



Multinet Gas Stakeholder Consultation

Feedback from focus group meetings 26 & 28 July, and 2 & 4 August – Shaun Dennison

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- Background
 - Scope of engagement
 - Background on focus groups
- Topics discussed
- Key insights
- Feedback by topic and question



- Farrier Swier Consulting (FSC) has been engaged to facilitate stakeholder consultation for Multinet Gas (MG) as follows:
 - Prepare background questions to be discussed with the focus groups based on issues of concern to MG in the preparation of its gas access arrangement review (GAAR) and supporting forecasts
 - Facilitate the stakeholder consultations
 - Report on the outcomes
- This report presents the findings from the eight focus groups conducted with residential and small business customers
- The focus groups are one input into MG's research and consultation program that includes customer advocates, business, government and regulators
- We understand that MG may use the findings in this report as part of its wider consultation program and gathering of evidence for the GAAR

- MG engaged Focus People to select the focus group attendees with representation of:
 - residents (Res) and small businesses (Bus) across MG’s distribution area
 - geography, socio economic and Culturally And Linguistically Diverse groups
- The dates, venues and number of attendees for the discussions were:

Response	G1 Bus	G2 Res	G3 Bus	G4 Res	G5 Bus	G6 Res	G7 Bus	G8 Res
	Tuesday 26 July, Clayton		Thursday 28 July, Windsor		Tuesday 2 August, Blackburn		Thursday 4 August, Croydon	
Number of attendees	10	9	10	10	8	10	9	11

- For all groups, most consumed gas for heating, with cooking the next most popular use for gas



TOPICS DISCUSSED

The topics discussed reflect areas that MG wanted stakeholders views on to assist MG in developing its GAAR position. Each focus group commenced by exploring how much was known about MG, providing some background on MG and what it does, and how that differs from retailers and other supply chain participants, and then discussing the following MG GAAR topics

- Our network objectives
- Replacement of our main pipelines (mains replacement)
- Guaranteed service level (GSL) payments
- Incentives for us to reduce our costs
- Communications from us
- Technology innovation - digital meters



Key insight	Why
Awareness of MG is very low, as was the role of MG versus Retailers	Less than 15% of attendees had heard of MG, or knew what MG does, or were aware that they are a customer of MG Those that had awareness of MG did so due to replacement or connection of meters, or planned outages
Reliability and price are most important	Reliability and price were regarded as most important and were often mentioned together Not too far behind was safety and then quality
MG meets customer expectations	Whilst many attendees were not aware of MG, once they became aware of MG and its role, the view was that MG meets customer expectations on the basis they have not needed to interact with MG
What is MG's environmental objective?	There was unanimous support for an environmental network objective
MG's network objectives could be made clearer	Whilst about half the attendees agreed with MG's draft network objectives, the other half found them a bit unclear and focussed on internal rather than external engagement

Key insight	Why
Customers like and support Pipeworks	<p>‘We trust the experts’ (that is, MG, AER and Energy Safe Victoria)</p> <p>Safety obligations are very important</p> <p>Unanimous that customers do not like the idea of less investment in Pipeworks with an increased risk of lower reliability</p>
Customers should be made aware of GSLs and they should remain unchanged	<p>There was almost no awareness of GSLs and strong support for greater consumer awareness, including how to access them</p> <p>Overall, the view was that GSLs shouldn’t change but if they were to, then increasing the payments to reflect current costs was preferred</p>
A move to a revenue cap seems sensible	<p>Whilst not specifically asked, most attendees appeared to like the idea that MG be compensated for its forecast costs (AER allowance) rather than make gains or losses due to differences between actual and AER allowances for consumption</p>
MG should be incentivised to reduce opex and capex	<p>Whilst about half the focus groups found incentives hard to understand, there was general overall support for having an incentive to reduce capital expenditure, provided that MG’s service is not compromised</p>

Key insight	Why
Customers would like direct communication on emergency matters	There was strong support for SMS for emergency matters (i.e. outages), noting MG has limited access to mobile phone numbers
Customers would like to hear from MG about once a year on general matters	Customers would like information on GSLs, Pipeworks (and other major infrastructure projects) and any cost reduction initiatives, otherwise communication should be minimised
Communications must be simple and identified from MG	Any communication must be ‘dumbed’ down, with lots of graphics, plus be careful to not be seen as the Retailer Also, if possible avoid addressing postal material to ‘The resident’ as often seen as junk mail and discarded accordingly
Communication tools must be broad given community demographics	For general communication, there was no clear winner with postal, website and email equally preferred, with less support for social media There was a clear preference for a call centre, rather than a digital self service call centre, that was knowledgeable and spoke clear English (regardless of where the call centre was located) There was mixed support for web chat

Key insight	Why
Digital meters are inevitable and a controlled approach to replacement of existing meters was sensible	General overall support for controlled pilot program, particularly one that focusses on replacement of faulty meters and new connections, that avoids Vic AMI problems (such as faulty meter reads, increased bills) and costs



FEEDBACK BY TOPIC AND QUESTION

- For each topic discussed, the key findings have been summarised
- For each question within a topic the response is collated in table format as per below, and in some cases notes are added below the table

Response	G1 Bus	G2 Res	G3 Bus	G4 Res	G5 Bus	G6 Res	G7 Bus	G8 Res
xxx	xx							

- Generally we have collated like responses and indicated the strength of support using *limited support*, *general support*, *strong support* and *complete support*
- If a cell is blank, then no response was provided by the focus group

Do you know Multinet Gas and what we do?

- Very few attendees knew of MG and what its does
- There was general confusion about the role of a retailer and distributor
- The primarily reasons for those few that knew of MG was due to experience with replacement or connection of meters, or planned outages

Response	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	G8
Yes	3	3	-	1	1	-	2	1
No	7	6	10	9	7	10	7	10
Total	10	9	10	10	8	10	9	11

What is most important to you about your gas supply?

- Reliability and price were regarded as most important; often they were mentioned together
- Not too far behind was safety and then quality
- G7 and G8 thought that accessible and transparent customer service was important

What is most important to you about your gas supply?

Response	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	G8
Price	Most important	Most important including consistency	Very important	Very important	Very important	Very important; MG must manage its costs	Very important	Most important
Reliability	Most important	Very important	Most important	Very important	Very important	Very important	Very important	Most important
Safety		Very important	Most important	Most important	Very important	Important	Very important	Very important
Quality of supply		General support		Some support for right burning quality	Very important		Very important, accept as given	
Environmental impact						1x very important		
Security							Some support	

Notes:

1. G3 noted that whilst historically price has been cheap, it has been increasing
2. Price and reliability were often mentioned together by most groups
3. G4 & G7 thought that for safety it is very important to have confidence in MG's infrastructure
4. G7 & G8 thought that accessible and transparent customer service from MG was important

Do we meet your expectations, and if not, how could we improve?

- On the whole, attendees do not have explicit expectations of MG, but implicitly they expect reliable and safe service
- If MG does what its supposed to, then customers do not have a need to interact with MG
- There was some general noise about assisting in keeping Retailers honest, or providing information to customers that would enable them to keep Retailers honest, such as network price information and breakup of network costs of total retail bill
 - This was a general concern raised throughout the discussions

Do we meet your expectations, and if not, how could we improve?

Response	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	G8
On the whole do not think about MG (gas supply is always reliable)	General support		General support & noted only do if there is a problem		General support		Overall support	Overall support
MG meets our expectations		Overall support		General support		Overall support	Strong support, MG exceeds	Overall support
Clearer transparency on retail bills of MG network costs	General support							General support
Network plans not accurate (pipes not where they are marked)							1 x feedback	

Notes:

1. The general feedback across all groups is that if MG does what its supposed to, then customers do not interact with MG

Have you had any interaction with us over the last 12 months, & if so, what was it and how satisfied were you with our service?

- There was generally very limited interaction over the last 12 months (and in fact last 2 to 3 years)
- As expected, any interaction was either planned outages (network maintenance or upgrade), meter replacement and connection
- On the whole MG exceeded expectations when there was interaction
- There was general discussion about the role of MG versus Retailers, and how do customers know what each party does:
 - Its not clear whether Retailers or MG is responsible when gas is unavailable
 - The network fault number on retail bills is difficult to find

Have you had any interaction with us over the last 12 months, & if so, what was it and how satisfied were you with our service? – cont.

Response	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	G8
No direct contact in last 12 months	Most attendees	Most attendees	Most attendees	All attendees	Most attendees	All attendees	Most attendees	Most attendees
Faulty meter replacement	2 x fast & responsive	1 x could have been smoother plus took 1 day	1 x 2 faulty meters had fast response above expectations					
Connection issues	1 x				1 x			
Other							1 x very responsive to development sites	1 x 2 maintenance above expectations

Notes:

1. G1 (faulty meter) left message for call back not expecting a prompt call back but received a call within 10 minutes which exceeded expectations
2. G1 (connection issues) was incorrectly disconnected instead of changing name, which was resolved the following day (rental investment)
3. G5 (connection issues) fault occurred on Friday and wasn't resolved until Monday
4. G7 generally thought it is not clear whether Retailer or Distributor is responsible when gas is unavailable

Our network objectives which we will use in developing our Access Arrangement proposal

In response to MG's draft network objectives covering safety, our customers, efficiency, growth and compliance:

- There was unanimous support for an environmental objective (the safety objective often triggered the debate when discussing what zero harm means)
- G1 to G3 generally supported the objectives but thought they were written from an internal perspective and less clear what the intent was from an outside perspective, nor what the desired deliverables are
- G4 thought the objectives were 'good solid things' but all bit 'motherhood' statements
- G5 to G8 also generally supported the objectives
- G7 thought that they were all reasonably clear although they had some comments
- There was general discussion on referring to MG's customers when the primary relationship is with Retailers and not direct with customers connected to MG's network
- Not sourcing gas from fracking was mentioned a few times

Our network objectives which we will use in developing our price submission

- All groups had suggested changes:
 - **Safety** – does harm need to explicitly apply to the broader community and not just imply MG staff? Does it extend to the environment and MG's operations?
 - **Customer** – about half the groups thought that it wasn't persuasive and didn't understand what customer expectations MG was trying to target. It was suggested that the objective should explicitly include Retailers, and that *seamlessly* rather than *effortless* better reflects what they perceive is provided by MG
 - **Efficiency** – many did not understand top quartile, though it was recognised that it would make sense to some of MG's target audience (e.g. internal, AER). There were mixed views on what *sustainable and prudent network investment* means, though about half the attendees thought it was well worded, balanced and focussed

Our network objectives which we will use in developing our price submission – cont.

- All groups had suggested changes:
 - **Growth** – there is general lack of understanding that ‘we are MG’s customer’ plus most did not understand how MG could achieve this objective. When explained, there was general agreement that if it led to reduced network charges then it was a good objective
 - **Compliance** – most thought MG had no choice but to comply and thought the objective could be strengthened to be clearer that this was the case (e.g. alternative wording for *manage*)

Safety: We strive towards achieving zero harm while maintaining network safety

Response	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	G8
What does zero harm mean?	Whilst about half the participants thought harm was focussed on people, others weren't sure and questioned why the environment wasn't mentioned G2 raised whether harm related to the business				Not clear but assumed no injuries & environment	Not clear & thought it should apply to the broader community and environment		A couple thought not clear whether meant to include environment
Support zero harm to people	Strong support	Strong support, with no deaths	Support		Strong support	Strong support	Strong support, very straight forward	Strong support, very reasonable and important
There should be an environmental objective	Strong support	Strong support	Strong support	Strong support	Strong support	Strong support	Strong support	Strong support

Notes:

1. Across all focus groups there was general discussion whether harm was internal or external, or both
2. G2 & G7 raised environmental objective at the end of the discussion on objectives
3. Many groups asked how gas was sourced and expressed concern of the environmental impact (particularly fracking)

Customer: We strive to meet customer expectations while providing an effortless customer experience

Response	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	G8
Was written from a marketing perspective, rather than persuasive (what are the target outcomes?)	General support	General support				General support, <i>effortless</i> was wrong word		
Did not know that MG exists so have no customer expectations	Strong support	Strong support	General support			General support		Strong support
Support the objective if you do what you say you are going to do		General support						
Its not clear what MG does versus a Retailer	Strong support	Strong support	Some support			General support		
How do you measure customer expectations?			General support					
Support the objective as written				General support	General support, other than <i>effortless</i>		Requires some edits (see notes)	Strong support

Notes:

1. G1 when there is a fault who should we call for most efficient service?
2. G6 this objective is *meaningless jargon* plus it requires efficient call centre to deliver
3. G7 consider extending to include Retailers, i.e. *all* customers, plus using *seamlessly* rather than *effortless*

Efficiency: We aim for top quartile operational efficiency through sustainable and prudent network investment

Response	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	G8
Aiming for top 25% is too low and range too large	General support			General support				
It isn't clear what sustainable and prudent network investment means		Some support		Some support	Strong support	Half agreed, half thought it was well thought through	General support, consider 'aiming for best results'	General support, but like MG investing in its network
Top quartile is ambiguous and not clear from an external perspective as to what it means - should focus on top number (i.e. top four Australian network operators)	General support	Some support	Strong support	General support	Strong support	Strong support	General support	Strong support
Support the objective as written		Some support for internal use			No, its too wordy		General support	General support

Notes:

1. G7 the use of top quartile should be tailored to audience i.e. AER versus customers (top 4)

Growth: We seek growth in our customer base

Response	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	G8
We didn't understand that we were your customer (relationship is with Retailer)	Strong support		General support	Strong support		Strong support		
Didn't understand how MG could achieve this	General support	General support	General support	General support	General support		General support	General support
Support the objective as written (after given examples of what MG can do)	General support	General support	General support	General support, but noting that this objective is not written in same style as the others		General support but thought it was obvious and a motherhood statement	General support	General support

Notes:

1. G5 & G8 thought it was important to link customer growth (consumption) to reduced average network costs



Compliance: We continually manage areas of technical and regulatory compliance

Response	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	G8
'Manage' isn't clear and that maybe it should be 'meet our', 'monitor and maintain', 'we strive to meet', 'stringently comply', 'adhere'	General support	General support	Strong support, remove manage		General support as obliged to comply		General support	General support, noted that have to meet
Would hope that MG does meet its compliance requirements		General support			Strong support & that there was no choice		Strong support & that there was no choice	Strong support & that there was no choice
Support the objective as written				Strong support		Strong support, must be confident MG is doing this		

- Customers like and support Pipeworks and MG's approach to the program and developing its forecasts:
 - We trust the experts
 - Safety obligations are very important
- MG should communicate the program to its customers
- Unanimous view that they do not like the idea of less investment in Pipeworks with an increased risk of lower reliability
 - Only some attendees of G3 & G4 said they would benefit from information on trade-offs between less investment with increased risk of lower reliability

Mains replacement - Do you think our approach to the mains replacement program is reasonable?

Response	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	G8
We are not experts and we trust those that are and are happy to be guided by them	Strong support	General support						
Safety is important and MG should just get on with the program	Strong support			Strong support			Strong support at minimum cost	Strong support, like approach
Advance communication of the program to the broader community is key (education, website)	General support			General support				General support
Have some confidence given AER and Energy Safe Victoria oversight	General support	Strong support						
Without being experts, we agree with the approach	Don't care, but safety is very important as is minimal disruption	Strong support	Strong support	Strong support, like focus on safety	Strong support, like focus on safety & lowest cost	Strong support, like focus on safety & reliability		

Notes:

1. G2 one attendee raised concern over proposed spend in light of perceived electricity overspending over 10 years

Mains replacement - Without compromising our safety obligations, would you prefer less investment in Pipeworks but with the risk of lower reliability?

Response	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	G8
No	Complete support	Complete support	Strong support, reliability is most important	Complete support, reliability is most important	Complete support, reliability is most important	Complete support	Complete support, 'better if you remain invisible' plus do not effect safety and reliability	Complete support
Benefit in providing information on trade-offs between reliability and network costs			Some support	Some support				
Main concern is to avoid pitfalls of NBN and political interference	General support	Strong support						

Notes:

1. G7 & G8 wanted to know how much material was sourced from Australia

- Almost no-one knew that MG had GSLs, and all thought that MG should create customer awareness, noting that in itself this could increase payments made by MG
 - G8 thought that MG should communicate the positive aspect of its target to minimise GSLs (demonstrates MG as committed, caring, reliable service provider)
- On the whole, most attendees thought that MG shouldn't make existing GSLs more onerous as MG should be meeting its standards
- But if MG did make them more onerous, the strong preference was for increasing the payments to be more in line with current costs (the general view was existing GSL payments are low)

Do you know about GSLs?

Response	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	G8
Have not heard of them	All no	7 no	All no	All no	All no	All no	All no	10 no
Have heard of them		2 yes						1 yes

Should we make our **GSLs** more onerous to increase the incentive on us to meet our agreed distribution service or reliability standards?

Response	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	G8
Not really; MG should already be meeting its standards without the need for more incentives	General support	General support		General support	Strong support, no real benefit	Strong support		
Not convinced that MG will do a better job with more onerous GSLs	General support					Strong support		Strong support
Don't like idea of MG making more onerous		Some support					Strong support	
Don't think changing GSLs are a high priority	General support							
Customers should be made more aware of GSLs and how to claim	Strong support	Strong support	Strong support	Strong support				
If customers made more aware, concern that unfounded claims would increase	General support			General support				
Generally support if drives efficiencies but not costs			General support		Some support			

Notes:

1. Various focus groups suggested communicating GSL's on Retailer bills and clearly on MG website
2. G7 might support if changing GSLs improves customer service
3. G8 should communicate the positive aspect of MG's target to minimise (committed, caring, reliable)

If yes to change, what change do you prefer?

Response	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	G8
Didn't support change to existing GSLs	General support	General support		General support	Strong support	Strong support	General support	Strong support, raised concern of safety breach by field staff to meet
Increasing the threshold but maintain service, quality and prices		Limited support to reflect time value of money	General support				Limited support to reflect time value of money	

Notes:

1. G6 whilst not supporting a change, half the group liked reducing existing thresholds and the other half increasing the payment amount
2. G2 & G7, whilst not supporting a change, liked increasing GSL payment to be more relevant and reflect today's costs
3. G8 raised possibility of seasonal GSLs, or customer differential (e.g. for people over certain age) plus onus on field staff to let customers know if they are entitled to a GSL

What do you think of us being incentivised to reduce our operating and capital expenditure below the AER allowances and penalised if our costs are above the AER allowances?

- Whilst not specifically asked, most focus groups appeared to understand and support a move to a revenue cap
- G1 to G4 struggled to understand incentives to reduce costs, whereas G5 to G8 seemed to have a better understanding
- There was general overall support for having an incentive to reduce capital expenditure, provided that MG's service is not compromised
 - There was concern that reduction in capital can compromise reliability and necessitate catch-up expenditure, showing that customers were mindful of their long-term interests when answering
- There were some general comments on how do customers get assurances that Retailers pass through any cost reductions in network tariffs (noting they had a simplified view of how prices are set)

What do you think of us being incentivised to reduce our operating and capital expenditure below the AER allowances and penalised if our costs are above the AER allowances?

Response	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	G8
Complicated and hard to understand	General view	Strong view	Strong view	Strong view				
Support MG being incentivised to achieve further efficiencies (as general business principle)	General support provided that there is no negative impact on services	Limited support for MG to be provided fair incentives - general concern of impact on services	Limited support for MG to be provided fair incentives	General support provided that perverse incentives on capex are not created	Strong support provided that there is no change in reliability, safety and quality	Strong support	General support provided that there is no negative impact on services, & like the idea of MG being able to do opex / capex trade off	General support but some concern that risky for capex (incentive to under spend)
Would be more supportive if confident that Retailers would pass network efficiencies to customers	Strong support							Strong support

- There was strong support for information on GSLs, Pipeworks, and emergency matters otherwise communication should be minimised
- There was general agreement that communication once every 12 months was enough with a focus on major projects (improving infrastructure), initiatives for operational efficiencies and cost reductions
- Any communication must be ‘dumbed’ down, with lots of graphics, plus be careful to not be seen as the Retailer
- Also, if possible avoid addressing postal material to ‘The resident’ as often seen as junk mail and discarded accordingly
- There was strong support for SMS for emergency matters, noting MG has limited access to mobile phone numbers
- For general communication, there was no clear winner with postal, website and email equally preferred, though with less support for social media
- There was a clear preference for a call centre, rather than a digital self service call centre, that was knowledgeable and spoke clear English (regardless of the location of the call centre)
- There was mixed support for web chat

What sort of communication / information would you like to receive from us, when and how often?

Response	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	G8
On urgent matters (unplanned outages, disconnection) for purpose only	Strong support	Strong support	Strong support	Strong support	General support		Strong support	Strong support
Other preferred information		Some support for network rates (to assist in keeping Retailers honest)		Strong support for network rates (to assist in keeping Retailers honest)	Strong support for Pipe-works		Future major projects, new technologies, what MG is doing to reduce costs	Pipe-works & anything impacting us as a customer, spend on infrastructure & who is MG
Information on GSL's and how to claim	Strong support	Strong support	Strong support	Strong support	Strong support	Strong support	Strong support	Strong support
How often	Yearly			Some for quarterly, most yearly	1 x for quarterly, rest yearly	Yearly	Some for 6 months, most yearly	Some for 6 months, most yearly

Notes:

1. G5 any information provided must be 'dumbed' down, with lots of graphics, plus be careful to not be seen as the Retailer
2. G5 haven't heard from MG in 12 months and it hasn't been a problem; less is better
3. G6 once a year Retailer bill should provide breakdown of aggregated costs
4. G8 any communication must be simple, plain English no acronyms, use graphics

How would you prefer to receive info from us?

Response	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	G8
SMS for urgent matters (unplanned outages, disconnection)	Strong support	Strong support	Strong support, otherwise not interested	Strong support, plus use social media	Strong support, plus to confirm appointments	Strong support, but Retailer should do it	Strong support	Strong support
Information on website	General support	Strong support		General support	Strong support		Some support	General support
For planned outages (e.g. Pipeworks), card isn't big enough and it must be distinguishable from junk mail and bills		Strong support						Strong support
Its important to not forgo traditional post as not everyone has a mobile phone or computers	General support	Strong support			General support		Strong support	General support
Telephone calls			No support				No support	No support

How would you prefer to receive info from us? – cont.

Response	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	G8
Its important to agree communication priorities with Retailers (outages)		Strong support						
Social media			No support	Some support (planned outages)			Mixed support (planned outages)	Very little support
Email (technology)	General support		No emails	Strong support	No emails, other than to confirm	General support	General support	General support
Other suggestions			Fridge magnet	Ads, TV, local rags		With Retailer bill, ads to for branding	With Retailer bill, ads	

Notes:

1. Quite a few groups (G5, G6, G7, G8) thought any material must be addressed to a person, not *The Resident* to avoid risk of being tossed in the bin
2. General view from all groups was given different age profile & preferences for communication, MG has to use a number of avenues
3. G7 asked whether MG wants customers to know who it is, and instead keep quite and maintain current low profile?

If more or better digital communication was available, would you prefer it to a call centre service?

Response	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	G8
Like the idea of digital self service call centres	Some support	Half supported					One quarter strong support	
Do not like the idea of digital self service call centres (mainly due to voice recognition issues)	Most support	Half supported	No support	Strong support	Strong support, want direct contact	Strong support	Three quarters no	Strong support
Webchat	General support	General support	Some support	Some support			Some support	Some support
A traditional call centre based in Australia is important (reasons included knowledgeable, can understand and Australian jobs)	General support				Some support	Limited support and willing to pay more		
A traditional call centre whose staff clearly speak English and are knowledgeable is important		Strong support	General support	General support	General support	General support	Strong support	Strong support with politeness

Notes:

1. G7 the culture of staff where the call centre is located is important as can result in different service expectations

- General overall support for controlled pilot program, particularly one that focusses on replacement of faulty meters and new connections, that avoids costly Vic AMI problems and costs
- There was some recognition of potential retailer partnership, with G8 emphasising that it should be a large retailer
- Also, there was general recognition that digital meters are inevitable and that MG should get on with installing them

Do you see benefits in us moving to digital meters, and is this initial investment worthwhile to deliver longer term benefits to customers? Do you have any concerns?

Response	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	G8
A pilot program that focusses on new and replacement of old and faulty meters makes good sense	Just replace with digital meters	Overall support with controlled approach	Overall support but learn from electricity	Overall support with controlled approach	Overall support, like idea of lower prices & improved safety	Overall support with controlled approach	Overall support if it results in lower costs	Overall support if can show long term benefits
It is inevitable and MG should get on with efficient replacement	Strong support	Strong support	Strong support	General support		Strong support	General support	
Important to not make the same costly mistakes as electricity		Strong support	Strong support	Strong support	Strong support	General support	Strong support	Strong support
Changeover must be efficient and not result in customer disadvantage	General support		Strong support	Strong support, guarantee customer will not be penalised	Strong support			1 x based on bad electricity smart meter experience

Notes:

1. G1 thought there was benefit of precise meter reads and avoiding estimates
2. A few groups thought a pro-active communication program is required
3. G6 (one participant) raised concerned of increased risk of cyber attack
4. G7 raised environmental concerns (EMF) plus concerned about ability for customers to change gas consumption