

May 2022

Statement of reasons: AusNet Services' Annual Pricing Proposal

The AER approves AusNet Services' 2022–23 pricing proposal and the tariffs contained within for commencement on 1 July 2022. AusNet Services' approved tariffs are set out on [our website](#).

Estimated network cost movements

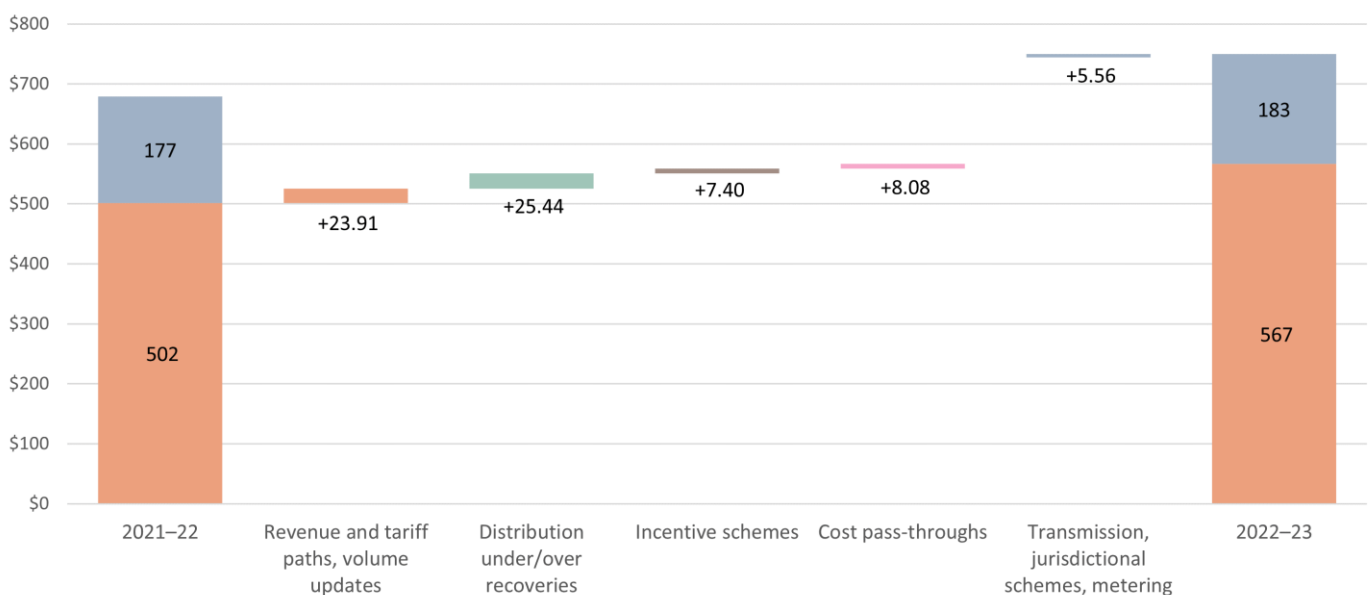
We estimate that, based on our decision, the network component of the typical bill for AusNet Services' customers to be \$70.38 higher for households and \$120.89 higher for small businesses in 2022–23 compared to 2021–22.

The network cost movements reflect an increase in revenue that AusNet Services is allowed to recover in 2022–23, as well as a forecast decrease in consumption.

There is a large change in allowed revenues between 2021-22 and 2022-23. In 2021–22, allowed revenues were reduced to return to customers previously over-recovered revenue in previous years. Having returned those revenues, the 2022-23 increase reflects a return to the revenue path set in the 2021–26 determination as well as increases for incentive scheme reward payments, higher than forecast inflation, and approved cost pass-throughs associated with the bushfire and storm natural disasters in recent years. We provide more detailed information on AusNet Services' consumption forecasts below.

We note electricity retailers ultimately determine how these underlying network tariffs are reflected in the retail prices offered to customers. The network charge component of an energy bill accounts for approximately 43% of the total residential retail bill.

Figure 1 Residential: Average annual network charge



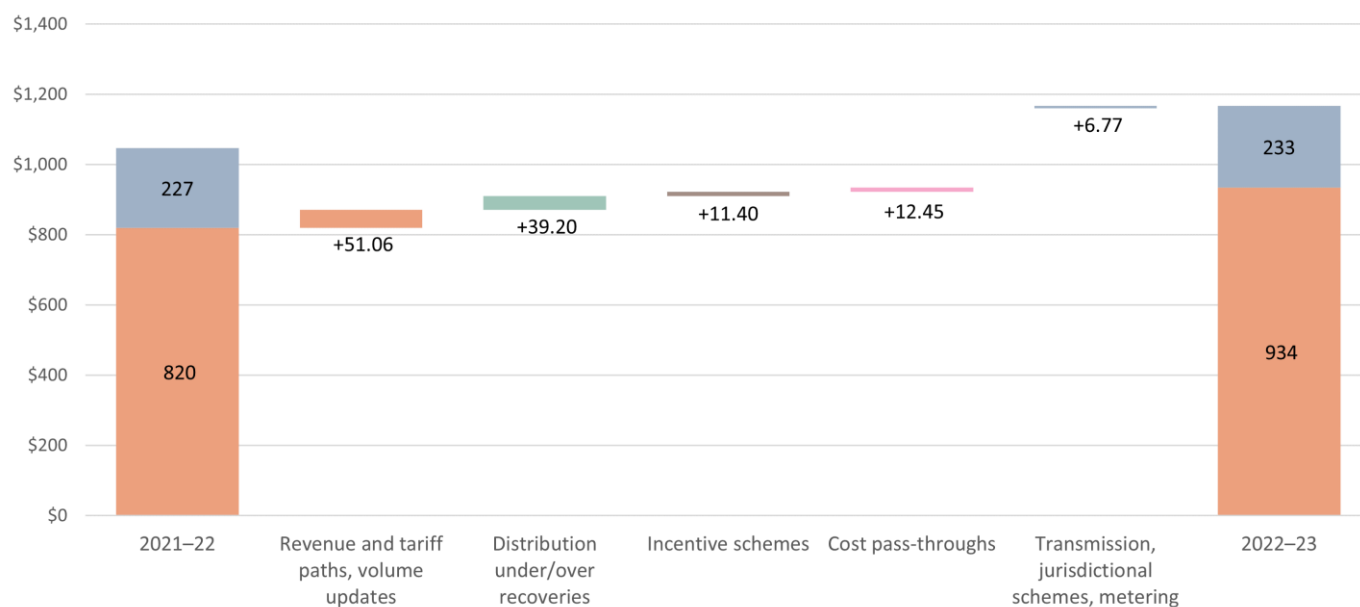
Source: AER Analysis; AusNet Services' 2022–23 pricing proposal.

Note: Our analysis assumes electricity usage of 4,370kWh for the 'Small single rate' residential tariff. This is based on actual data for residential electricity usage and customer numbers reported in Ausnet Services' 2022–23 pricing proposal.

'Revenue and tariff paths, volume updates' includes all other movements in the distribution network charges not shown above.

'Transmission, jurisdictional schemes, metering' includes all movements in the non-distribution network charges.

Figure 2 Small business: Average annual network charge



Source: AER Analysis; AusNet Services' 2022-23 pricing proposal.

Note: Our analysis assumes electricity usage of 5,237kWh for the 'Small single rate (business)' tariff. This is based on actual data for small business electricity usage and customer numbers reported in Ausnet Services' 2022-23 pricing proposal. 'Revenue and tariff paths, volume updates' includes all other movements in the distribution network charges not shown above. 'Transmission, jurisdictional schemes, metering' includes all movements in the non-distribution network charges.

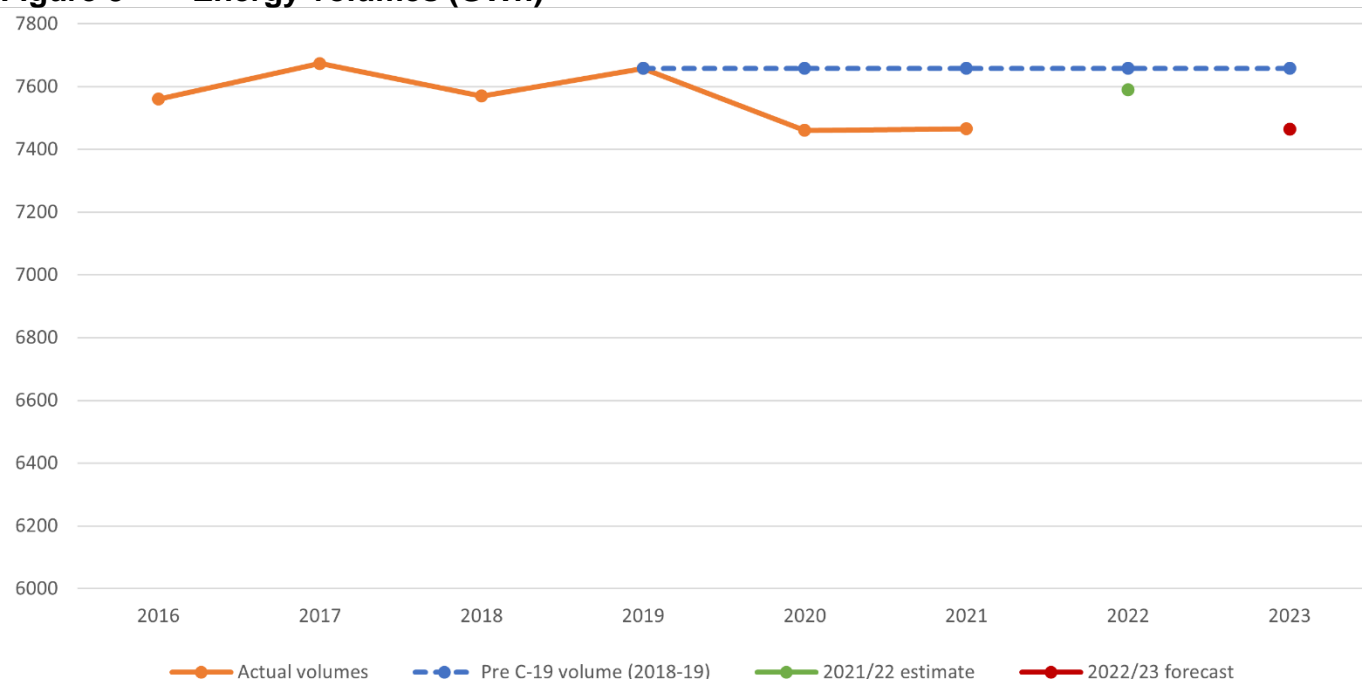
Actual bill impacts for individual customers will vary from our estimates as customers may be on different tariffs or consume different amounts of energy from our assumptions. Our analysis is based on flat rate tariffs, which are the most common tariffs for residential and small business customers. Where overall price movements are small, some tariffs may increase while others decrease.

Consumption forecasts

Electricity distributors operate under a revenue cap which sets the annual allowed revenue they can recover to deliver safe and reliable electricity within their networks. Prices are determined based on forecast consumption for that year, allowing distributors to recover their allowed revenue. If distributors forecast lower consumption, then other things being equal, prices are expected to be higher to allow them to recover the revenue allowed.

Our assessment of the distributors' consumption forecasts includes analysis of historical consumption trends and the reasons put forward for any departure from them. For 2022-23, a key factor of our assessment is the impact that Australia's response to COVID-19 has had and is continuing to have on energy consumption.

Figure 3 Energy volumes (GWh)



Source: AER Analysis; RIN data; AusNet Services' 2022–23 pricing proposal.

AusNet Services has forecast decreased energy consumption for 2022–23. The forecast is based on long term trends and includes reductions in energy consumption per customer due to energy efficiency and greater solar PV installations. This reduction is being partially offset by customer growth consistent with its historical trends.

We consider AusNet Services' consumption forecasts are reasonable based on our analysis and the supporting information provided by AusNet Services.

Under/over recovered revenues

Although we set the revenues the distributors can recover, the revenue they ultimately receive over an individual year is determined by the amount of actual energy consumed in that year.

- Actual energy consumption can fluctuate from forecast consumption because of a number of factors such as weather, increased uptake of solar PV, or, in recent times, in response to a pandemic. These fluctuations in energy consumption result in distributors recovering more or less than the allowable revenue we set.
- Variations also occur for the transmission costs and jurisdictional scheme amounts a distributor passes through to customers where actual payments differ to what was forecast.

To 'true-up' these variations in revenue, adjustments are made to allowable revenues for the upcoming financial year to ensure that over time, a distributor only recovers the revenue it is allowed.