



Appendix 1.1: Communication Link report of feedback from community and customer forum sessions

Revised 2026–31 access arrangement
information

ACT and Queanbeyan-Palerang gas network access
arrangement 2026–31

Submission to the Australian Energy Regulator

January 2026

Evoenergy Community and Customer Forums

Gas network 2026–31 access arrangement revised regulatory proposal

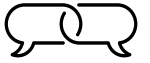


Report of feedback received from
Community Forum sessions 11 & 12 and
NSW Customer Forum sessions 1 & 2

December 2025

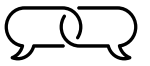


Communication Link



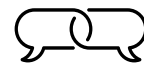
Acknowledgement of Country

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



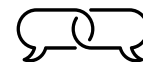
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1. Executive Summary

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

To help Evoenergy better understand the values and long-term interests of their customers and inform decisions for the 2026–31 gas network access arrangement regulatory proposal (the five-year gas plan), a Community Forum was established in 2024. This engagement program was expanded in late 2025 to include the establishment of a dedicated NSW Customer Forum. Both forums were independently recruited and facilitated by Communication Link.

This report provides a summary of the activities undertaken and feedback heard during Evoenergy’s engagement forums after it submitted its five-year gas plan – meetings 11 and 12 of the Community Forum, and meetings 1 and 2 of the NSW Customer Forum. The groups are collectively referred to in this report as the forums. This report is supplementary to the suite of materials covering Evoenergy’s engagement prior to submitting its plan, which can be found on its [website](#).

1.1 The engagement process

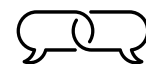
The engagement process for the forums maintained the deliberative and methodical approach established earlier in the program, continuing the journey of building understanding regarding the energy network and complex pricing and revenue recovery considerations. Consistent with previous phases, the process included diverse learning and feedback activities to ensure that all voices—both existing and new—were heard, and everyone retained the ability to contribute effectively.

To uphold the high standard of participant experience, the program maintained its significant investment in AV technology, online tools, and tailored workshop design. This ensured that the online participant experience closely replicated that of in-person attendees. A dedicated facilitator guided each online session, including activities, questions, and sharing of feedback with in-person members. Communication Link continues to regard this as a benchmark for high-quality hybrid engagement.

The process was meaningful and rewarding for participants, with 83% of participants recording that the ability to participate and contribute to discussion was easy or very easy.

Although complex information and concepts were discussed, 70% of participants found the information presented easy or somewhat easy to understand. This reflects the investment by Evoenergy in ensuring information was presented in an easy-to-understand manner with significant time allowed for questions and discussion to aid understanding.

The number of active Community Forum members remained largely the same across sessions 11 and 12. This forum had 32 members (August 2024) followed by 28 members (March 2025) and 27 members for sessions 11 and 12. The NSW Customer Forum maintained 22 members.



**27 community
forum members**



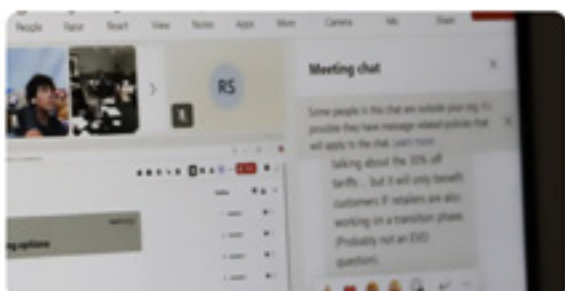
**22 NSW customer
forum members**



9 hours of sessions



10+ feedback activities

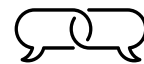


Over 500 data points



**Approximately
100 cups of tea**





2. Introduction

2.1 Context for the engagement program

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

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

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

2.2 Purpose of this report

Evoenergy is currently finalising its access arrangement plan for the 2026–31 period, a strategic plan designed to ensure a safe and reliable network while laying the foundations for an equitable transition to full electrification by 2045. The regulatory process has reached a key stage. Following the submission of the initial five-year plan in June 2025, the Australian Energy Regulator (AER) released its draft decision on 28 November 2025. Evoenergy's response to the AER's draft decision (its revised five-year plan) is due in January 2026.

The Engagement Strategy for the five-year plan was designed to ensure customer voices directly shape these submissions. A key component of the program is the Community Forum, made up of randomly selected participants representative of the ACT region's diverse community. In late 2025, this program was expanded to include a dedicated NSW Customer Forum to gather specific insights from Evoenergy's NSW customers, i.e., those who have gas connections and are within Evoenergy's Queanbeyan-Palerang gas network. Like the existing forum, this new forum was randomly selected to reflect the demographic make-up of the communities where Evoenergy operates in NSW.

Both groups were facilitated by Communication Link. Collectively referred to as the forums, they play a pivotal role in ensuring that Evoenergy's revised plan reflects the values and long-term interests of customers, particularly regarding bill impacts and a fair and equitable energy transition.

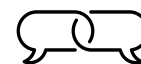
These conversations with consumers and other stakeholders are informing and shaping Evoenergy's decisions over the next five years and through to 2045. All forum sessions were observed by a representative from the AER and its Consumer Challenge Panel.

This report provides a summary of the discussions and feedback heard between October and December 2025, after Evoenergy had submitted its five-year gas plan, covering meetings 11 and 12 of the Community Forum and the inaugural meetings (1 and 2) of the NSW Customer Forum.



How we engaged

3



3. How we engaged

3.1 Engagement objectives

The delivery of the forums is guided by Communication Link's best practice principles.

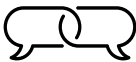
	Implementation	Outcome
Two-way	Effective facilitation and listening activities to build shared understanding and meaningful feedback.	Better understand of client and stakeholder views making it easier to reflect and respond.
Genuine	Effectively reflect feedback received, even if we are unable to deliver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

Figure 1. Best practice engagement principles

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

Table 1. Engagement objectives

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



3.2 Engagement approach

3.2.1 IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation

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

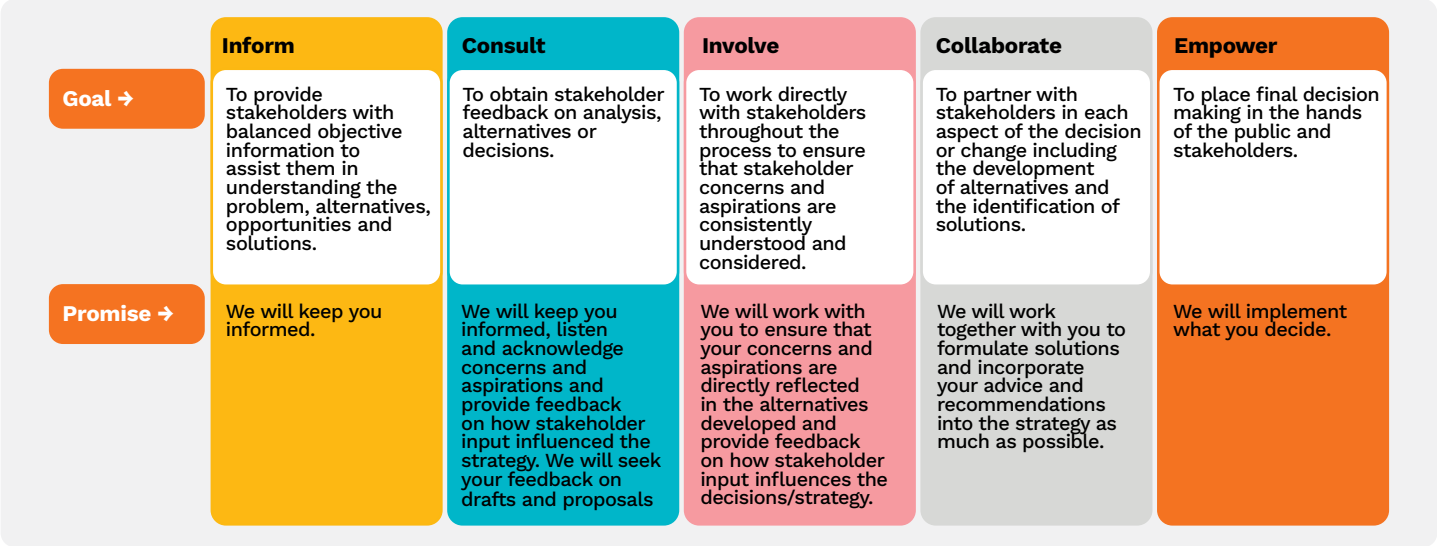


Figure 2. IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation

3.2.2 Accessibility

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

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

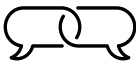
3.3 Composition of the forums

3.3.1 Recruitment

The Evoenergy forums were established through an independent recruitment process that used blind demographic stratification to build a group that is diverse and representative of Evoenergy’s customers within the Canberra and Queanbeyan-Palerang region.

The Community Forum started off with 35 people in May 2024 and by December 2025 consisted of 27 people. The NSW Customer Forum consisted of 22 people from the Queanbeyan-Palerang region.

A summary of the forums’ demographics is provided in Figures 3 and 4.



3.3.2 Community Forum demographics

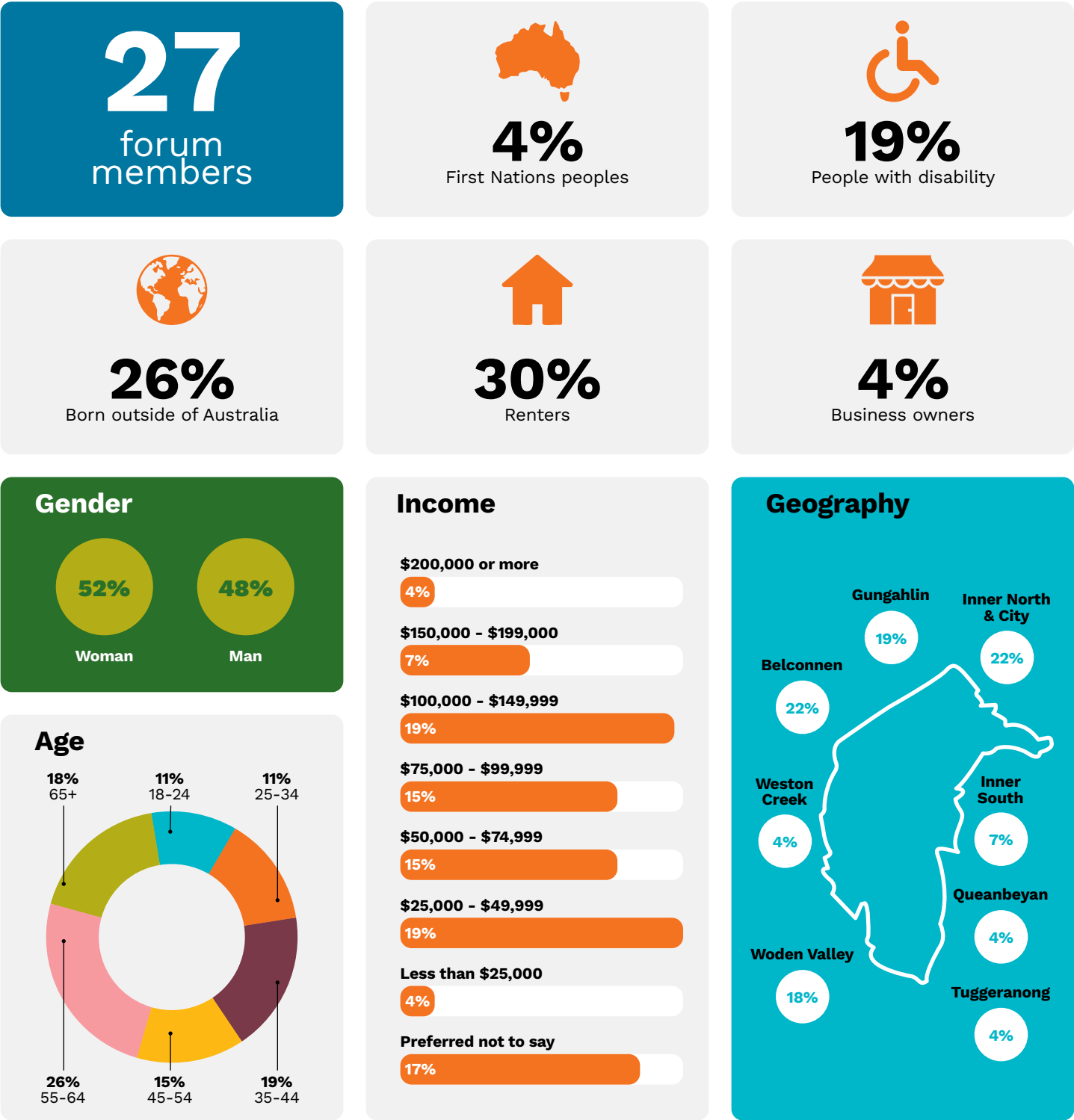
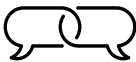


Figure 3. Demographic composition of the community forum



3.3.3 NSW Customer Forum demographics

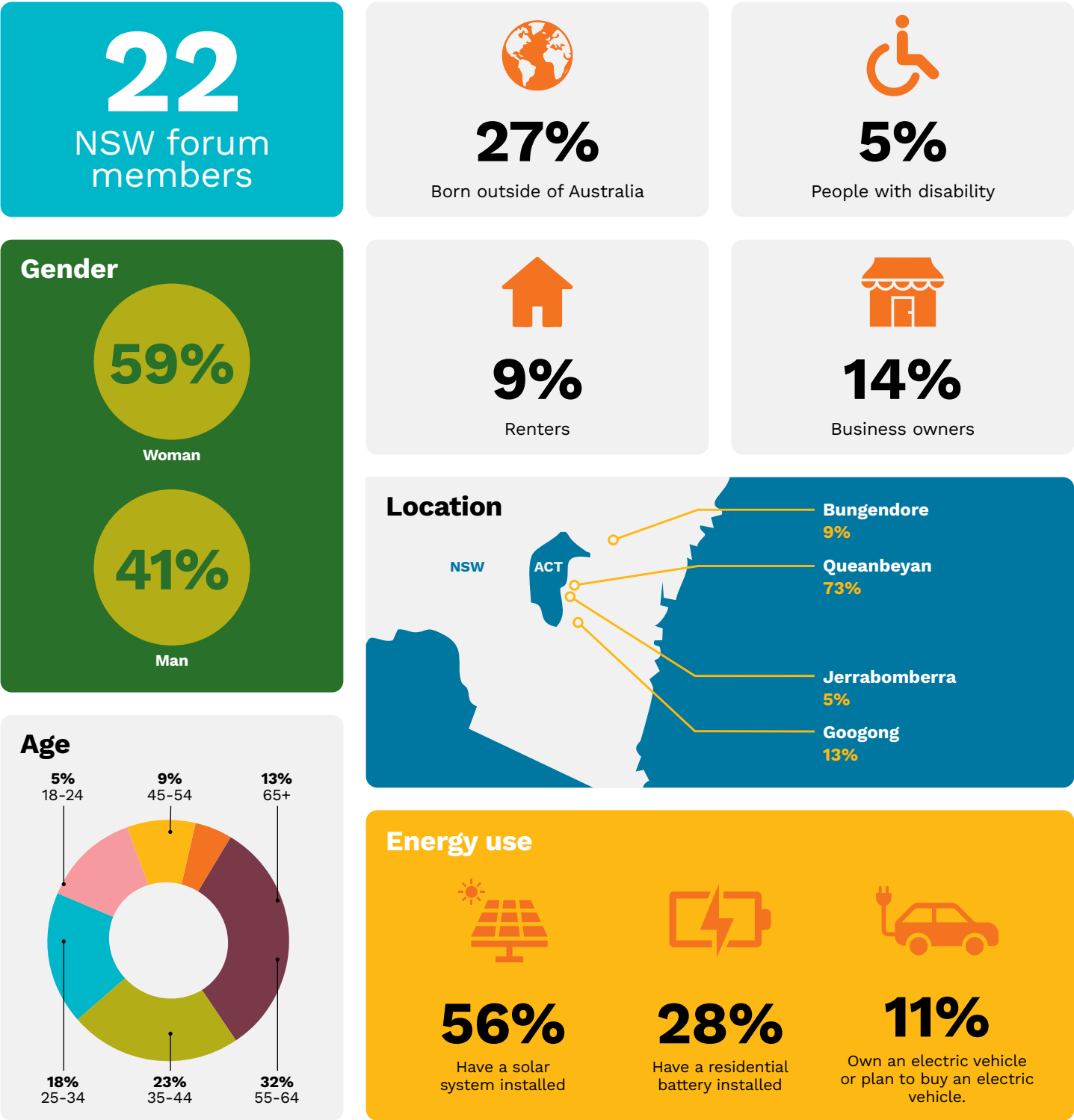
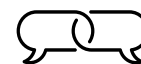


Figure 4. Demographic composition of the NSW Customer Forum



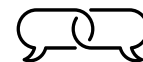
3.4 Timeline of the forums' sessions

The sessions covered by this report were the final stages of an extensive series of Community Forum meetings that commenced in May 2024. The image below provides a summary of the different stages of the work of the Community Forum, including the hosting of the NSW Customer Forums between October and December 2025. Session 12 involved both the community forum and NSW customer forum participants.

Overview of Evoenergy's gas network five-year gas plan 2026–31 Community and Customer Forum sessions



Figure 5. Overview of Evoenergy's gas network engagement through the community and customer forums



3.5 Engagement activities and tools

3.5.1 The forums' activities

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

The forums have used tools and activities to aid in contributing and developing knowledge and understanding including:

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

3.5.2 Slido

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

3.5.3 Slack

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

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

3.5.4 Website

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

3.5.5 Frequently Asked Questions

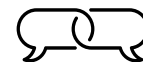
To aid understanding, Evoenergy developed frequently asked questions ahead of each session to support the technical presentations with clear, concise information about topics discussed on the forums' agendas.

3.5.7 Story wall

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

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





4. Summary of feedback

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

For each forum session there is also a Snapshot summary which was presented at the conclusion of each session (and via email following the meeting) for review and ratification by participants. These summaries are explained in more detail at section 5 of this report and are attached as [Appendix A](#). Evoenergy's five-year plan is frequently referred to as **GN26** during the forums' sessions.

4.1 Community Forum: Session 11 30 October 2025 – Energy sector updates, stakeholder feedback on five-year-plan, and gas demand updates

IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum level: **Inform**

Session 11 of the Community Forum was an important opportunity for Evoenergy to update members since they last met in May 2025, including presenting their five-year gas plan lodged with the AER on 30 June 2025. As the session was largely made up of presentations, the session was held entirely online.

4.1.1 AEMC gas networks review

Evoenergy provided an overview of the Australian Energy Market Commission (AEMC) review into gas networks in transition and likely changes to the charges associated with both disconnection and new connections to the gas network. The forum discussed the implications of potential rule changes and consumer protections for both ACT and NSW customers.

1.1.1.1 Initial feedback on the AEMC review

- A suggestion that customers buying new gas appliances in NSW should be notified about the proposed future high costs of connecting to gas to ensure informed decision-making
- Support for user pays approach rather than sharing costs.

The following areas were raised for further discussion:

- The ability of customers who have temporarily disconnected to re-connect to the network at a later date
- The specific costs associated with re-connection
- Interest from forum members regarding how they can personally get involved in the AEMC's rule change processes.

4.1.2 Stakeholder feedback on five-year gas plan

Evoenergy presented a summary of the public and stakeholder submissions on the five-year gas plan. The forum explored how this feedback aligned with their own views and queried how external regulatory changes might impact the final proposal.

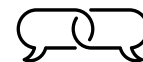
4.1.2.1 Initial feedback on stakeholder submissions

The initial feedback on the stakeholder responses is summarised below.

- Interest in whether submissions were received from specific large energy users such as universities, student accommodation, and large apartment complexes.

The following areas were raised for further discussion:

- The interaction between AEMC rule changes and the five-year plan, and what happens if rules change during the determination process
- Whether accelerated depreciation would still be explored, noting concerns raised in public submissions
- Clarification on whether homeowners will be required to permanently disconnect gas before selling their property and if this is part of forecasted changes.



4.1.3 Gas demand forecast update

Evoenergy provided an update on gas demand forecasts, providing an update based on new data received. The forum discussed external supply factors and the effectiveness of current government incentives.

4.1.3.1 Initial feedback on demand forecasts

A request for an update on the low-interest rate loans offered by the ACT Government to understand if they have materially impacted the rate of electrification.

The following areas were raised for further discussion:

- Recent news regarding reduced gas supply for NSW and VIC
- The potential impact of supply reductions on the price of gas and associated purchasing decisions
- Interested in understanding how many units or apartment developments were approved in the ACT before the gas ban was implemented, noting that there was a slight increase in new gas customers.

What we heard

This reflects the participant endorsed session 11 snapshot summary - refer to [Appendix A](#).

Participants mainly focused on the financial and practical challenges of the transition, seeking clarity on connection costs, the treatment of large apartment complexes, and the future impacts of government policy changes on homeowners.

4.2 NSW Customer Forum Session 1 10 November 2025 – Introduction and values

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

The first session of the NSW Customer Forum provided an opportunity for members to get to know each other and feel comfortable in sharing their opinions to the group and with Evoenergy. Ice-breaker activities included a get-to-know each other activity. A briefing was also provided on Evoenergy's role in the Energy Market and an explanation of the gas transition. Participants undertook a short activity to determine how the group would operate. Under the IAP2 engagement spectrum this was an 'empowered' engagement.

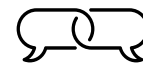
4.2.1 NSW Customer Forum operating principles

To further strengthen relationships within the forum and establish an environment that provided a safe place for open discussion, the forum members identified behaviours and expectations to guide the work of the forum.

How you want to work together

This reflects the participant endorsed session 1 snapshot summary - refer to [Appendix A](#).

- Listening
- Participation
- Respect
- Asking questions
- Inclusivity
- Considerate
- Confidentiality and trust
- No such thing as a dumb question or answer
- Politeness and courtesy
- Civility
- Knowledge building.



4.2.2 Understanding demand uncertainty

NSW Customer Forum members were briefed on the ACT Government's plan to phase out natural gas. This included informing the participants on the estimated costs of upgrading to electric appliances, and that Evoenergy's NSW gas network will no longer be viable once the ACT component of the network closes.

4.2.2.1 Personal transition journey

To help participants understand demand uncertainty, they were asked to consider how quickly they are personally likely to transition away from gas.

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

- ACT Government's transition timeline
- The impacts of the ACT transition on Evoenergy's NSW gas customers
- Likely costs to customers to change from gas to electricity.

Using a digital polling tool, Slido, participants were asked how quickly they think they will transition from gas to electricity. Results are provided in Figure 6. The question was answered on the basis of what their plans were before participating in this session.

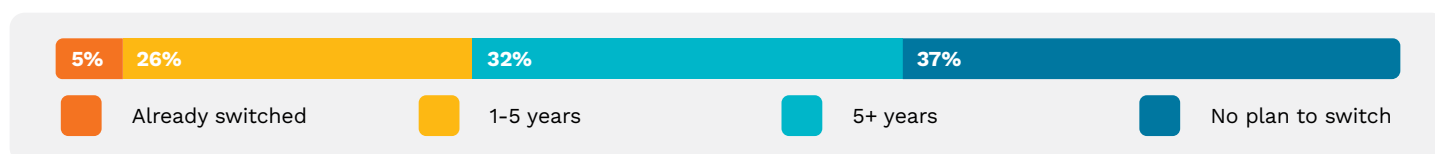


Figure 6. Question: How quickly do you think you will shift your energy use from gas to electricity? (19 responses)

4.2.2.2 ACT Government policies

Using Slido, participants were asked to rank the amount of influence they think ACT Government policies have on NSW customers? Poll results are in Figure 7.

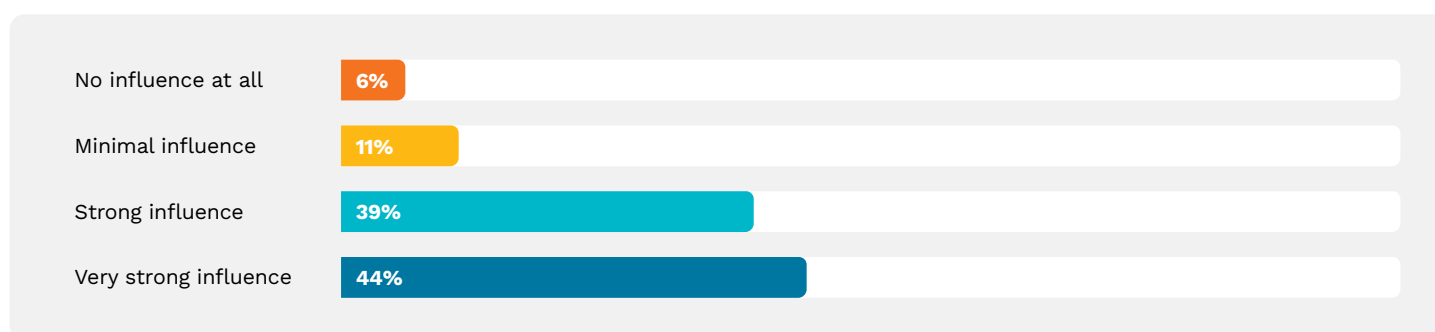


Figure 7. Question: How much influence do you think ACT Government policies have on the decisions of Evoenergy's NSW gas customers? (18 responses)

4.2.2.3 Connection charges for NSW Customers

Evoenergy briefed the NSW forum members on the current AEMC review of gas network connection charges, which is expected to result in an upfront charge for NSW customers to connect to the gas network of around \$2,200.

Using Slido, forum members were asked how much impact they felt this will have on NSW customers considering connecting to the gas network. Poll results are detailed below in Figure 8.

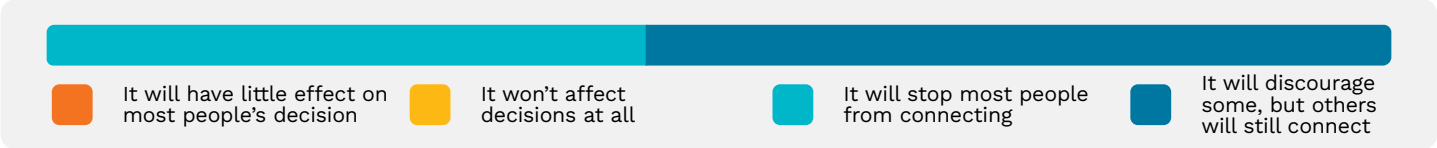
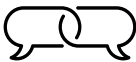


Figure 8. Question: Consider the new (around \$2,200) upfront charge to connect to the gas network. How do you think this will impact new customers' decision to connect to Evoenergy's gas network in NSW? (19 responses)

What we heard

This reflects the participant endorsed session 1 snapshot summary - refer to [Appendix A](#).

The majority of participants were not planning to transition off gas in the short term. Almost 70% were not planning to transition in the next five years, or had no plans at all.

Most participants felt that ACT Government policies influenced the behaviour of NSW gas customers.

Participants felt that a connection charge of \$2,200 will stop or discourage people from connecting to the gas network with almost 60% suggesting it will stop people connecting at all.

4.2.3 Recovering network costs

Evoenergy explained how it recovers revenue to fund the operation of the network, including the role of depreciation in recovering gas network owners' investment in network infrastructure over the life of the assets.

Evoenergy presented the current challenges associated with recovering these infrastructure costs when:

- the forecast life of the assets is unexpectedly shortened as in the case of the future decommissioning of the gas network, and
- the pace of customers leaving the network, as they transition to electricity, is uncertain and therefore modelling how to fairly spread the cost recovery over forward years is difficult.

4.2.3.1 Comparing depreciation methods

Evoenergy presented three depreciation methods for consideration and feedback by the customer forum:

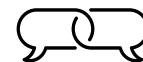
- Status quo (straight line depreciation with technical asset lives)
- Economic lives
- Accelerated depreciation.

Customer Forum members worked in small groups to discuss the respective strengths and weaknesses of each depreciation method. Feedback from the activity is presented in Table 1 below.

Forum members also considered what impacts there may be on NSW customers for each of the different depreciation methods. Feedback from this activity is presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of each depreciation option

Feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of each depreciation option		
Straight line depreciation with technical asset lives (status quo)	Strengths	Weaknesses
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">no short-term customer impacts and is the same system as currently exists.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Penalises those that can least afford it as it increases costs for those who can't transition earlyDoesn't allow Evoenergy to recover its costsRelies on a stable decrease in customers which is unlikely.



Feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of each depreciation option

Straight line depreciation with economic asset lives (economic lives)	Strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evoenergy is able to recover all its costs. 	Weaknesses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very significant cost increase for those that who need to transition later. This may disproportionately impact lower socio-economic customers Not palatable due to price increase.
Sum of Years Digit depreciation with economic asset lives (accelerated depreciation)	Strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is the most equitable option Lower pricing across the model per annum Distributes the costs more evenly across customers regardless of length of time using the network Reduces this impact on those who cannot bear the significant upfront costs. 	Weaknesses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relies on assumptions to inform the model. If modelling is incorrect may benefit or hurt customers who transitioned earlier or later Will accelerate the decline of the network and users As cost is spread over a bigger customer base, price impact is lower and may slow down transition.

Table 3. Feedback on impacts on NSW customers, that may be different to ACT customers

Feedback on impacts on NSW customers, that may be different to ACT customers

Straight line depreciation with technical asset lives (status quo)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are no government incentives available for NSW customers The transition is likely to be slower in NSW Cost for NSW customers will 'bite' and the alternative is that Evoenergy may go 'bust'.
Straight line depreciation with economic asset lives (economic lives)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ACT customers can access incentives and financial support to transition If ACT customer numbers decline quickly and viability of the network declines, NSW customers will suffer Without external intervention the cost will be significant ACT incentives to disconnect unfairly penalise NSW residents who can't access these subsidies, therefore transitioning more slowly and therefore will be paying more. This seems inequitable.
Sum of Years Digit depreciation with economic asset lives (accelerated depreciation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incentives only available to ACT residents NSW residents will be left behind This option provides more security for those wanting to continue to use gas and allows more time to transition This may produce political action by NSW Government or QPRC to match ACT Government subsidies Could ACT customers feel aggrieved that they are effectively subsidising NSW customers who hold onto gas?

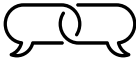
What we heard

This reflects the participant endorsed session 1 snapshot summary - refer to [Appendix A](#).

The accelerated depreciation (Sum of Years Digits) option appears to have the most strengths and was seen as the more equitable option by NSW customers.

The most frequent impact on NSW customers identified by the Customer Forum was the inability of NSW customers to access ACT Government incentives and financial supports.

There were also suggestions that the active support by the ACT Government to encourage people to transition would speed up the transition, leaving NSW customers to fund a greater proportion of network costs, as they are slower to transition.



4.3 NSW Customer Forum Session 2 17 November 2025 – Exploring equity and fairness and demand uncertainty

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

4.3.1 Fair sharing of network costs

To further explore the fair sharing of network costs between customers, the Customer Forum was presented with three different customer scenarios to consider.

The presentation reflected on the impacts for ‘early adopters’, gradual ‘switchers’ and the ‘stayers’ over the early and later periods of the transition.

4.3.1.1 Considering impacts of the different approaches to depreciation across different customer types

Forum members were asked about the different impacts between Evoenergy’s proposed approach to depreciation and the AER preferred straight-line depreciation from the perspective of different customer types.

Working in small groups, participants were asked to consider how well Evoenergy’s proposed approach contributes to fairness and equity for different customer types compared to the straight-line approach. Table 4 captures the answers provided by these groups.

Table 4. Feedback on the fair sharing of network costs under different approaches to depreciation

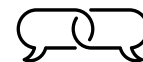
Feedback on fair sharing of network costs
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Evoenergy’s approach appears to be the more equitable approach, but this is the better of a bad situationNeither approach is fair. They don’t address affordability for vulnerable customers including the aged and lower socio-economic groupsThere are winners and losers in all scenarios. Knowing what I know now, I would rather keep the cost low now so that I can save to buy new appliances for the switchIt is not a bad approach but concerns still exist for the stayers - they may not have a choice to be a stayerEvoenergy’s approach appears to provide equality across the first half of the transition but lacks equity across the whole period. Those who are slow to transition will face significantly higher gas costs in the long runThe straight-line approach appears to be more equitable to slow movers, particularly if costs can be transitioned elsewhere (e.g., onto government).

4.3.1.2 Impacts on NSW customers – fair sharing of network costs

Working in small groups, participants were also asked to consider if Evoenergy’s proposed approach will impact on NSW customers differently to ACT customers. Feedback is presented in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Feedback on fair sharing of network costs

Feedback on fair sharing of network costs
<ul style="list-style-type: none">The lack of financial incentives for NSW customers will mean NSW customers remain longer on the network with the potential to be burdened with a greater share of the costsThis was a political decision by a government that the NSW residents didn’t have a chance to vote for or influence. It was felt that NSW Government and Queanbeyan Palerang Regional Council will be unable/unlikely to financially support local residents during this transitionThat there should be other options beside recovering the entire costs from customersThat the ACT Government didn’t consult with NSW customers and should provide the same incentives to the NSW customers. There was also a suggestion that the ACT Government pay compensationThere may be an impact on industry and potential future lack of gasfittersACT focus on sustainability and EER ratings when selling properties will also speed up transition to the detriment of NSW customers.



4.3.1.3 The challenge of balancing customer prices now and in the future

Participants were asked to share ideas for addressing the challenge of balancing customer prices now and in the future and for different types of customers. Ideas were generated as part of their small group discussions and are presented in Table 6 below.

Table 6. Ideas from the Customer Forum

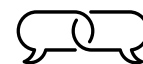
Ideas from the NSW Customer Forum	
Sell the infrastructure to a community co-op to continue supply	Investor dividends to be reduced to lower costs to gas users
Need to seek Government assistance for NSW consumers impacted by the ACT Government policy	Transparent communication now to help people plan and have choices
Could Evoenergy consider expanding its NSW footprint and build a sustainable gas network that continues to service Queanbeyan and surrounds, plus Murrumbateman, Goulburn etc?	Involving the local government and increasing supports/ incentives so there are not as many stayers....
Could Evoenergy wait till the very end of life for sending the final bills to everyone for permanent disconnect regardless of when they transitioned off? ie pay the temp disconnect for early adopters but still have to pay permanent disconnect at the end or via some sort of scheduled program of disconnecting.	There should be a class action suit taken against the ACT Government from both the consumers perspective and the investors perspective. Evoenergy should be paid damages by the ACT Government.
Providing more advice to NSW customers when completing new builds/ renovations - I only just completed one and put in gas hot water and then being presented with this. I didn't get an option to make a well-informed choice only finding out now...	It's a natural resource and should not be banned. Every customer should have choice either to choose electricity or gas. Surprised to see this is going on.
For government: (1) provide means tested incentives which are highest now and reduce over the next decade (as electrical appliances hopefully get cheaper with greater uptake) for owners to transition; (2) require landlords to ensure minimum energy efficiency ratings for rental properties, and transition to electrical appliances over time; (3) make the transition more approachable by offering free home energy assessments to make it easier to create a plan and timeline for transition.	For government, Evoenergy or the community sector - provide more robust tools and explainers for the transition from gas to electric and do more to let those in QPRC know about the impending issues. For example, an equivalent to the ACT Government's Everyday Climate Choices and CHOICE's Make your Next Choice Electric geared specifically to QPRC residents.
People should be left to have a choice. There should be compensation or waiver of all these costs. The investors took a risk, they shouldn't be allowed to recover the cost. Amend the law/ policy to make it fair.	

What we heard

The forum members identified the following key issues in terms of fairness and equity:

- NSW customers are being unfairly burdened by a political decision they could not influence
- Concern that neither depreciation approach properly addresses affordability for vulnerable customers who may become involuntary 'stayers' because they cannot afford new electrical appliances
- Evoenergy's accelerated depreciation approach was viewed by some as 'the better of a bad situation'
- A perceived lack of financial incentives for NSW residents creates an inequity, leaving them on the network longer and potentially shouldering higher recovery costs
- There is a need for transparent communication now to help NSW customers, especially those building new homes in NSW, to make informed choices to avoid stranded assets.

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



4.3.2 Demand uncertainty

Evoenergy presented forum members with different scenarios that demonstrated the impacts of demand declining at a faster or slower rate than forecast. These scenarios considered both the long-term and short-term implications of this uncertainty.

4.3.2.1 Long term demand uncertainty

Working in small groups, forum members was asked if their feedback on the most equitable approach to investment recovery changed once they had considered the implication of long-term demand variability. Table 7 captures the answers provided.

Table 7. Feedback on long-term demand uncertainty

Long term demand uncertainty

The only definitive answer provided in response to this question was no, with the following supporting explanation:

- The government will need to step in if the costs get too outrageous
- I think the transition will be slower (or faster)
- There are only two options
- Evoenergy will not be able to recover all its costs regardless.

The following additional suggestions were also made:

- That there be incentive arrangements created for Evoenergy to reward accurate forecasting
- That there be an increase in frequency of revisiting the demand models
- Allowing tolerance in the model as a buffer if the transition moves quicker than expected
- The ACT Government should levy all taxpayers to cover the cost
- More communication and education is required.

4.3.2.2 Short term demand uncertainty

Working in small groups, forum members were asked to consider the impacts of short-term demand uncertainty and the respective strengths and weaknesses of the Evoenergy's proposed approach and the AER's preferred approach. Table 8 captures the answers provided.

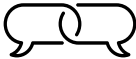
Table 8. Feedback on short-term demand uncertainty

Feedback on Evoenergy's approach

- This has the benefit of having a set revenue with less exposure to the rate of transition risk for both Evoenergy and customers
- A negative is that customers are exposed to the highest possible prices if there is a faster transition
- Yearly updates will be more accurate and incremental.

Feedback on the AER's preferred approach

- It has the benefit of smoothing out potential impacts of forecast uncertainty
- Including a threshold is a good parameter
- This encourages a slower, steady transition which reduces the risk
- This approach protects customers more, by reducing Evoenergy's revenue amount to make up for the lower price
- This approach provides more certainty to Evoenergy in the 5-year period but could lead to a price shock every 5 years for customers.



What we heard

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

The forum expressed concern that long-term demand uncertainty could lead to variability in forecasts, indecision, and faster customer drop-off, making cost recovery more difficult.

Members generally see AER’s approach as smoothing variability and protecting customers through thresholds, while Evoenergy’s approach offers revenue certainty but risks higher prices if transition accelerates. Concerns include unclear pricing methods, cost recovery timing, and the need for stability to prevent rapid customer exit.

4.4 Community Forum Session 12 9 December 2025 – AER draft decision and revised five-year gas plan positions

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

Session 12 of the Community Forum was a combined forum of both the Community Forum and the NSW Customer Forum members. Evoenergy used this session to present the AER’s draft decision as it related to key policy components of Evoenergy’s five-year plan. It was also an opportunity to gather feedback from forum participants on Evoenergy’s options for a revised five-year plan.

4.4.1 The AER’s draft decision on five-year gas plan

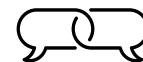
4.4.1.1 Initial reactions to the AER’s draft decision

Evoenergy presented the AER’s draft decision as it related to the following elements of their five-year gas plan: demand forecast, asset cost recovery, expenditure, approach to adjusting prices, approach to disconnections and tariffs.

Using Slido, the online chat and speaking within the forum, the participants provided their initial reaction to the AER’s draft decision. Table 9 below provides the detail of reactions shared during this session.

Table 9. Provides participants initial reactions to the AER’s draft decision (comments reproduced verbatim)

Initial reactions to the AER Draft decision
<div><div>🗨</div><div>Does their decision reflect the size of our population compared to the rest of the country. Ie other states have different views to ACT government</div></div> <div><div>🗨</div><div>Surprised by how comprehensively the AER position differs</div></div> <div><div>🗨</div><div>Initial feedback is:<div><div>–</div><div>It seems very short term focused within 5 years at keeping the prices low for 5 years. Which is the idea of the framework. The problem with the 5 year framework seems to be that is based on the assumption of a steady and know growth of the network</div></div><div><div>–</div><div>Can we get the AER along to the community forum for them to see the community forums feedback and so that</div></div><div><div>–</div><div>The AER needs to encourage participation in their feedback session as many people I believe are concerned about this, but almost no one in the general community (outside this Evoenergy forum) knows about the AER’s forum</div></div><div><div>–</div><div>Should be partially responsible for safety incidents if they occur after rejecting funding for safety campaign</div></div></div></div> <div><div>🗨</div><div>From draft decision, looks like consumer who will transition late will need to pay more</div></div> <div><div>🗨</div><div>Why go against what had been discussed by the community?</div></div> <div><div>🗨</div><div>This is a really challenging response from the AER, who come under the portfolio of Climate Change and Energy - their position doesn’t appear to align with/further the Commonwealth’s ambition for a net zero future (transition away from more emissions intense activities to less intense)</div></div>



Initial reactions to the AER Draft decision

- “ This community forum’s feedback had in focus the need to factor in climate change impacts, and also to ensure that community cost of living pressures are alleviated not increased
- “ The AER decision feels like it was produced by people with no idea of the ACT/Queanbeyan region. It feels politically motivated over short term to cap price increases; and not focused at all on the bigger picture. They get 0/10. If they want a politically motivated outcome they should bring utility operations under state ownership. The AER also appeared to assume community members were not smart enough in my opinion to understand accelerated depreciation based on my brief read of the exec summary. It felt quite insulting given the extensive consultation had
- “ Seems that they’ve been quite hard on all the requests. Part of me appreciates that, things like not supporting a customer safety program are a worry
- “ Offensive
- “ Shocked
- “ Is the regulator treating ACT like the other states and not looking at ACT specific policy?
- “ Not good, clearly they are not listening to majority of the point out forward, sadly it is an indication of either communication that was not clear or other underlying issue?
- “ Lack of flexibility, lack of long term planning
- “ Doesn’t sound like they have really taken much on board from the customers
- “ I am really not happy that the tariff for those using least will increase and punish those using least
- “ I am appalled the AER is not considering ACT government’s plan to phase out gas in 2045. And all the aims that we need to make it work best for people
- “ I think the real difficulty in the way you are trying to look beyond 2031, I have a big picture they’re not giving the answer. It seems that AER is working strictly on the rules we’ve worked for these 5 years. What happened there? I don’t know who cares and I mean basically you ask us to go and look a bit beyond and you know what you want to do. How can we go and tell them grow up because the world won’t finish in 2031? The decision we make now will have longer impact. How can we go and tell them? Doesn’t matter if its community doing that on any day, it’s for everyone. Thanks for business, they look also beyond five years
- “ It just seems like they’re totally ignoring the ACT, as a unique case, and just looking at what they’re doing in every other state.

All dotpoints presented in table 9 are direct quotes taken from feedback provided by members.

4.4.1.2 How well does the AER’s draft decision reflect community feedback

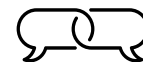
Participants were asked to also respond in Slido on how well they felt the AER’s draft decision reflected community feedback. Table 10 provides the feedback received in response to this question.

Table 10. Responses to question: Do you think it reflects the Community’s feedback? Why/why not? (comments reproduced verbatim)

Does the AER’s draft decision reflect community feedback

- “ Didn’t see/hear much about fairness and equity in the AER position- did I miss something?
- “ Largely no. It seems very much focused on the exact rules and not allowing governments and communities to achieve their emission and energy policies
- “ The rules that the AER has to work under may need to be reviewed
- “ Unless govt will not take ownership and left with customer to pay at this cost of living crisis, it will not do good with community
- “ It does not seem to have considered what the ACT position is towards going zero use of Gas
- “ Absolutely not. Haven’t listened at all to price cap, accelerated depreciation, education campaign and almost everything
- “ I think fundamentally when we go back to our first few sessions it does support our views but I think we’ve come further and developed more empathy for Evo. My greatest concerns at the moment are over safety
- “ Do not align with community values
- “ No, it’s all very confusing on their part
- “ Well the community voiced it’s concerns but if the recipient is not comprehending then the voice needs to be either louder or clearer
- “ No
- “ Not really, it comes across as if their main focus is still just recovering as much money as possible while making it sound like they’re considering the little guy.

All dotpoints shown in table 10 are direct quotes taken from feedback provided by members.



What we heard

Members expressed general disappointment with the AER's draft decision, and some suggested it was short-sighted and incompatible with the ACT's net zero targets.

Some members believed their informed views on technical issues were disregarded by the regulator.

This reflects the participant endorsed session 12 snapshot summary - refer to [Appendix A](#).

All participants who responded to the question (12 out of 19) suggested that the AER's draft decision did not reflect community feedback.

4.4.2 Considering the AER's draft decision on long term cost recovery

Evoenergy provided the forum with an overview of the AER's draft decision with respect to depreciation noting that the AER's decision shortened asset lives and set a limit on the allowable accelerated depreciation. Evoenergy then presented the expected impacts of the AER's draft decision on long term prices and outlined a proposed alternative approach being considered by Evoenergy.

4.4.2.1 Feedback on the AER's approach to depreciation (set asset lives beyond 2045 and apply additional accelerated depreciation based on short term 4% price path)

Working in small groups, participants were asked to consider the AER's decision. They were asked to reflect on the community forum values as established early in the process. Feedback from this discussion was mixed and included:

- Surprise and some concern that the AER would assume there would be a gas network and customers beyond 2045 and would challenge the ACT Government's plans in this regard
- Noted that the AER was very focused on the next five years rather than the longer term
- Some support and understanding of the AER's position, on the basis that it was a presumed shift by the AER to not guarantee full asset recovery by Evoenergy. This was linked to the idea that the ACT Government should be covering more of the transition cost
- Conversely, there were others that were concerned by the AER's approach which they felt increased the risk that vulnerable customers would be left to bear more of the transition cost.

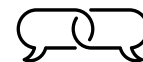
There were also a number of other suggestions associated with the challenge of recovering the costs including:

- That both shareholders (ACT Government and Jemena) should bear some of the network costs, not just the customers
- Suggestions that the cost also be recovered from electricity customers
- Evoenergy should reach out to the ACT Government for support in challenging the AER's approach
- Green gas should be explored as a viable option for the network.

4.4.2.2 Feedback on Evoenergy's initial thinking of an alternative approach (set asset lives to 2045 and apply additional accelerated depreciation based on long term 8% price path)

Working in small groups, participants were also asked to consider the initial alternative approach that Evoenergy proposed. There was mixed feedback:

- The most common feedback was of 'some support' and it was felt this seemed like a fairer, compromised, solution
- Some felt that this option was better for Evoenergy than the AER's proposal, but perhaps not better for the customer
- Some were unsure of their opinion noting that the information was being presented by Evoenergy and that the projection data was hypothetical
- The message that the costs should not all be recovered from the customer was reiterated
- One group noted that Queanbeyan didn't want the gas network to be decommissioned.



4.4.2.3 Other ideas on how Evoenergy should respond to the AER's decision

Continuing to work in small groups, participants were asked for any other ideas about how Evoenergy could respond to its concerns about the implications of the AER's draft decision.

Ideas for how Evoenergy should respond have been grouped into the following themes:

- Representations to the AER
 - Provide more quantitative examples and data to the AER
 - Seek an extension to the timeframe so that extra feedback from customers can be received
 - Involve the ACT Government in representations.
- Consultation
 - Suggestions that there be extra time for consultation and that there be broader online customer voting on the issues
 - Concern that the AER appears to be acting at odds with community feedback. The cancellation of the AER public forum was noted in this context.
- Data – build a powerBI tool to track different modelling scenarios and provide more quantitative data where possible.

What we heard

Members expressed mixed feedback on the AER's decision with respect to depreciation. While there was some support for the AER's approach there was also concern that the AER appeared to be acting at odds with ACT Government policy and that this would have negative impacts on customers.

Participants provided some support for Evoenergy's proposed alternative approach to depreciation, considering it a fair compromise.

Community forum participants considered continued advocacy by Evoenergy and the AER's role to listen to community feedback, to be important responses to the draft decision.

This reflects the participant endorsed session 12 snapshot summary - refer to [Appendix A](#).

4.4.3 Responding to the AER's draft decision on managing demand forecasting uncertainty

Evoenergy presented the AER's draft decision on varying pricing in the face of demand forecasting uncertainty. Evoenergy presented its proposed revenue cap price variation approach and compared it to the AER's preferred hybrid approach.

Evoenergy spoke to four options for price variation – revenue cap (Evoenergy's five-year plan proposal); 50/50 sharing hybrid; narrow hybrid; and broad hybrid (the AER's draft decision). An illustrative pricing scenario was used to demonstrate the implications for each option in either a slower or faster energy transition.

Participants were asked to provide their feedback on the options.

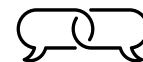
4.4.3.1 Which approach to adjusting prices to manage demand uncertainty is most appropriate?

Working in small groups, participants were asked which approach (50/50 sharing hybrid, a broad hybrid, or a narrow hybrid) is most appropriate in Evoenergy's circumstances. They were also asked to explain why.

Overwhelmingly the participants felt that the 50/50 sharing hybrid was the most appropriate approach. The next preferred option was for the broad hybrid.

The reason for preferring the 50/50 hybrid approach was largely that it was considered the fairest with shared risk. Other feedback provided included:

- Evoenergy should have provided more context on why the AER chose this method to help to understand the drivers for both Evoenergy and the AER
- All calculations should be done yearly and the proposed method chosen then to keep provides low



- Recognise that the broad hybrid has a reverse incentive for Evoenergy to keep customers on the network longer.

What we heard

This reflects the participant endorsed session 12 snapshot summary - refer to [Appendix A](#).

Forum members felt that the 50/50 sharing hybrid was the most appropriate option to adjust prices in Evoenergy's circumstances. It was considered to be the fairer option.

There was also some support for the broad hybrid as proposed by the AER.

4.4.4 Finalising the proposal

The final session invited participants to reflect on the past 18 months of discussions and provide any additional feedback to Evoenergy and the AER.

4.4.4.1 What is most important for Evoenergy to consider as it prepares its revised proposal?

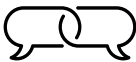
Using Slido and online meeting chat, participants were asked 'what do you think are the most important things for Evoenergy to consider as it prepares its revised proposal?'. The results are detailed in table 11 below.

Table 11. What is most important for Evoenergy to consider (comments reproduced verbatim)

What do you think is most important for Evoenergy as it prepares its revised proposal?

- 💬 Customers need to be considered foremost
- 💬 Remaining a viable business. Maintaining a secure gas network - not cutting corners on safety to save on costs
- 💬 To consider AER proposals more fully. The accelerated model from Evoenergy seemed too high at the beginning. It does sound like Evoenergy is now going to go with an adjusted model. Need to consider going past 2045 like what AER says for industrial customers
- 💬 More predictable gas pricing and user pay system. I.e the price tiers to reflect it by higher prices for higher users
- 💬 What is the main motivation for AER not considering the Evoenergy feedback? What is the common goal? How do we negotiate, what can be negotiated? How is AER's response meeting their roles or responsibilities? Can a revised proposal be positioned to meet any of the answers to these questions
- 💬 What happens if the AER stands their ground, what does that look like for the future of the network
- 💬 It needs to focus on what is best for the community. If that involves bringing forward some depreciation to assist those later on it should be done. The most important consideration should always be your customers. And then safety... which I know is the main determining factor for the depreciation schedule and associated costs. However as Evoenergy is half owned by the ACT Govt I am still confused by their decision to stop gas, and not be willing to wear the losses
- 💬 I feel this was a missed opportunity to bring all the relevant stakeholders together to address this wicked problem - Evoenergy is one player, Cth and state Govts (ACT & NSW), network suppliers, shopfronts, as well as consumers. It's not too late for Evoenergy to put forward recommendations, even outside their role, e.g. modelling on impacts of climate on the region and how this may result in lower/higher temperatures therefore impact on gas usage. Evoenergy can still advocate for important things like need to communicate simply, needs to parity. Evoenergy also need to think about their customer while trying to recover its cost. Customer will have less chance to engage with govt bodies so Evoenergy should reach out to govt regarding rebate for some capital cost
- 💬 Customer focused quantitative based evidence reporting with clear communication that allows for front loading initiatives whilst they can touch a larger customer base to reduce future price hikes for a smaller cohort!
- 💬 Please consider the customers, we didn't choose this. Remember that you are also likely customers. What would you want done as a customer?
- 💬 While it is necessary to be practical it is important for Evoenergy to continue to advocate for the values as outlined for community forum: adaptable, fairness and equity, integrity and to demonstrate foresight or a longer term view regardless of AER short term
- 💬 That all parties involved are fairly treated, and any savings are passed onto the customer and shareholders
- 💬 Evoenergy should consider shareholder interests versus customer costs, now we are in a cost of living crisis
- 💬 Change the decision to remove gas from the ACT Area and focus on methane. Not good to rely on single energy. Low cost for customers- less risk sharing, more caps on costs to protect low income families
- 💬 AER need to relook at the transition time in the ACT so should have more flexibility for and this need discussion.

All dotpoints presented in table 11 are direct quotes taken from feedback provided by members.



4.4.4.2 Final piece of feedback to the AER

Using Slido and online meeting chat, participants were asked ‘What is your final piece of feedback you would like shared with the AER as it makes its final decision’. The feedback provided is detailed in table 12 below.

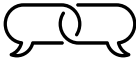
Table 12. Final piece of feedback for the AER (comments reproduced verbatim)

What is your final piece of feedback for the AER?	
💡	The world is changing, recognise that this is the first jurisdiction to face the challenge of closing a network. Embrace change and recognise that ACT is a small jurisdiction and does not create a meaningful precedent for other future decisions
💡	Need to consider the longer time for these forecasts, not just the short term gains or losses
💡	I imagine it will be harder for Evoenergy to prioritise fairness for lower income people when Evoenergy is busy trying to minimise its losses as a business - which is a legitimate concern
💡	Not fair for responses in the Christmas period. Should have been factored in during the initial planning. Take more community feedback
💡	This feel like, as a community, we are being disadvantaged by being at the forefront of zero emissions. Customers should be heard and AER needs to apply a forward thinking approach. This is the approach taken in these customer feedback sessions. I am alarmed, deeply disappointed by the AER draft response. It has created a call to action and I feel I need to get my local politicians actively involved
💡	You need to take community forum in your final decision
💡	I trust that the AER had our best interests at heart, so long as safety and the ACT’s decision are taken into account. It’s interesting that majority of Evoenergy’s proposals were not accepted, and I can’t help but question how this conversation would differ if AER had a chance on the microphone in this forum!
💡	It’s time to do something new. Let’s be the first jurisdiction to do something different in terms of pricing (revenue cap) and accelerated depreciation. Not liking a revenue cap, just because you don’t think we were well informed is not a valid reason, it needs to be backed with actual evidence as to why it is not beneficial. Maybe adopting a revenue cap means you can reduce the return Evoenergy makes as there is less risk. What we do now will benefit those for decades to come if we do it right
💡	We are trying to develop the plan before outcome of our feedback that framework is no longer fit for purpose has been considered. So build as much flexibility into plan as possible so Evoenergy can adapt when framework changes
💡	The most important consideration should always be your customers. And then safety... which I know is the main determining factor for the depreciation schedule and associated costs. However as Evoenergy is half owned by the ACT Government I am still confused by their decision to stop gas, and not be willing to wear the losses. [note: this is an accurate repetition of the comment provided in response to the question above.]
💡	AER should look after both customer and Evoenergy regarding costs and long term infrastructure management for NSW customer who wants to stay in network. They should be the middle person to facilitate it
💡	How can most of the proposals put forward be not considered as acceptable by the AER, is this how historically they operate?? How have you in the past worked with a regulator that is blind and deaf to calls and reporting?
💡	Don’t lose sight of environmental needs!
💡	Keep a close watch on actual customer transition to electricity. A 7% difference on forecast customer demand fall between regulator and Evoenergy is large
💡	Stop the closure. It ensures cold houses and poverty
💡	AER need to relook at the transition time in the ACT so should have more flexibility for and this need discussion. [note: this is an accurate repetition of the comment provided in response to the question above.]

All dotpoints presented in table 12 are direct quotes taken from feedback provided by members.

What we heard	
This reflects the participant endorsed session 12 snapshot summary - refer to Appendix A .	The key priority identified by the forum for Evoenergy was prioritising the customer and working to ensure that their business needs and lack of uncertainty were balanced against fair treatment of customers.
	The final piece of feedback the forum had for the AER was mixed from prioritising the customer and the environment, through to recognition that the ACT was the first jurisdiction to confront the transition and as a result may need special consideration or a new approach.





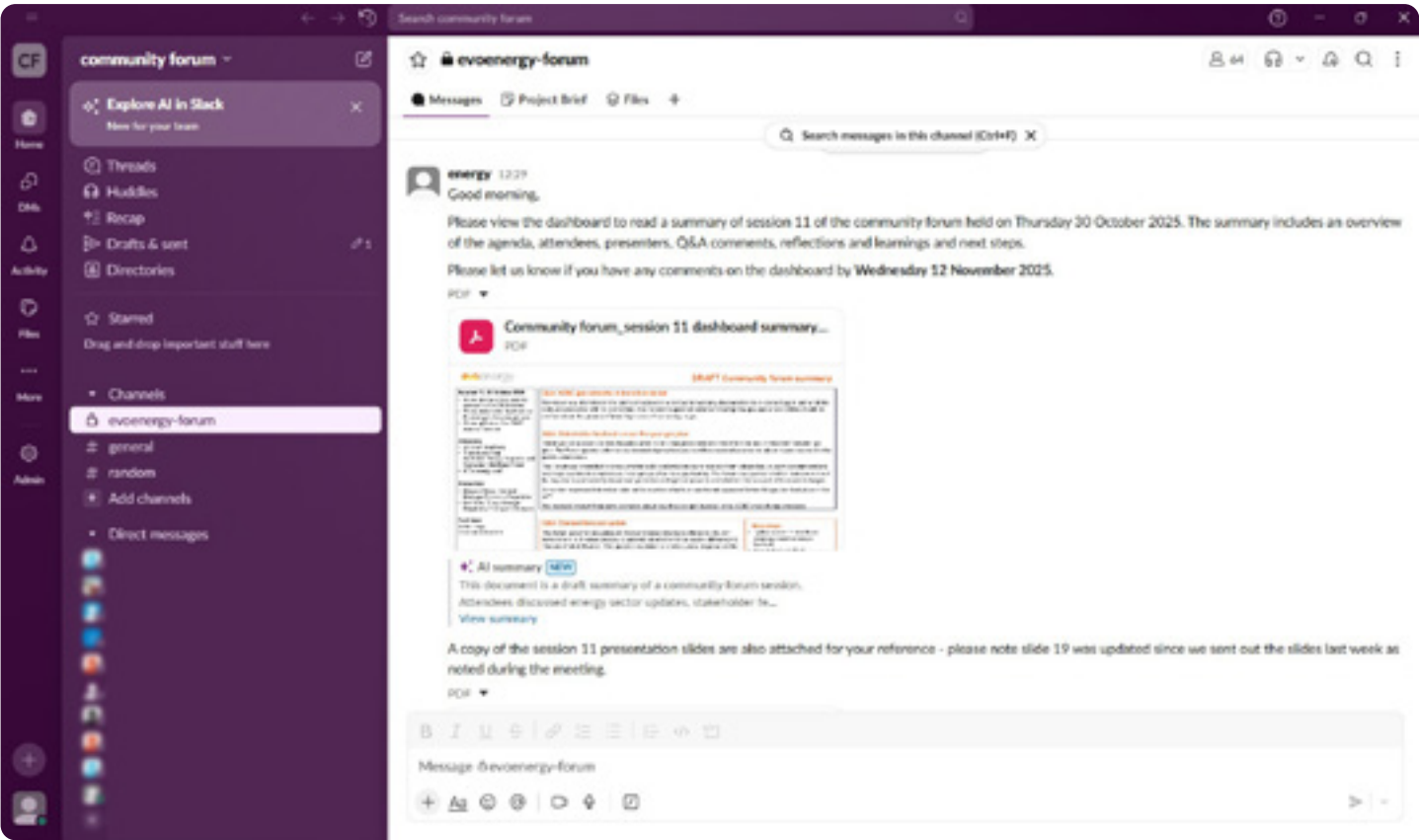
5. Reporting by the forums

5.1.1 Snapshot summaries

As part of the delivery of each forum session, the facilitators draft a ‘Snapshot’ summary of discussion as the session progresses. This is presented to the group at the end of the session for revision and modification. After the session the draft Snapshot is provided to all participants via email and through the communication platform Slack.

Participants are invited to edit or amend the Snapshot as required. At the subsequent session of the forum, the amended Snapshot is shared with the group for final consideration and with the broader community through the Evoenergy website.

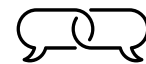
Copies of the snapshots for forum sessions are included at [Appendix A](#).





**Effectiveness of the
community forums**

6



6. Effectiveness of the community forums

The forums were delivered in a manner that supported the building of understanding of the energy sector and the associated capability and capacity of members to contribute effectively to discussion. A broad range of engagement tools and activities were used throughout the sessions to achieve this. These include:

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

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

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

The amalgamation of the data across sessions 11 and 12 of the Community Forum and sessions 1 and 2 of the NSW Customer Forum is outlined in the following charts. Across these sessions participant feedback shows:

- The information presented was easy or somewhat easy to understand (70%)
- The ability to participate and contribute to discussion was very easy or easy (83%)
- The information provided was transparent (86%).

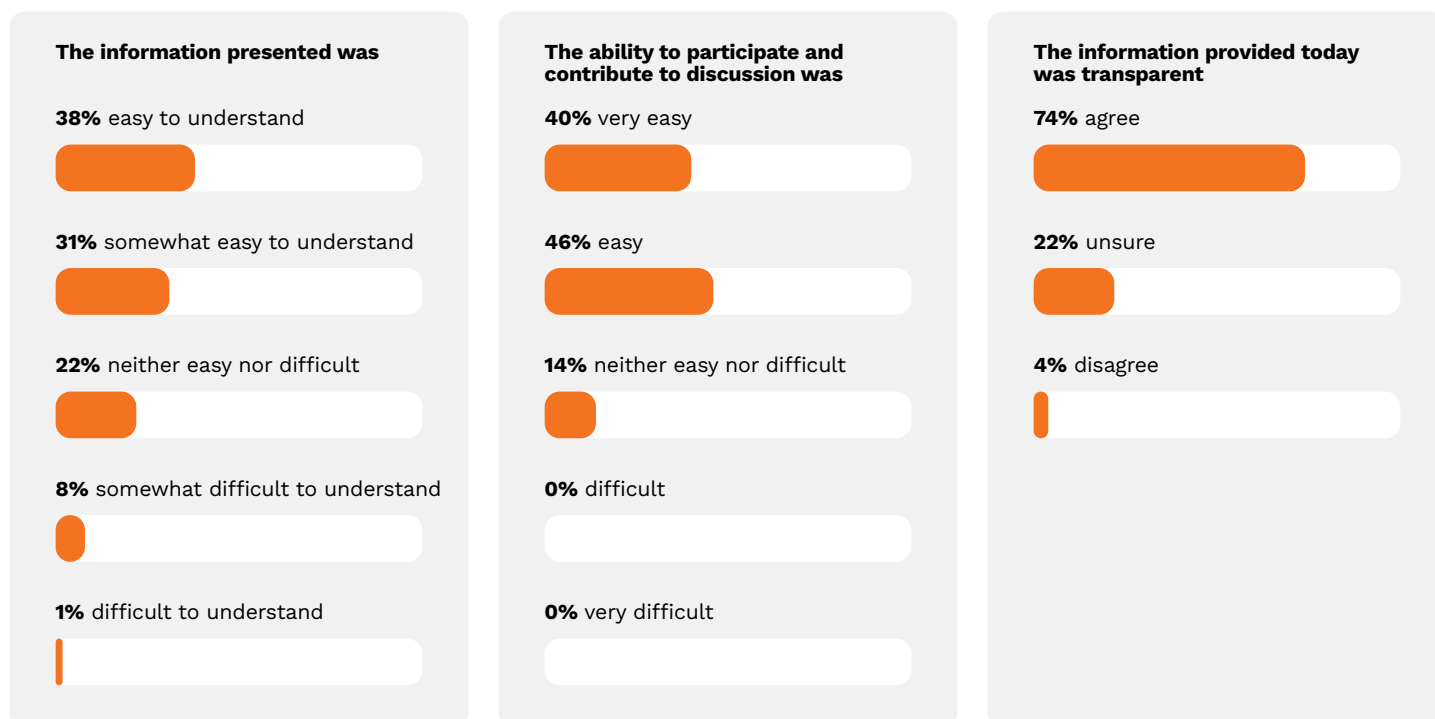
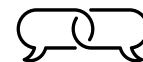


Figure 9. Participant feedback from Community Forum sessions 11 and 12 and NSW Customer Forum sessions 1 and 2



6.1.1 General reflections from forum participants

At the end of the session, 12 participants provided general feedback on how they were feeling and general comments about being part of the forums.

Participant sentiment was a mix of pride in their joint effort but frustration on how that effort was received by the AER. While participants expressed fatigue, there was a strong sense of connection and appreciation for the educational value of the forum. Many noted that the process was a great opportunity to be part of significant decisions and felt empowered through knowledge.

Many expressed a desire to continue their involvement, with some feeling a call to action to advocate directly to local ministers or politicians to ensure the community voice is heard.

Participants shared the following highlights of their involvement:

- Participants felt empowered through the knowledge gained about complex energy transitions
- Members valued the social connection and supportive cohort formed over the last 18 months
- The long-term process drove deeper understanding and empathy for Evoenergy and a practical understanding of business challenges
- There was a sense of pride in contributing to the ACT's unique position at the forefront of the energy transition.

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

- The AER should be present in future forums to hear community feedback firsthand
- Regulators need to acknowledge the high level of participant capability and understanding of technical concepts
- Future engagements should include government ministers and regulators to address complex issues collectively
- Response periods should avoid holidays, and complex sessions could be longer to avoid feeling rushed
- Participants expressed a desire to transition from consultation to active advocacy with local leaders and representatives.

The feedback is reflected below:

Great opportunity to be part of some big decisions and also be educated in what is happening around me.

Power to people through knowledge.

Can't believe we have been coming to meetings for 18 months – time flies.

Initially angry but more pragmatic as session went on.

I think fundamentally when we go back to our first few sessions it does support our views but I think we've come further and developed more empathy for Evo.

I feel like I need to contact my local Ministers and Members to make sure our views are heard.

The AER also appeared to assume community members were not smart enough... It felt quite insulting given the extensive consultation had.

Not fair for responses in the Christmas period. Should have been factored in during the initial planning.

How everything went a little too quickly tonight... Felt a bit rushed."

I want to continue to be part of public forums and engage more on this subject.

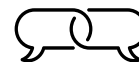
Can we get the AER along to the community forum for them to see the community forums feedback...

I trust that the AER had our best interests at heart... [but] I can't help but question how this conversation would differ if AER had a chance on the mic in this forum!

Why is only [Evoenergy] running these sessions... what about the others!!

How lovely it was to see everyone again.





Appendix A Snapshot Summaries



Session 11: Community forum summary

Session 11, 30 October 2025

- Share energy sector updates relevant to the GN26 review
- Share stakeholder feedback on Evoenergy's five-year gas plan
- Share update on the GN26 demand forecast.

Attendees

- 21 forum members
- 4 observers from Australian Energy Regulator and Consumer Challenge Panel
- 8 Evoenergy staff

Presenters

- Megan Willcox, General Manager Economic Regulation
- Lev Yulin, Group Manager Regulatory Pricing and Analysis

Facilitator

- Helen Leayr, Communication Link

Q&A: AEMC gas networks in transition review

The Forum was interested in the ability of customers who have temporarily disconnected to re-connect again and what the costs are associated with re-connection. One member suggested customers buying new gas appliances in NSW should be notified about the proposed future high costs of connecting to gas.

Q&A: Stakeholder feedback on our five-year gas plan

There was a discussion on what happens when AEMC changes its rules and the effect this has on the draft five-year gas plan. The Forum queried whether accelerated depreciation would still be explored as concerns about it were received in the public submissions.

The Forum was interested to know whether public submissions were received from universities, student accommodations and large apartment complexes as these groups often have gas heating. The Forum also queried whether homeowners will be required to permanently disconnect gas before selling their property and whether that is a part of forecasted changes.

A member expressed interest on data on the number of units or apartments approved before the gas ban took place in the ACT.

We received interest from some members about how they can get involved in the AEMC's rule change processes.

Q&A: Demand forecast update

The forum asked for an update on the low-interest rate loans offered by the ACT Government at the next session, to understand whether it has made a difference to the rate of electrification. This question was taken on notice, and a response will be provided ahead of session 12.

There was discussion about recent news regarding a reduced gas supply for NSW and VIC and whether this will impact the price of gas and associated gas purchasing decisions.

Next steps

- Update session 11 dashboard summary based on today's feedback
- Keep in touch via Slack
- Next session: 9 December 2025



Session 01: NSW Customer forum summary

Session 1

10 November 2025

Session purpose

- How the NSW Customer Forum will work and get to know each other.
- Briefing on the role of Evoenergy in the energy market.
- Information on the energy transition, and what it means for the residents of NSW who are connected to gas.
- Evoenergy's gas network.
- Introduction to the asset recovery costs of decommissioning the gas network.

Attendees

- 19 forum members
- 3 observers from Australian Energy Regulator and Consumer Challenge Panel
- 8 Evoenergy staff

Presenters

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

Facilitator

- Helen Leayr, Communication Link

Outcomes

Activity 1: Icebreaker quiz

The forum answered a series of fun questions about themselves to get to know one another and practice using the program Slido.

Activity 2: Forum operating principles

Q: What behaviours and expectations do you want to guide the work of this forum?

The forum highlighted the following operating principles as important to them: listening, participation, respect, asking questions, inclusivity, considerate, confidentiality and trust, no such thing as a dumb question or answer, showing formal politeness and courtesy in behaviour or speech (civility) and knowledge building.

Activity 3: Transitioning from gas

Q: How quickly do you think you will shift your energy use from gas to electricity?

A total of 5% of members said they have 'already switched', 26% said they will likely switch between '1-5 years,' 32% of members said they will likely switch at '5+ years' and 37% of members said they have 'no plans to switch.'

Q: How much influence do you think ACT Government policies have on the decisions of Evoenergy's NSW gas customers?

'A very strong influence' was voted as the top choice followed by 'strong influence', 'minimal influence' and 'with no influence at all' receiving the least votes.

Q: Consider the new (around \$2,200) upfront charge to connect to the gas network. How do you think this will impact new customers' decision to connect to Evoenergy's gas network in NSW?

It will discourage some, but others will still connect' was voted as the top choice followed closely by 'it will stop most people from connecting.' Approximately half of members voted for each of above two options.

Outcomes continued...

Activity 4: Alternative approaches to recovery of asset costs (depreciation)

Q: What are the strengths and weaknesses of each approach?

Straight-line depreciation with technical asset lives - customer impact is low as same system as now, although noted large increase for customers staying on the network, which may penalise those unable to shift. Noted it is economically unviable.

Straight-line depreciation using economic asset lives - significantly raise costs for customers, unfairly impacting low-income households who may struggle to transition early without financial support. Not considered palatable.

Sum-of-years digits depreciation with economic asset lives - spreads costs more evenly across users and reduces upfront burden for low-income customers but relies on accurate modelling to avoid unfair advantages or penalties for early or late movers.

Q: Are there any impacts for NSW customers of these approaches that may be different to ACT customers? Why? Why not?

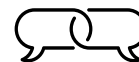
The feedback across all depreciation options was consistent. Feedback noted that NSW customers will face higher costs, with none of the potential supports or benefits that are provided by the ACT Government. Participants also noted concerns about any future changes in Government policies that may have further impacts on NSW customers.

Q: What further information do you need to understand the issues and tell us what you think?

The forum requested additional information about gas bottles, gas and energy bill discounts, other uses for the gas network, CPI impact on the modelling done so far and incentives for local gas appliance traders. The forum suggested more information sessions are needed for time poor customers to learn about the energy transition.

Next steps

- Update session 1 dashboard summary based on today's feedback.
- Keep in touch via Slack
- Next session: 17 November 2025



Appendix A Snapshot Summaries



Session 02: NSW Customer Forum summary

<p>Session 2 17 November 2025</p> <p>Session purpose</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recap session 1 Explore the proposed approach to fair sharing of network costs Gather feedback on any particular impacts on NSW of the proposed approach Provide information on Evoenergy's response to demand uncertainty and understand NSW customer perspectives on this approach. <p>Attendees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 18 forum members 3 observers from Australian Energy Regulator and Consumer Challenge Panel 8 Evoenergy staff <p>Presenters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gillian Symmans, Group Manager Regulatory Reviews and Policy Megan Willcox, General Manager Economic Regulation <p>Facilitator</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helen Leayr, Communication Link 	<p>Outcomes</p> <p>Activity 1: Different approaches to depreciation</p> <p>Q: How well does Evoenergy's approach contribute to fairness and equity for different customer types compared to the 'straight line' approach? Many members expressed a strong view that the approach is not fair to NSW residents and noted that Evoenergy's approach comes at a risk if the assumptions are incorrect. Some felt neither approach appeared to take into account impacts on the elderly and low-income earners who may be left last on the network. Others queried if gas costs can be shared with other energy users, whether the return to investors can be reduced to offset rising costs and if Evoenergy could sell the network in ACT and NSW to continue to service the customers in the region.</p> <p>Q: Will Evoenergy's proposed approach impact NSW customers differently to ACT customers? Why / why not? How? The forum agreed that NSW residents will be impacted more than ACT residents as they don't have access to the same incentives. This impacts NSW customers who may continue to buy gas equipment that has a long lifespan. There were concerns over the impact of ACT residents leaving the network at a faster rate will have on NSW customers left to carry the financial load.</p> <p>Q: Do you have any other ideas for addressing the challenge of balancing customer prices now and in the future and for different types of customers? The forum shared the following ideas for addressing the challenge: involving the local Government, consider expanding Evoenergy's NSW footprint and providing more advice when completing new builds and renovations. More transparent information is needed now to help people plan and make active choices.</p> <p>Outcomes continued...</p> <p>Activity 2: Impacts of long-term and short-term demand uncertainty</p> <p>Q: Do the potential impacts of long-term demand uncertainty impact your feedback on what is the most equitable approach to investment cost recovery? The forum expressed concern that long-term demand uncertainty could lead to volatile forecasts, indecision, and faster customer drop-off, making cost recovery difficult. Members suggested mitigations include more frequent forecast reviews, incentives or revenue buffers for Evoenergy, government levies or support, and stricter cost recovery mechanisms to avoid stranded infrastructure.</p> <p>Q: Consider the two approaches to adjusting prices in the short-term. What are the strengths and weaknesses of Evoenergy's proposed approach and AER's preferred approach? Members generally see AER's approach as smoothing volatility and protecting customers through thresholds, while Evoenergy's approach offers revenue certainty but risks higher prices if transition accelerates. Concerns include unclear pricing methods, cost recovery timing, and the need for stability to prevent rapid customer exit.</p> <p>Next steps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update session 2 dashboard summary based on today's feedback Keep in touch via Slack Next session: 9 December 2025 (optional)
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Official



Session 12: Community forum summary

<p>Session 12 9 December 2025</p> <p>Session purpose</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recap session 11 Provide a briefing about Australian Energy Regulator (AER) draft decision. Consider the key areas of accelerated depreciation and Tariff Variation Mechanism and seek additional feedback from the Community Forum. Gather final consumer input to inform Evoenergy's final submission to the AER. <p>Attendees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 19 community forum members 8 NSW customer forum members 3 observers from Australian Energy Regulator and Consumer Challenge Panel 12 Evoenergy staff <p>Presenters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Megan Willcox, General Manager Economic Regulation Gillian Symmans, Group Manager Regulatory Reviews and Policy Ashlyn Napier, Principal Regulatory Economist <p>Facilitator</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helen Leayr, Communication Link 	<p>Outcomes</p> <p>Discussion 1: Australian Energy Regulator draft decision initial reactions</p> <p>Q: Any initial reaction to the AER's draft decision? Members expressed disappointment about the AER ignoring forum feedback and requested alternative ways to share input and to see data from the AER. The draft decision was perceived as short-term and disconnected from ACT-specific needs and forum input.</p> <p>Q: Do you think it reflects the community's feedback? Why/why not? A total of 63% of members who attended the session completed the Slido question and they suggested the AER's draft decision did not reflect community feedback.</p> <p>Activity 1: Accelerated depreciation feedback</p> <p>Q: Reflecting on our values and priorities what feedback do you have on the AER's approach to depreciation? There was some support for the AER's depreciation approach. There were concerns about it not considering the ACT Government's policies to 2045 and missing decommissioning. Views varied with some noting Evoenergy must acknowledge the gas's declining viability, while others argue it's being pushed to ignore ACT policy. Some suggested that the ACT Government and Evoenergy may need to explore alternative solutions, such as support from electricity customers or taxpayers.</p> <p>Q: Reflecting on our values and priorities what feedback do you have on our initial thinking of an alternative approach? There was some support for Evoenergy's alternative approach with many considering it a fairer option. Others were unsure.</p> <p>Q: Reflecting on our values and priorities do you have other any ideas about how Evoenergy can respond to its concerns about the implications of the AER's draft decision? Suggestions include seeking support from government bodies, advocating more to the AER using more quantitative examples and addressing lack of consideration of views.</p> <p>Outcomes continued...</p> <p>Activity 2: Managing demand forecasting uncertainty feedback</p> <p>Q: Do you think a 50/50 sharing hybrid, a broad hybrid or a narrow hybrid approach is most appropriate in Evoenergy's circumstances? Why? Majority of members favored a 50/50 sharing hybrid as the fairest and most balanced approach for customers and Evoenergy, though some suggested a broad hybrid for greater price stability and faster transition.</p> <p>Discussion 2: Final comments for Evoenergy and AER</p> <p>Q: Thinking about everything we've discussed over the last 18+ months, what do you think are the most important things for Evoenergy to consider as it prepares its revised proposal? Evoenergy should prioritise customers and community needs while ensuring safety, fairness, clear communication, and long-term viability, balancing cost recovery with affordability and advocating for flexibility in transition timelines.</p> <p>Q: What is your final piece of feedback you would like shared with the AER as it makes its final decision? The AER should adopt a forward-thinking, flexible approach that prioritises fairness, community input, and long-term outcomes. The AER should recognise the ACT's unique position as the first jurisdiction to close a gas network.</p> <p>Next steps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update session 12 dashboard summary based on today's feedback.
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