** level of satisfaction with the process, with participants rating all aspects on average 4.7 out of 5. On average, participants stated they trusted Jemena more than before as 4.6 this scale, also. Participants were particularly impressed with the venue, the workshop structure and the honesty.

- '*I really like this workshop, it was clearly thought out information to present and easier to process*'
- '*The honesty and valuable information*'

13. DELIBERATIVE FORUM - NEWCASTLE

WHO DID WE SPEAK TO?

We spoke with demographically representative participants from across Newcastle and surroundings such as East Maitland, Hamilton, Windale, Mayfield, Bar Beach and Charlestown on Saturday the 16 and 23 June and on 22 September 2018.

THEME

Fairness

Participants focused strongly on the outcomes of decisions and flow-on effects to vulnerable customers. There was a lot of discussion as to how they would cope with any changes into the future. This also included any adaptation to new technologies, and location in the network, as demonstrated by the below.

- "*Consider the vulnerable when transitioning to hydrogen – maintain their reliability*"
- "*Relates to fairness – same service regardless of location*"

Affordability

Forum attendees focused on the needs of low-income earners and for Jemena to be mindful of this when planning the future of the network, as well as major decisions related to the future renewal and infrastructure in the network. Others were of the view that prices could be spread out as much as possible. Some of the comments related to this are included below:

- "*People on low incomes need to be able to afford gas*"
- "*Spread costs as far as possible to keep the prices as smooth as possible*"

Voting preferences for forums two and three can be found in the deliberative forums - overall results chapter. Preferences on how participants use gas in their homes, their household bills, and appliance preference can be found in the mid-summary report, in the appendix.

Workshop feedback

Overall, there was a **very high level** of satisfaction with the workshop process, with an average of 4.7 out of 5 across all the aspects of the workshop (where 5 is strongly agree and 1 is strongly disagree). Participants were particularly impressed by Jemena's willingness to engage with customers and their simple and understanding approach to educating customers. Some comments that demonstrate this are below:

- '*Jemena's approach to considering the opinions of the community. Business model vs interests of consumer*'
- '*It was clear and easily understood. Wouldn't change a thing*'

14. DELIBERATIVE FORUM - BATHURST

WHO DID WE SPEAK TO?

We spoke with participants reflective of the community of Bathurst and surrounds on the 23 and 30 June, and the 22 September. The group included participants from surrounding communities such as Orange, Millthorpe, Windradyne, Wallerawang and Gormans Hill. Some participants also hailed from the newer estates and areas of Bathurst, including Kelso.

THEME

Thirst for knowledge

Participants really threw themselves into the topic area and had really insightful feedback and questions. As an indicator, they came up with many complex questions for the team to answer which ranged from use of blockchain to Jemena's approach to fairness. Many participants had a personal interest in energy and one participant had gone as far as developing an energy comparison spreadsheet of their own! Participants also valued the need for genuine conversations, communications and marketing. There were reflections on government policies on future direction of the energy markets and the level of conservatism or risk towards future renewals or infrastructure investments. Some indicative comments are included below:

- '*Jemena does what it can to facilitate a reliable service to all in the community, irrespective of social position*'
- '*Truth in marketing*'
- '*Carbon tax and government policy -how would this impact the future?*'

Voting preferences for forums two and three can be found in the deliberative forums - overall results chapter. Preferences on how participants use gas in their homes, their household bills, and appliance preference can be found in the mid-summary report, in the appendix.

Workshop feedback

Overall, there was a **very high level** of satisfaction with the workshop process, with an average of 4.8 out of 5 across all the aspects of the workshop (where 5 is strongly agree and 1 is strongly disagree). Participants valued the facilitation, the venue and opportunities to participate in an engaging and appropriate way. Some of the comments outlining this are as follows:

- '*The workshop was concise and timely. There is not much I can suggest to improve it. I've enjoyed learning about the future of gas!*'
- '*The fact that to me, Jemena values our opinion in how we receive and pay for our gas and how we think about the consequences.*'

15. VOLUME BOUNDARY METRES RETIREMENT LIVING

INTRODUCTION

Straight Talk as part of RPS conducted a consultation involving a group of elderly residents from Woolooware Shores, at Woolooware, and Donald Robinson Village, at Taren Point. These are both Anglicare retirement living communities located in the Sutherland Shire. The consultation was located at the Kirrawee facility within the community centre, in August 2018. The main objectives of the consultation were to:

- Understand resident's experiences with using gas, challenges with billing
- Agree ground rules, working together, build trust and connect with each other as a group
- Introduce and explain who and what Jemena is
- Work through key issues of fairness and costs, understand personal experiences of financial security and insecurity, understand motivations, barriers and challenges amongst retirement living communities regarding gas and power costs
- Understand attitudes to Volume Boundary Metering or Embedded Networks
- Help residents understand, plan for and adapt to rising power and gas costs.
- The consultation in addition to the mix of residents, also hosted one employee from Anglicare, five Jemena staff who answered technical questions and were note takers, and two Straight Talk team members. This report documents some of the key themes, supported by quotes from participants themselves.

Key Themes

Consider the Needs of Elderly Customers

Although older customers are well advocated for through Council of the Ageing and other industry bodies, participants emphasised the need for Jemena to consider the needs of elderly customers who may have disabilities or other concerns about negotiating with the retailers. They were concerned their views are not heard within the wider customer base community and the customer service was not set up to properly address their concerns. Some comments that support this are as follows:

- *"The clientele, a lot of people don't know where to start – one of the issues you must take with you is that facilities like ours require intensive care."*
- *"I was told to get on my hands and knees to read the metre, I'm an older person and I refuse to do it."*
- *"But if you're 85 – we didn't come here to spend hours on the phone and the point is this generates anxiety; concern and they worry about this. Someone got a $6k bill at one stage, all sorts of problems."*

First Time Users

Many participants had not a great deal of experience with gas prior to moving into the retirement community and were comparing their prices against electric off peak and cheaper gas prices a few years ago. Some participants were dismayed at the big rise in their gas bill since moving into residential care. Many realised the issues were due to inefficiencies in the central hot water systems but were keen to have their say on this issue. Some found the billing proportion process very confusing. Some of the comments that describe this sentiment are below:

- *"I was all electric before I moved. I couldn't work out at the time how they proportioned the bill. Reply to letter 6 months in, fluctuations common factor. Each village has* *own hot water on roof, share proportion and that is supposedly the common factor as people moved in the common factor dropped by about 6. The original hot water system, copper pipes are not logged, losing a lot of heat. It accounts to 15 min per day on average showerhead, or 6.5 min between the two of us. It came as a bit shock – more than paying with electric on peak or off peak."*

- *"I haven't had any experience with gas until we moved in here. Horrified, much higher bill, and we had a bill much higher than at home which had a heated pool. (...) when we divided by the number of charges it worked out I was paying 1.24 minute which is excessive."*
- *"I don't want to spend my life on the phone – but you don't know what the new rate is, it's like betting on the greyhounds"*

Billing Issues

Many attendees had experienced billing issues and mistakes around billing. Some got estimated reads, despite meter datalogger being in place. Others had experienced a big rise in gas bill since moving into residential care. Residents felt this was confusing and time consuming and that the village administration could not advocate on their behalf due to privacy concerns.

- *"When I came from Melbourne, I didn't get a gas bill the January through to October. Then my gas bill was $1,137. I contacted the ombudsman, they ruled it should be $800. Then it went from $92 to $432. It turned out they had changed the metre in our unit from the one downstairs and hadn't coordinated – impacted everyone in our block."*
- *"We finally got a rebate of $200 now our bills are starting to creep up again"*
- *"When have bill issue - admin staff at retirement village try to help out but have privacy constraints and so cannot speak on behalf of residents. Had one case that took a year to resolve."*
- *"Electricity bills are higher than gas - but runs everything. Gas is just hot water and washing up. Feel like paying a lot for gas with limited usage."*

Their Experience in Retirement Living

Many users were from an all-electric background before moving to the retirement community village and were concerned about at the prices when they first moved in. Some participants enjoyed using gas however.

Many had little desire to switch retailers or seek a better deal, because of the administrative work involved, or barriers including early onset dementia, and felt they were disadvantaged when trying to negotiate competitive rates with retailers.

Some participants believed village management could be supported to resolve issues for them or that VBM would be the answer. Some participants were of the view that they had worked hard all their lives, and being new to gas, questioned why they should have to worry about these things in their retirement.

- *"Gas is the lesser of two evils"*
- *"As a particular company said, our burgers are better, I believe gas is better."*

- *"My son has two teenage girls who can't get out of the shower. What started me off was their bill for gas was the same as mine."*
- *"It's crazy – think of an aged care person, no family, early onset dementia (…) a lot of people are not cognisant of the bill. For 60 years, I never had a hassle, and come here and a lot of problems."*

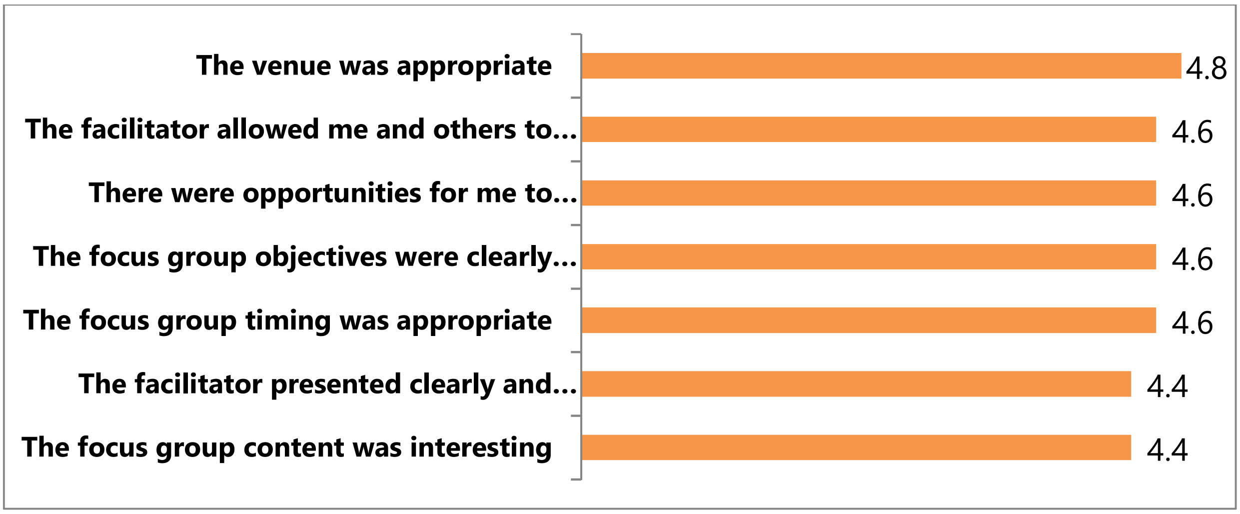
Volume Boundary Metre Feedback

Participants held a variety of views regarding the topic of volume boundary metres. This was a key question for the consultation, as with the over 55s community consultation held previously, participants were not supportive. However, in this group, majority of this group were supportive, as the village currently uses this method for water and agreed it was more efficient. They felt a similar procedure for gas would be extremely helpful for residents, except for one participant, who stated it would be unfair to residents who use less gas. The below demonstrates the range of views:

- *"A quantum saving in administrative time"*
- *"I can't understand why the gas can't be charged direct to the village"*
- *"we'd win from capital cost perspective"*
- " *Would be unfair to residents who use less gas. Don't want recurrent charges going up. Some better off and others worse off."*

Workshop Feedback

Overall, participants had a high level of satisfaction with the workshop content and delivery as demonstrated by the scores. Participants were most complimentary about the location (the fact that Jemena came to them!) saying they thought the venue was appropriate, and the facilitation, as the facilitator allowed all participants to have a say. Overall, scores ranged from 4.4-4.8 out of 5 (where 1 was not at all and 5 was strongly agree) in relation to the statements, with an average of 4.6 across all the scores. Please see below for the charting of the scores.



In terms of suggestions as to how the workshop could be improved, participants indicated the following:

- *"Could have had a bit more time"*
- *"No - it as excellent"*

In terms of what they most valued about the workshop, attendees cited the following:

- *"To find that we all have the same issues"*
- *"The opportunity to share our concerns"*
- *"Ability of participants given to present their problems"*
- *"A lot of dissatisfaction with 'estimated'"*
- *"People listened"*

Do you have any other comments about Jemena and household gas?

- *"Definitely need to improve their bill improve their billing process for DRV"*

16. SMALL MEDIUM BUSINESS ENTERPRISES - FOCUS GROUP SYDNEY

Introduction

The following provides a summary of the small business focus group representative of Western Sydney. This was run at the Sydney Group Rooms Parramatta, from 5-7pm on Thursday 24 May, 2018.

The format was slightly different to the deliberative forum style in that Jemena employees did not play an active role in educating and informing participants. The following report provides a summary of the key themes and the overall learnings. It was noted that due to a recruitment error, several participants had bottled gas, which highlighted the challenges of understanding the context and framing of the session. It also resulted in challenges interpreting customer concerns, as to whether they were related to levels of service in the network or other gas services.

This summary will help the team refine our process, to move forward to the next stage.

Key themes

Fixed Perceptions, Need for Education and awareness

Whilst participants had some views on elements of fairness, on the future of gas and pricing, it was clear that they needed more information prior to giving feedback. This was manifest through the conversation at the focus groups; topics needing education are the consumer gas sector and energy sector as a whole. Many participants had bottles gas, which further compounded the challenge of understanding the context, and made it difficult to interpret if some of their issues and concerns related to service levels in the network or with other gas services. Some participants felt strongly there was a need to focus on renewable energy in their businesses in the future, whilst others thought the technology was out of reach or not fully formed. Because the focus group didn't feature information that was featured at the deliberative forums and the study circles, participants became side tracked into various topics. Some of the comments that are examples of this are included below, particularly around the renewables issue:

- **[When asked about options for renewables]** "*My friend put solar panels in he's only getting $45 per quarter. Tesla is such a big thing happening right now, we are miles away. But the thing is they're charging you $100,000 for that single battery, which is ridiculous*".
- **[Misinformation about renewable technology]** "*I did have the opportunity to put solar power in, but I do worry, that it's such a new industry for Australia, the components of solar power and how*

they're going to have longevity. For 10 years, when they stop working and when they're going to be disposed of. When they go underground, they still smoke."

- **[Learning from other countries]** *"In China, the biggest industries---they all use solar. Everybody has to learn from somewhere."*

Similarly, participants wanted more details around future use of hydrogen, prior to deciding on this issue. Some participants responded fearfully. Others wanted more information. Some of the comments that demonstrate these different positions are below:

- **[more education]** *"It's an education isn't it. Does it burn better? Is it cheaper?"*
- **[uncertainty]** *"[I'm] not sure about that yet"*
- **[safety concerns]** *"If there's a leak in the pipe you're breathing in hydrogen"*
- *"[I'm worried about] the quality control", "Is there something to neutralise it?"*

Unfortunately, with the focus group format, there was insufficient time and resources to delve into education and hearing first-hand from the Jemena team. The structure of the deliberative forums and study circles allowed for this and these elements were focused on in future sessions.

Price Perceptions

There was agreement that gas pricing impacted small businesses, however the degree of this impact varied significantly between participants. The budget exercise indicated that overall businesses were used to gas coming fourth on the list of expenses. Some ups and downs had been experienced over the years. Some examples are included below:

- *"It's critical for our process that it's constantly there. We did have a few issues about 2 years ago, the price of gas was really increasing, and there was a possibility that the supply might be interrupted. So that concerned us because that would really cripple our business. Now that didn't eventuate - so we are always thinking how we can do something differently. So that's always in the back of our minds."*
- *"I don't expect it to be fixed forever and a day"*

Reliability

Participants had a generally good impression of gas supply, and were used to quality supply, well suited to a variety of business uses. Some were focused on gas as an instant 'on' source which is a point of difference. There were some who had experienced interrupted supply or loss of pressure who also recounted their experience:

- **[instant on]** *"It's instantaneous - doesn't need down time. I find with my ovens, I do a lot of baking - if you turn the gas on pilot, it can retain the heat, electricity doesn't. I would never to go electricity in commercial [cooking]"*
- **[loss of pressure]** *"We have noticed the pressure drops down sometimes"*
- **[value]** *"I find gas is quicker, better and cheaper"*
- **[describing the impact of loss of supply]** *"I've had jobs on - firing up the ovens, all self-ignited, click click, click click click, I'm thinking I'm going to pull my hair out if nothing happens, nothing coming,*

sometimes it's 10 minutes. Experienced first-hand loss of pressure. I rang because I'm with [distributor] and nothing to do with my lines - plumber come out, just no constant gas supply to my ovens. And if you can't get your ovens fired up and you have a really big job on you're in really big trouble."

How is gas currently used?

Businesses used gas in a variety of ways across various industries. For food related services, it was heating and cooking food, across industrial ovens, commercial kitchens, salamanders and stove tops. For others, heaters were used for employee comfort in the machinery and industrial environment, or for greenhouse growing conditions, and for personal services such as beauticians, heaters. For another attendee, gas is used as part of the manufacturing process to heat chemicals then reheating 4-5 times, then on-selling the product to BHP or mining companies. Use could be seasonal or fixed, depending on the nature of the business. It was noted that many participants had bottled gas, which added to the challenges of creating an understanding about the purpose of the consultation.

Where gas is placed in Business Operations

When asked, what if gas prices increase and where would they cut, the examples of answers were as follows:

- *"If gas goes up, it has to go down on other things, the first thing to go is staff and wages."*
- *"The only thing we can control is staff wages"*
- *"Work harder, pay more"*
- *"Rely on government policy, rely on tax cut"*
- *"Cut down on something else in your business; wages"*
- *"[We] would prioritise the increase"*
- *"Gas - compared to five years ago double"*
- *"We really have to use it. A must-have. That's why we were concerned because we saw our gas bill almost double. We were lucky we were under contract, so we wanted to secure a certain price for the next 2 years, and wanted to ensure we got adequate supply. So, we just had to pay."*

When asked what would happen if the gas price didn't increase, participants indicated the following:

- *"Pay directly, get a big discount"*
- *Discount through paying on time through the retailer*
- *"Just pocket the difference, put it into some capital"*
- *"I don't believe they would decrease the price (...) because it's life ---they always increase."*

Participants completed an activity where they categorised overall costs of the business by placing coins on an A3 sheet to demonstrate the proportion of spend against other categories. The numbers below represent the overall results.

Largest cost overall was staff wages and benefits, followed by marketing and promotions and premises rent or mortgage. Overall, gas appeared as the fourth largest cost on the list. Another budget category that wasn't listed but incurred by participants was water.

This is demonstrated by the table below, tallying the results.

Category	Total
Staff wages and benefits	38
Marketing and promotions	25
Premises rent / mortgage	21
Gas	21
Materials	20
Phone / internet	18
Transport	17
Electricity	17
Plant and Equipment	16
Insurances	15
Stock	15
Venue hire	14

** Note number totals used due to small base size*

Many participants prefer gas as a fuel source in the business and they see value in continuing to use it.

- *"I still prefer gas, it's cheap"*
- *"Clean"*
- *"Does the job"*

Sustainable energy

When asked how much a zero-carbon gas solution should be focused on in future by Jemena or others, on a scale of 1 to 10, just under half of the group were at the promoter end of the scale (either a 9 or 10)

<6	7-8	9-10
1	4	5

*numbers shown instead of percentages due to low base

A comment that supports this is below:

- *"It is important that we continuously strive to be efficient without harming our environment"*

Some participants had also used alternative forms of energy in their individual businesses including:

- Solar
- Battery
- Biodegradable

Perception of moving to alternative fuel sources and the implications are varied. Here are some examples below.

[on switching to solar] "*Very keen - have done a lot of research on it - it's better for our future. I don't know why Australia seems to be way behind. When the government came out with the rebate, we put in solar for two of our investment properties for electricity. We put it in, 2 of our electricity bills went down, so tenants happy to take a 25 increase in rent. So, they won in that respect and so did we. I'm only sorry that I did not put in hot water.*"

[on the costs of switching to solar] "*We had a lot people almost like snake oil charmers. So, we thought about it because we have a large roof space, because they maintain everything. Australia has a lot of opportunity for renewables, but I think the problem is that if you talk about electricity, talk about cheap sources of fuel, at the moment, it is coal. I know it's polluting and everything.*"

[On learning from other countries] "*In China, the biggest industries---they all use solar. Everybody has to learn from somewhere.*"

[On those left behind] "The government did all that stuff, some people have got the benefit, but we seem to be paying for it with higher charges."

Innovation fund

Many participants thought there should be a separate fund for innovation, research and development in the future. However, many participants in the room, reflecting on their own operations, incorporated innovation into their own business as an absorbed cost. One participant described how they segmented innovation as a specific part of business expenses with a dedicated budget. Others felt it should be big business helping small business with innovation---not government. An example comment is below:

- "*Innovation: It's thinking the smallest thing can turn into the biggest thing. Thinking about how we do things differently.*"

Who we Talked to - Demographics

Some businesses had both mains and bottled gas (for example, bottled gas used for forklifts, but mains gas for industrial processing). Due to a recruitment issue there were 3 exclusive bottled gas users. Participants were from a broad mix of businesses, with varying cultural backgrounds, ages, gender and locations. A variety of small businesses attended, as evidenced from the list below.

	Gender	Age	Postcode	Category	Role
1	Female	55-64 years	2151	Catering - food and beverage	Business Owner
2	Female	35-44 years	2147	Catering - food and beverage	Business Owner
3	Male	55-64 years	2077	Manufacturing	Chief Financial Officer
4	Male	45-54 years	2153	Real Estate and Finance	Principal
5	Male	55-64 years	2077	Property services	CEO
6	Female	25-34 years	2148	Glass Manufacturer	Administrator

	Gender	Age	Postcode	Category	Role
7	Female	45-54 years	2164	Wedding Industry	Manager
8	Male	45-54 years	2065	Financial services	Manager
9	Female	45-54 years	2154	Nursery / Plant Hire	Director
10	Female	35-44 years	2151	Beautician / makeup artist	Makeup artist
11	Male	35-44 years	2767	Personal Trainer	Manager
12	Female	35-44 years	2130	Cleaning and IT services	Business owner

Conclusion

From the results detailed in this memo, it appears there is a lot of misinformation, and lack of understanding around the future of gas.

As evidenced by some of the comments that were off topic or ill-informed, the team agreed that the complex issues around fairness, pricing and trade-offs could not be addressed adequately in the focus group format.

It was agreed by the project team that future consultations in this project will focus on the deliberative forum or study circle format. This will have the Jemena team in the room for more informed discussion.

This will allow for more incorporation of education, and more informed feedback, conversation and deliberation, therefore leading to an increased quality of feedback.

17. SMALL MEDIUM BUSINESS ENTERPRISES - FOCUS GROUP GRIFFITH

Introduction

We spoke to business owners from a variety of industries in the Riverina area on the 24 August 2018, covering retail, pool installation, interior design, agriculture (including feed and feedlot producers and fruit dehydration on a large scale), and representatives from the Prune Growers Association. Participants undertook a warm up activity where they detailed how they used gas in their business currently. The responses and feedback are included below:

How do you use gas in your business currently?

Participants stated a variety of uses including household, kitchen, Heating the store, Design pools for our customers, Cook and extrude animal foods. For large corporations and feed lots and agricultural retail, To dry prunes, Dehydration of prunes

Who are the end users?

There were many end users of the products ranging from developers, businesses, industrial operators, Customers and staff, Council, swim schools and residential customers, Agricultural consumers, nationwide as well as exporting, Retail consumers, national and export – USA

Who controls how gas is used?

Most often operators and owners of the business cited control. Others mentioned demand at present because of the drought. Our all year customers include dairy, beef, lamb, poultry and piggeries and a small segment in retail (e.g. dog food). There were also time pressures, for example seasonal and harvested produce to be processed within hours of harvesting 24/7

How is the gas distributed? What appliances are used?

Distribution was across stove, heating, boilers, residential, instantaneous. Feed 2 extruders producing pellets, Natural gas, computerised burners, through huge burners taking humidity out of the fruit.

Is your gas generally fixed or stable? Why or why not? Is your usage seasonal?

Many operated all year round and others were seasonal. Others indicated it was semi seasonal and temperature dependent. Summer low demand, winter high demand, generally fixed with seasonal spikes. Based on rain and seasonal conditions, Usage seasonal and dependent on crop yields, Seasonal, dry fruit when it's time.

Similarities

In terms of similarities across these businesses, it was noted as follows:

- The commercial pool installer doesn't use much gas. They do however play a role in recommending the pool heating systems
- Seasonality is common amongst participants. Retailers only us it in the winter for heating
- The interior design businesses use some gas, but it's more about accessing gas with the developers. Because there isn't gas mains access across the region, often it's easier for consumers to go with tank or cylinder gas.
- Participants had positive feedback regarding the Jemena technicians in the region:

> "*The staff technicians in the area are fantastic. They'll be proactive about asking how it's [the gas] is going. And always ready to answer questions. Could not fault technicians*"

Service

In terms of blackouts and service interruptions, there was only one participant who had experienced this. One of the agricultural producers was on the same pipe as a large winery and described it as follows:

> *[They] were on the same pipe – they would turn on a certain piece of machinery, I would lose my gas. The minute your gas drops off, everything shuts down. There was one time in a season where I was updating my systems three times a night.*"

They added that the problem was solved by increasing his pressure and then in the next season, increasing it across the entire line.

Questions

This group had several different questions about local supply, exporting gas and the future of supply in Australia, the retailers and off shore shareholders. There were also questions as to whether Jemena had done capacity estimates and equations for primary producers. These questions and more were answered by a senior representative from Jemena who was present.

Price Sensitivity

There was a general discussion of how the increase in prices had impacted their businesses and customers. Some participants felt people were starting to notice the difference, others were sticking with it because of the consistency and others felt the rising costs interfered with their profit margin for export of their product. Some of the range of comments are reflected below:

- "*People are starting to say that there isn't a lot of saving with gas. People will use it for basics.*"
- "*People like it for user reliability. Gas for stove top and hot water*"
- "*It has the ability to cripple our industry. (…) One of the things that hold us back is gas. Generally, there is a gross return of $2000 per dried tonne. $350 – 400 a tonne is for gas.*"

On the Future of Gas

- In terms of feedback, some felt major recreational users in the area for example upgrades from Councils took place every 50 years for pools. There was no budget for gas, however Councils have the budget to have evacuated tubes. Residentially, gas is still an option because it's an upfront capital cost but not for big pools.

- Others felt the existing resources will eventually not be sustainable. Renewables is where it's at. Hope it doesn't go to nuclear. Don't think that what's happening with gas is sustainable, don't know much about hydrogen but I know that it's expensive
- Some saw potential to generate methane from their waste: "*I see a great future for renewable resources. At the end of the day, can't keep taking it out of the ground*"
- Some felt the future is renewable: "*I think it is with the future generations to come up with better solutions. There is so much more that could be harvested.*"

On Hydrogen

There were many questions about moving to hydrogen and if the existing infrastructure could support it. The Jemena team provided details around the tests and trials that were occurring.

- "*We are very open to new technologies, if we can see a return. It's all very well to get there at 2050 but how will we keep the market afloat till then? 300 growers down to 70. Farmers moving to alternative crops. They see it as a different source of income, they don't rely on it as their main source of income. We're just not making as much money as we used to.*"

The business participants mentioned they would discuss with their suppliers and then discuss with the client about any potential moves to hydrogen in future. They believe the private sector have a leading role to play.

- "*Scientists, universities, companies. Wouldn't be looking at government – we have a vast amount of that.*"
- Some industries were already investigating industry-specific innovation alternatives, for example sun-drying dehydration testing for fruit drying, agricultural based businesses. Like the other Sydney-based business focus group, users wanted more information about hydrogen before deciding:
- "*If hydrogen is going to be happening in the next 5 years, we need to be educated about it. We need a big education system*"

Alternative Energies and Sustainability

When asked about how important alternative energies and sustainability many agreed it was on top of the wish list.

Some participants agreed that they couldn't afford it right now. Others were willing to pay some of the cost for the long-term benefit. A few believed that everyone should be welcome to utilise alternative energies.

- "*We are trying to spend a lot of money to upgrade to be efficient, we have looked at biochar, high energy, high impact solar. At the present time these options aren't feasible for us. In the end, by the time we weighed it all up, it was much of a muchness. The amount of time it would take to put that in and recoup the costs is not worth it.*"

For larger suppliers of services to local government, who are one of the bigger commercial users in the area, participants agreed it appears to vary between Councils.

- "*Some councils talk about zero emissions, there is a big, big range (...) Some councils want cheap some councils want environmentally sustainable*"

For those working with developers and in the private sector:

- *"These days it's all about sustainability. Approvals are based on this. In restaurants, gas will always be attractive, you can control it and get a better outcome"*

Others agreed sustainability was extremely important.

- *"Dollars and cents are the most important thing but sustainability is very important to me. But the next generation is a bit different, they are making choices differently."*

Like the other businesses interviewed in metropolitan areas, some disagreed with the way solar was implemented and marketed, with questionable customer service and business practices.

- *"It's not about the dollars only, it's about the service. [I put in solar and] chased and chased and chased and we put in 4 (X kilowatt systems). Took far too long to talk to him on the phone and then didn't come out. The problem with solar – there are so many suppliers, so many grades of panel and so many shoddy installers. With gas, you've only got 3 major suppliers and they've got us over a barrel."*

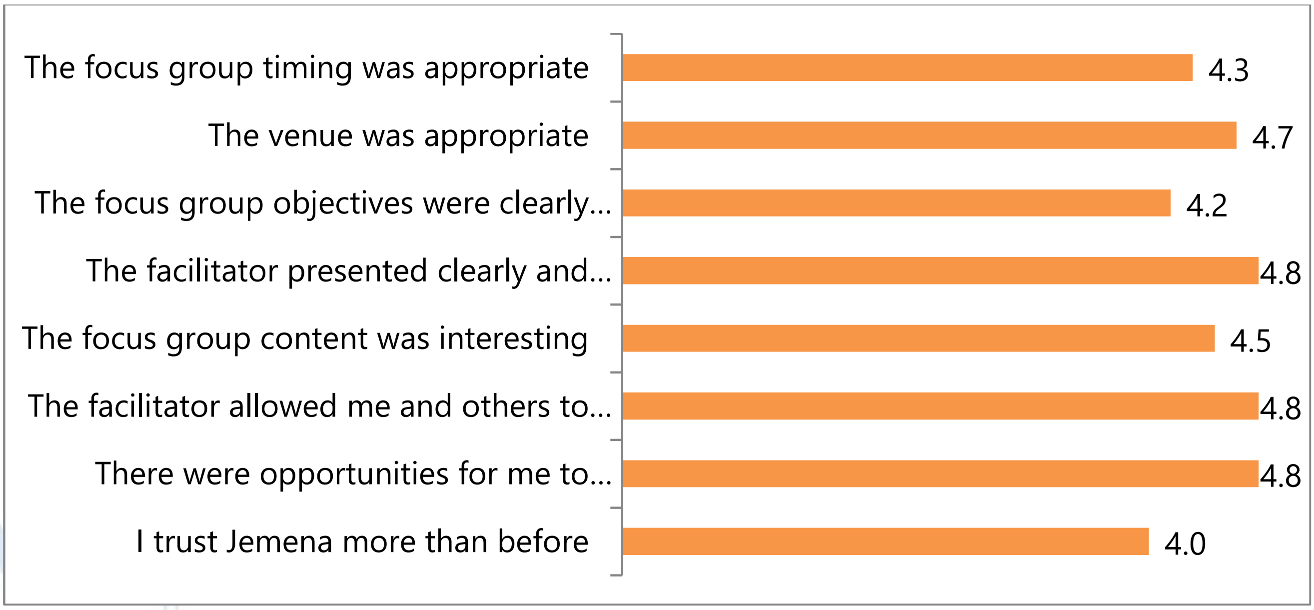
On Retailers

Many participants agreed it was smart to shop around. Some felt disadvantaged due to being large users and the pricing being different. Some agreed it was confusing to ascertain.

- *"There isn't loyalty – now it's shop around, change every year. The companies don't care, it depends on the operator that you get."*
- *"For the retailers – it is so difficult to work out the pricing brackets. It's all so hard. I rang AGL, "you've gone over a limit, you should have a different metre which costs $50K.""*
- *"They changed my pricing structure and flat rated me. My bill is $20k more expensive than what I expected. In the end I got a $300 discount."*

Focus group feedback

At the end of the focus group, individual feedback was obtained using a feedback form to explore participant satisfaction with the focus groups including suggestions about how the session might be improved. All the 6 participants in these groups provided feedback at the end of the focus group session. Overall, there was a high level of satisfaction with the workshop process. This is demonstrated by this graph:



Participants were complimentary about many aspects but were particularly impressed by the facilitators skills, the opportunities for engaging discussion and Jemena's openness and interest in local industry.

The average ratings for all the statements were all 4 and above in a 5-point rating scale where 5 equalled 'strongly agree' and 1 'strongly disagree' and there was little deviation. The scores ranged from 3 – 5, with most scores being 4 and above.

Improvements

When asked whether they had any suggestions about how the focus group could have been improved participants mentioned the following:

- *'Increased focus on primary producers and manufacturing'*
- *'All good'*
- *'No, It's very good, very open, very cooperative'*
- *'Provide more technical information.'*

Most valued

When asked what they valued most about the focus group participants mentioned the following:

- *'What the future looks like with energy'*
- *'Transparency and honesty'*
- *'All good'*
- *'Your openness and interest.'*

Additional comments

When asked if they had any additional comments about the project, participants mentioned the following:

- *'No, your techs are brilliant and very, very happy with them'*
- *'Gas retailers need to offer a better service in terms of capacity assessments, seasonal demands, impact on economy and farmers'*

18. STUDY CIRCLES - OVER 55S / LOW INCOME EARNERS

WHO DID WE SPEAK TO?

We spoke to workshop participants on Wednesday 6 and 13 June 2018. Majority of participants were over 55, from a mix of western Sydney suburbs and housing types. There were a handful of participants in the group representative of new arrivals and low-income earners, including Khmer, Gujarati, Tamil, Punjabi and Arabic. Several participants worked for non-government organisations that provide EAPA vouchers, such as Harris Park Community Centre.

THEMES

Discovery and education

Participants had the opportunity to discuss complex topics broken down into simplified concepts and ask questions of the Jemena team in an informal and engaging way, learn about how to read their bills, and share their opinions with each other.

Budgeting

Many participants spoke about financial hardship in relation to themselves, friends and family and what is done in this space to support them. Some participants paid for elderly parents' electricity and gas bills. Two participants, new arrivals, indicated they change retailers every six months to find a better deal on their gas and electricity and this was part of their household budgeting strategy.

Fairness questions – results

The reason we asked these questions was to ascertain customer perceptions and opinions about fairness. We framed these as questions around depreciation, capital expenditure, vulnerable customers and gas pressure across the network. These questions were completed as table discussions in smaller groups of 4 to 6 people. Where possible, table scores were collated in response to each question from verbal feedback and summarised by the facilitator, who took the 'temperature' of the room. When this was not available, individual written comments and notes were categorised and analysed.

Q1: With uncertainty whether our pipes will actually be used beyond 2050, would it be fairer for current customers to pay more for new investments we make on the network relative to future customers?

Almost all participants indicated yes - it would be fairer. Some of the other comments related to requiring more information, incentives, supply and monitoring, and communications or transparency around this. No participants indicated no to this question. Some examples of the feedback are:

- "*Pay more now to help out future generations*"
- "*Make it transparent*"

Q2: Would it be fairer for new customers to contribute to the cost of their connection, when in the past they haven't had to contribute?

After some discussion, majority of participants agreed that Jemena should charge for a new connection. Others indicated the cost could be recouped over time. One indicated it was a large upfront cost that could be difficult for some.

- "*Many countries charge for a new connection everywhere*"
- "*Pay some upfront or recover all*"

Q3: Is it fair that everyone pays a little more to help fund programs led by Jemena to assist vulnerable gas customers? *

(*Note: Q3 vulnerable customers question asked in Griffith, Goulburn, Study Circles and Western Sydney)

In response to this question participants gave a unanimous yes that vulnerable customers should be assisted. A few participants were involved in the EAPA scheme delivered by their employers; non-government organisations. Participants were also clear that there should be some rules to avoid people taking advantage of the system. Some of these comments are below:

- "*Increase capacity, allow organisations to have more help*"
- "*Wonderful scheme - I wouldn't mind paying $1 towards it*
- "*It would still need to be means tested*"

Q4: Is it fair that the pressure in the network is lower in some areas than others meaning some customers can't use modern gas appliances, specifically instantaneous hot water?

Forum attendees believed this was a complex question and there was need for more education, information and transparency around this topic. After discussion, many agreed that no, it was not fair. There were a couple of comments around communications to those on the lower pressure areas. There was also a view that it was only fair that everyone was supplied with basic necessities, if gas is a necessity. Some of the comments are included below:

- *"Reasonable – how much for it to go up?"*
- "*Upgrade, but if not, it should be cheaper…Gas is an essential service*"
- "*Need for transparency*"
- "*[I] want an idea of the costs around it*"

In terms of group voting, the group agreed that, to help manage future uncertainty around the long-term viability of the gas network, JGN should recover money spent on new pipes over 30 years rather than 50 years.

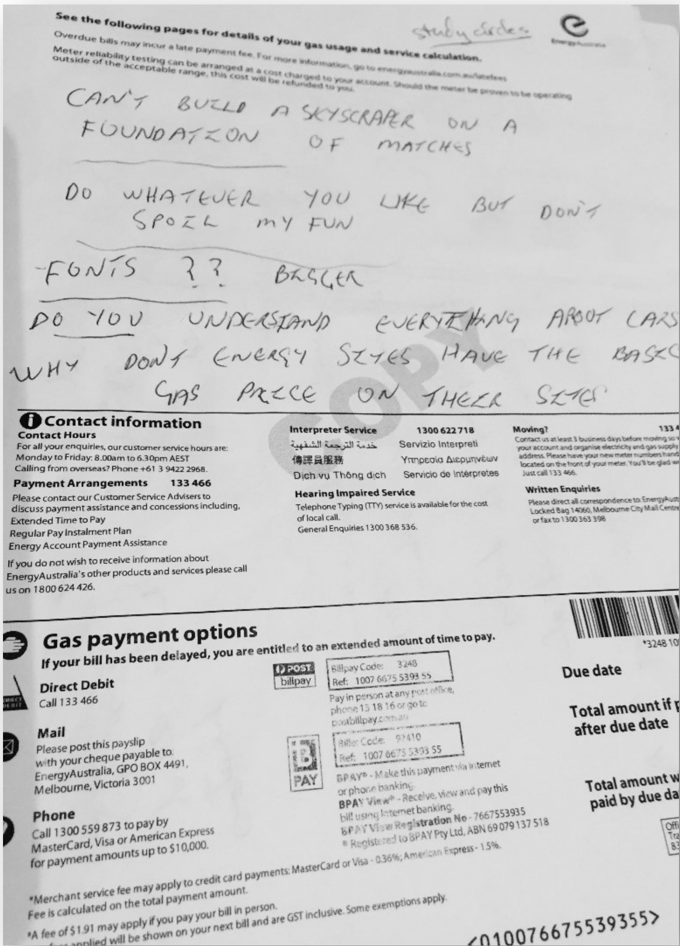
Feedback

At the end of each session, detailed feedback from participants was sought, via our anonymous feedback forms. Attendees rated all aspects of the workshops including opportunities to participate and engage, the facilitation, the workshop content, workshop objectives, venue and timing. Across the scores, participants rated all the elements of the workshop an average 4.5 out of 5.

Participants were complimentary about most aspects of the workshop but were particularly impressed by the facilitation. Some of the feedback and quotes from participants was as follows:

- *"Learning new things"*
- *"Different views and expressing my view"*

Figure 2 (right): Participant feedback hand written on their own bill, pertaining to the font size on the Bpay payment options, which was raised in the study circle by participants.



19. LESSONS LEARNED

Throughout the project, there were many lessons learned which we will take forward into future engagements. The format of the forums allowed for deep diving into issues and when we didn't take the time to do this, we found the quality of the feedback suffered.

We found that providing information and education to participants in a clear and timely way and responding to feedback quickly along the way in the form of technical expertise with senior staff or engineers in the room, was essential. In this way, by responding quickly in real-time, or in between sessions if there were multiple workshops or forums, we were able to improve the quality of experience both for participants and Jemena and to build up trust quickly.

One example was regarding the small business engagement. For Griffith, based on our prior experience in Sydney, we made several alterations to better craft the engagement experience, and ask the right questions, for participants as follows:

- Providing information about Jemena upfront, playing your videos content at commencement, more time to set the scene and why we are here to provide that essential education piece
- Change the way we ask the questions around the ‘fair price for gas’ as participants were confused about what this meant
- Keeping the conversation on alternative fuels as considerately managed conversations and focused on outcomes
- More lead time for recruitment of participants, to exclude tank or LPG gas customers as not to confuse issues unrelated to mains gas
- The engagement for the CALD participants lead to adjustments of the materials, particularly through adjusting the activities to focus on images rather than text, changing the way feedback was sought and the explanation of the gas production and retailer system. This was to ensure understanding and feedback was gleaned in a considered way. These changes included:
- Creating a game of some of the feedback activities like how households used gas, involving pictures and images
- Modifying resources such as homework and feedback forms to be simpler and picture based
- JGN team acting out a dialogue around the way gas is sourced, transported and delivered, by utilising an apple farm analogy
- Awareness of cultural sensitivities for example changing activities to allow for a larger group discussion rather than separating the group
- Translation of key materials into Arabic
- Conducting of the entire workshop in Arabic by the educators so there is no time lost in translation
- Arabic speaking Jemena staff present in the workshop to explain technical concepts.

All these learnings, and many more, contributed to a continual refining of the process and seeking full engaged and meaningful participation, driving best practice across the life of the project.

Above: participants in our Bathurst Forum

20. CUSTOMER PRIORITIES

At the session three of the deliberative forums we asked participants to communicate what they wanted Jemena to keep top-of-mind over the next five years. These inspirational words could form part of the guiding principles for customers for Jemena in future.

On reliability

Major themes in this category was across service levels, constant feedback, equitable service, and keeping the supply secure for Australian customers. Some quotes that demonstrate this are:

- *'For there to be good gas flow at all times of the day when I want it'*
- *'For all customers, metro and country to have the same level of reliable service'*
- *'Don't give it all away and then have to buy from someone overseas'*
- *'Seek customer input'*
- *'Don't stop talking to customers for next 5 years'*
- *'Ensuring any alternate fuels are equally reliable as the current natural gas'*
- *'Ensure any alternate gas maintains the same reliable service'*
- *'Prompt and responsive service to safety issues and leaks'*

On Environment

The key points in this category was looking after the local environment including flora and flora, examining renewables, customers wanting sustainable and green solutions, and mindful of the gas sourcing techniques. The indicative quotes from customers are below:

- *'Mind of impact of everything we do'*
- *'Return it to the pristine nature of what it was'*
- *'Customers want green solutions*
- *'Be mindful of renewables'*
- *'Reduce environmental impacts of sourcing conventional gas e.g. drill, mine, CSG etc.'*
- *'Avoid fracking sources - influencing energy community'*
- *'Jemena should be leading'*
- *Maintain moral obligations for our children's future*
- *'Ensuring appropriate remediation at construction sites'*

On Affordability

Participants focused on being careful with investment for the future, ensuring equity across the board, working smart and investigating innovation to keep prices affordable. Some of the comments that support this are included below:

- *"Every $1 matters – you don't know where it's coming from"*

- *"Affordability stimulates future growth"*
- *"Recognise some customers really struggle to pay bills – renters or people who can't afford to switch. Not the role of distributor to put in place mechanisms for vulnerable customers – retailers and government are better placed. Government and retailers need to do more!"*
- *"Skimping today will cost more in the long term – but without better clarity on the future, don't make big decisions yet"*
- *"Transparency between Jemena and customers. No hidden agenda"*
- *"Fair for all"*
- *"Working on smarter – research / investigate alternatives i.e. pipe materials equip etc to keep it affordable"*
- *"Same price for everyone"*

On Fairness

Forum attendees focused on Jemena being a financially fair company, looking after the disadvantaged and the different definitions of fairness, and keeping the billing stable and smooth. Some of the comments that indicate this are below:

- *'Some people can afford it and some people can't'*
- *'Happy to pay now so long as future generations will get it better – the sad thing is everyone is for the now.'*
- *'Fair price irrespective of location'*
- *'Fair profits'*
- *'Jemena should understand that fairness means different things to different people'*
- *'Make it available to people that want it'*
- *'Think of supporting each other – e.g. pensioners / disadvantaged people'*
- *'Keep things predictable and steady'*

On our process

Participants were deeply appreciative of the thoroughness of the engagement and felt that what they had to say matters and will make a real difference for Jemena. In response to the question 'I trust Jemena more than before', rating a 4.5 average out of 5. Some indicative comments on this theme are below.

- *"Well run - one of the best interactive consumer feedback sessions I have attended."*
- *"The fact that to me, Jemena values our opinion in how we receive and pay for our gas and how we think about the consequences."*
- *"I value that Jemena are genuinely consulting with the general public about these issues."*

APPENDIX A RESULTS MATRIX

STRAIGHT TALK

hear every voice,
know where you stand

Appendix A - Results Matrix

What	Where	Who	Methodology	Themes	Key issues
CALD Arabic Workshops with household customers (x 2 workshops)	Fairfield	Forums 1 and 2: 13 participants – including newly arrived refugees from Iraq and Syria	▪ Session 1: current experience of gas, and how to receive information, ranking household expenses and homework. ▪ Session 2: answer questions in more detail, delve into voting around current and future priorities	▪ This group feel the pressure of bills from everywhere – and gas is high on the list ▪ Building up of learning and knowledge ▪ Sharing of experiences ▪ Support of vulnerable customers	▪ Attending workshops in person much more beneficial than media Look after vulnerable customers ▪ The Environment and Safety is more important to these customers – but price is still key ▪ Retailers are difficult due to language barriers ▪ Happy to pay now for future ▪ Steady as you go bill path
CALD 1:1 Interviews in Cantonese, Arabic and Mandarin (x1 interview)	Chatswood, Auburn, Norwest, Campsie, Kogarah, Waitara and Hornsby.	23 participants – representative small businesses from hospitality sector	▪ In depth interviews understanding gas role in small business, the network and the future of gas ▪ Customer experiences and testing feedback on themes explored with other groups such as the cost of new connections	▪ Information from family and friends ▪ Experience of gas different in Australia to their country of origin ▪ Price is key	▪ Sensitive to costs ▪ Highly reliant on gas as energy source for business ▪ Satisfied with current state and timing of outages ▪ Polarised on paying for new connections

What	Where	Who	Methodology	Themes	Key issues
Deliberative Forums (x3)	Griffith	Forum 1: 13 household customers Forum 2: 15 household customers Forum 3: 11 household customers	Random selection Spread of demographics and age groups. Session 1: covers introduction to deliberations, icebreakers, introduction and education around supply chain, and what information they would need to make key decisions. Session 2: Answering questions from participants, bill shock, covering the future of gas, depreciation, new connections vulnerable customers, pressure in network. Session 3: Welcome quiz, voting around depreciation, asset renewal and bill path as well as formulating customer priorities.	▪ Authentic Listening ▪ Fairness	▪ Price is of concern ▪ Prefer gradual increases ▪ Big pipes preference ▪ Speed up recovery 30 years ▪ Steady as you go bill path
Deliberative Forums (x3)	Goulburn	Forum 1: 16 household customers Forum 2: 19 household customers Forum 3: 16 household customers		▪ Fairness and sharing views ▪ Price and Affordability	▪ Focused on individuals meeting their own energy needs ▪ Investing now for the needs of the future ▪ Big pipes preference ▪ Speed up recovery 30 years ▪ Steady as you go bill path
Deliberative Forums (x3)	Parramatta	Forum 1: 19 household customers Forum 2: 19 household customers Forum 3: 17 household customers		▪ Learning and education ▪ Transparency	▪ Focused on zero carbon energy ▪ Transparency of operations ▪ Look after vulnerable customers ▪ Big pipes preference ▪ Speed up recovery 30 years ▪ Steady as you go bill path
Deliberative Forums (x3)	Bathurst	Forum 1: 22 household customers		▪ Thirst for knowledge	▪ Previously took gas for granted

What	Where	Who	Methodology	Themes	Key issues
		Forum 2: 23 household customers Forum 3: 18 household customers			▪ Concern about the environment ▪ Small pipes preference ▪ Speed up recovery 30 years ▪ Steady as you go bill path
Deliberative Forums (x3)	Newcastle	Forum 1: 25 household customers Forum 2: 25 household customers Forum 3: 18 household customers		▪ Fairness ▪ Equality ▪ Affordability ▪ Invest now in infrastructure for the future	▪ Price, reliability and safety of top concern ▪ All for energy efficiency ▪ Big pipes preference ▪ Speed up recovery over 30 years ▪ Steady as you go bill path
Small Medium Business Enterprises focus group (x1)	Parramatta	10 small businesses ranging across retail, manufacturing and hospitality	▪ Random recruitment and recruitment via chambers of commerce. ▪ Identifying small businesses experience	▪ Need for Education and Awareness	

What	Where	Who	Methodology	Themes	Key issues
Small Medium Business Enterprises focus group (x1)	Griffith	6 small and large businesses ranging from interior design to large scale feedlot and fruit growers	in gas and priorities for the future ▪ Explore attitudes towards the future of gas and future technologies such as hydrogen	▪ Need for Education and Awareness ▪ Price ▪ Reliability ▪ Retailers ▪ Alternative Energies and Sustainability on the wish list	▪ Price is very important to these customers ▪ Very open to new technologies
Study Circles **Over 55s / Low Income Earners (x2)**	Parramatta	15 participants from across Western Sydney who are over 55s or those involved in non-government organisation in the area. Some worked for non-government organisations that provide EAPA vouchers.	▪ Study Circles: ▪ Capacity building approach where customers are supported in their journey around various issues. ▪ Meeting 1: concept and purpose, discovering cost of living pressures, introduction to supply chain and homework. ▪ Meeting 2: reintroduce and check in on feedback, video about	▪ Discovery and education ▪ Budgeting	▪ Look after vulnerable customers, but means-test the assistance given ▪ Some customers seek out new deals every 6 months within their communities, or seek out discounts ▪ Supportive of customers paying something upfront for new connection costs ▪ Interested in paying more now to help out future generations ▪ Some have strong loyalty to retailers

What	Where	Who	Methodology	Themes	Key issues
			fairness and conversation around depreciation, new connections vulnerable customers and pressure in network.		
Customer Call focus group (x1)	Phone call Videoconference, Bathurst, Newcastle, Baulkham Hills, Griffith and Goulburn	7 participants from 5 communities	▪ Sharing of findings so far ▪ Testing customer priorities and wording ▪ Testing and workshop elements for forum 3	▪ Building trust ▪ Focus on the impact on communities ▪ Authenticity	▪ Jemena to remain authentic and transparent ▪ Use simple language for customers that is understood
Retirement Living / Embedded Networks Workshop	Donald Robinson Village (Anglicare) Kirawee	12 older participants from two Anglicare facilities in Sutherland Shire area – Woolooware Shores and Donald Robinson Village	Study Circles: ▪ Capacity building approach where customers are supported in their journey around various issues. ▪ Understand personal experiences of finances, motivation and	▪ Strong loyalty to retailers ▪ Traditional values ▪ Rising price is of concern ▪ Efficiency concerns	▪ Consider the needs of elderly customers ▪ Generally supportive of Volume Boundary Metres ▪ Many first-time gas users ▪ Billing issues

What	Where	Who	Methodology	Themes	Key issues
			challenges around bills and utilities ▪ Understand customer experiences in retirement living in the context of bills ▪ Understand customer perceptions of embedded networks		