

# Attachment 1: Consumer and stakeholder engagement

Access arrangement information

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

Submission to the Australian Energy Regulator

**June 2025**

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# 1. Overview of our engagement program

Over the past 18 months, we have engaged extensively with our community on our five-year gas plan. The conversations we have had built on conversations that were started over five years ago when the ACT Government announced its plans to ban new connections to the gas network.<sup>1</sup>

Through our engagement, we have sought to better understand the values and expectations of our customers to ensure the decisions that we make reflect these both now, and over the long-term so that we can enable a fair and equitable transition for our customers.

We tapped into our existing community relationships and a range of additional channels to ensure we heard from a wide range of diverse voices about their values, concerns and priorities as we developed our five-year gas plan. Additionally, in March 2025 we released our draft five-year gas plan for public consultation to ensure that our positions reflected the feedback we received from our community, provided updates based on current data and information, and tested that we had listened and acted in line with our community's values of honesty, transparency, equity and affordability.

Our five-year gas plan engagement strategy has guided the engagement activities and channels that we employed, which included deliberative and quantitative approaches, customer research via surveys and one-on-one interviews, one-on-one conversations, online channels, and utilising existing relationships with key stakeholders. We engaged openly and honestly, ensuring that we were transparent about what we thought were the key issues facing our network, the community at large, and those who are likely to remain on the gas network for longer. We engaged an external consultant to independently recruit and facilitate our community forum so that we could garner honest feedback from our consumers on the issues that mattered the most to them.

Our executive team and staff have been actively involved in all our engagement activities, with our Chief Executive Officer and General Managers attending community and large customer forum sessions and our Energy Regulatory Advisory Panel (ERAP) meetings. Subject matter experts (SMEs) presented at forums and were available to answer questions in a timely, accurate and open manner. This approach also provided an opportunity for our staff to hear directly from our consumers and to better understand their expectations.

## 1.1 Engagement design and development

Our engagement with the community was guided by our five-year gas plan engagement strategy (provided in Appendix 1.1: Five-year plan engagement strategy).<sup>2</sup> The strategy:

- builds on our ongoing engagement with consumers and key stakeholders including the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) and New South Wales (NSW) Governments, regulators, retailers and industry
- builds on engagement on previous electricity and gas five-year plans, reflecting the unique characteristics of our network and gas customers, drawing on lessons learnt and industry best practice to enable continuous improvement
- uses the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Spectrum and Core Values to guide the design, planning and delivery of our engagement program. We aimed

<sup>1</sup> ACT Legislative Assembly, [Parliamentary and Governing Agreement](#), 10th Legislative Assembly, November 2020.

<sup>2</sup> [Five-year gas plan engagement strategy](#), March 2024, available on the [gas network plan](#) website.

to build capacity and understanding through meaningful and genuine two-way discussions so we can better understand our customers' values, energy needs and long-term interests

- is guided by the expectations set out in the Australian Energy Regulator's (AER's) Better Resets Handbook regarding the nature of engagement, breadth and depth, and evidence of impact
- contains upfront messaging about the ACT transition policy direction and the risks and challenges we face
- reflects Evoenergy's Stakeholder Engagement Strategy engagement principles<sup>3</sup>, as set out in Table 1.

**Table 1 Evoenergy's engagement principles**

We are	What this means to us	What this signifies to stakeholders
Adaptive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tailored approaches – no one-size-fits-all</li> <li>• Evolving alongside the changing energy landscape</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexible engagement and communication to meet stakeholder needs</li> <li>• Engagement on your own terms</li> </ul>
Curious	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enthusiasm for learning and exploring new ideas</li> <li>• Embracing diverse perspectives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your voice will be listened to and valued</li> <li>• Inclusive engagement practices</li> </ul>
Courageous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluating and enhancing our engagement practices</li> <li>• Initiating bold conversations and seeking input</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You can hold us accountable</li> <li>• We will actively seek your feedback</li> </ul>
Transparent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing clear, precise, relevant and timely information</li> <li>• Openness around the purpose, scope and outcomes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will use plain language to help you make informed contributions</li> <li>• You will be able to read reports on our engagement activities and their impact on our website</li> </ul>
Committed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allocating time and resources for engagement</li> <li>• Acting with integrity – doing what we say we'll do</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our commitment is long-term – our engagement is ongoing</li> <li>• We will explain how your inputs influence our work and your experiences</li> </ul>

Using these guiding principles, we developed an engagement strategy that allowed us to truly understand and reflect the needs and expectations of our consumers and stakeholders in our five-year gas plan. Our five-year gas plan engagement strategy objectives, set out in Table 2, ensured we framed our engagement to allow for robust discussions by clearly articulating our

<sup>3</sup> [Evoenergy Stakeholder Engagement Strategy 2023](#), p. 5, available on Evoenergy's website.

assumptions and inviting stakeholders to challenge those assumptions and present alternative views. We have also been transparent in excluding options that we do not consider apply to our current circumstances or that are out of scope.

*Table 2 Our five-year gas plan engagement objectives*

Objective 1	Objective 2	Objective 3	Objective 4
<p>Inform stakeholder engagement for Evoenergy's future gas plan:</p> <p>Gather diverse consumer and other stakeholder input to enhance connection and inform the gas plan development.</p>	<p>Engage the community on the future of the gas network:</p> <p>Conduct transparent consultations with residential and business consumers, industry, and government. Balance competing outcomes and manage equity issues in these discussions.</p>	<p>Foster discussions on energy transition and gas network decommissioning:</p> <p>Promote community and stakeholder conversations on the energy transition and its customer impacts.</p>	<p>Ensure transparency and accessibility in feedback:</p> <p>Provide genuine two-way communication channels for stakeholders to see how their feedback influences the proposal.</p>

## 1.2 A phased engagement approach

As shown in Figure 1, we have phased our engagement program to ensure that we consider the perspectives of our consumers and key stakeholders as we develop our five-year plan. The phased approach allowed us to build capacity through in-depth discussion on key issues. Our phased approach also allowed us to adapt to the needs of our stakeholders and revisit complex issues and topics around risk and uncertainty, revenue and cost recovery and pricing based on their feedback and developments in our thinking. It also meant that we had continuous engagement with our community and other stakeholders over the past 18 months.

We centred engagement discussions around three key topic areas:

- understanding customer values and introducing uncertainty (setting the context)
- managing uncertainty
- balancing equity and fairness in the recovery of network costs.

Across these topics, we maintained a measured and systematic approach across all forums to build our stakeholders' understanding of the gas network and the complex issues we face:

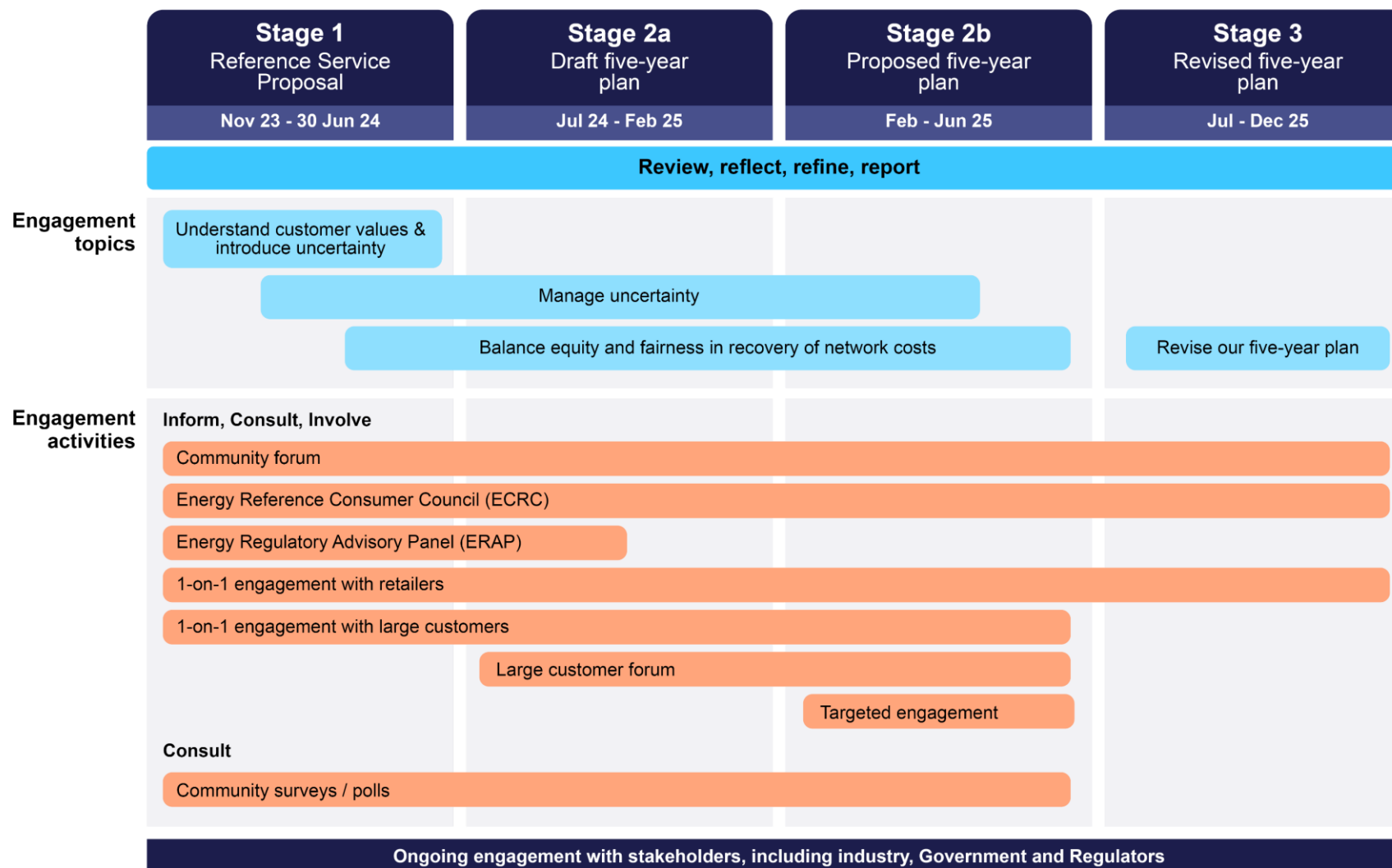
- firstly, we sought to **build capacity** by explaining key issues using digestible and easy to understand material, and where possible real-life examples to provide an overview of key regulatory concepts
- then we sought to **expand capacity** by diving deeply into topics and testing understanding using anonymous Slido questionnaires, providing opportunity for questions, and providing answers to frequently asked questions (FAQs) out of session

- we sought **feedback on possible options** available to us under the regulatory framework (and outside the regulatory framework, where appropriate)
- where appropriate, we **revisited those topics** after reflecting on and refining our approach based on feedback and we were transparent about those options we had excluded and why
- we **shared what we heard** across our forums to provide a continuous feedback loop
- we **presented our five-year gas plan positions** and invited discussion and feedback.

With the submission of our five-year gas plan to the AER, we have completed Stages 1 and 2 of our engagement program.



Figure 1.2 Phased engagement – staged discussions on key topics with key voices



### 1.2.1 Engagement tools and activities

Our engagement program included a range of tools and activities to ensure that we heard from a broad range of diverse voices and stakeholder groups as we developed our five-year gas plan. Our engagement program design recognised that different consumers and stakeholders have different levels of knowledge and understanding, and therefore we provided time for reflection and feedback. Deliberative forum discussions were complemented by other engagement activities such as one-on-one discussions with retailers and our large customers. We used multiple engagement channels and tools, including:

- context setting and capacity building through a site visit, consumer-friendly presentations, videos, FAQs and access to our experts and leadership team to respond to questions
- use of personas and scenarios to aid understanding and encourage critical thinking and discussion
- deep dives into complex topics using best available information, scenarios and forecasts of demand and expenditure to show potential retail-level bill impacts of different regulatory approaches
- large and small group discussions and activities to allow for robust discussions and challenging of our assumptions
- one-on-one discussions to provide opportunities to raise issues and concerns with us
- hearing from our consumers and stakeholders through various feedback mechanisms, including written and verbal feedback, individual feedback through post-it notes and a story-wall, online communication tools, digital polling and online surveys
- a dedicated [webpage](#) for our five-year gas plan containing our engagement strategy and all engagement-related information including presentations, reports, survey results, with opportunities for the community to provide feedback.
- An overview of our engagement channels by stakeholder group is shown in Table 3.

Table 3 Engagement channels by stakeholder group

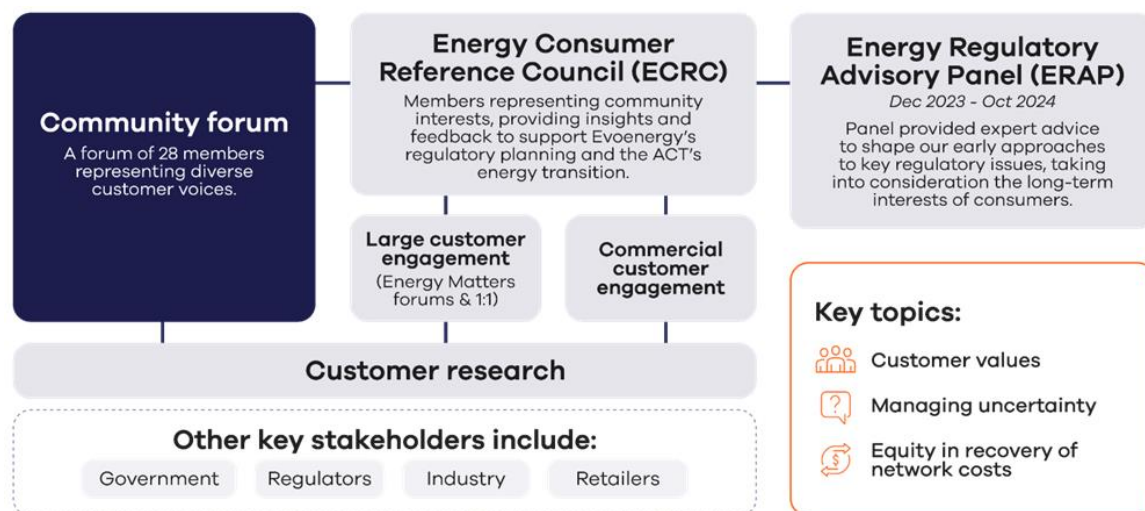
Stakeholders	Channels						
	ERAP	ECRC	Community forum (deep dives)	Large customer forum	1:1 engagement	Targeted engagement	Other channels (e.g., research, website, social media, existing opportunities)
Residential		●	●				●
Commercial customers		●		●	●		●
Large customers		●		●	●		●
First Nations peoples, CALD people, hard to reach groups and vulnerable, young people		●	●				●
Industry bodies or representatives / emerging industry		●			●	●	●
Retailers					●		●
Government and regulators					●		●
Consideration of the long-term interests of the above stakeholders	●						

## 2. Our key consumer and stakeholder voices

To ensure effective engagement, we recognised that to consider the energy transition holistically, we needed to hear from our diverse community and, where possible, sought to ensure continuity in forum membership. Some of our forum members have been on the journey with us since previous resets, over the past five years or more, and are represented through existing and new forums.

An overview of our key stakeholder channels is provided in Figure 2.

Figure 2 Key consumers and stakeholders

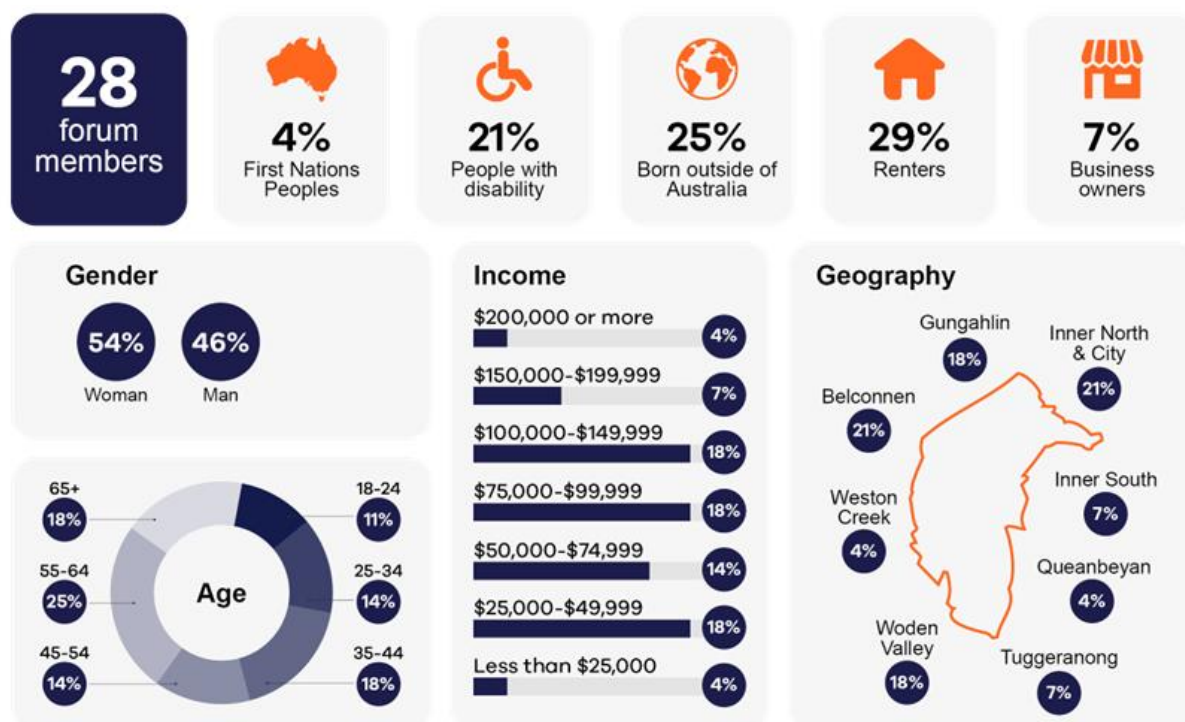


## 2.1 Community forum

We recognised the continuing complexity of the energy transition landscape in the ACT and beyond and established a community forum to enable flexible and deliberative engagement across a range of issues over an extended period. Our community forum was established in May 2024 through an independent recruitment process that used blind demographic stratification to build a group that is diverse and representative of our ACT and NSW customers. Recruitment was promoted through social media (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, X (formerly Twitter)), direct customer interactions, via emails to our gas customers, community representative groups and previous engagement forum participants, and by tapping into our Energy Consumer Reference Council (ECRC) representatives. From over 180 expressions of interest, a total of 35 members were randomly selected including three NSW representatives. While there has been some gradual natural attrition of members, as at June 2025, 28 members remain in the forum.

Our forum participants cover the full spectrum of our network customers including residential customers and business owners, First Nations peoples, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) people, young people (emerging customers), renters and homeowners (see Figure 3). The community forum includes eight returning participants from previous five-year engagement forums. Having a diverse group of participants in the room, including some with a background of other engagement forums, encouraged more robust conversations and enabled cross-pollination of ideas and feedback.

Figure 3 Our community forum



Forum participants met over a series of ten independently facilitated hybrid sessions, which included a site visit to our gas receiving station. To ensure that participants did not just hear from us, forum members were offered the opportunity to hear from guest speakers at three additional, optional, well-attended sessions. They heard from the ACT Government on its Integrated Energy Plan (IEP) and industry experts on the complexities of the transition and perspectives of vulnerable energy consumers.

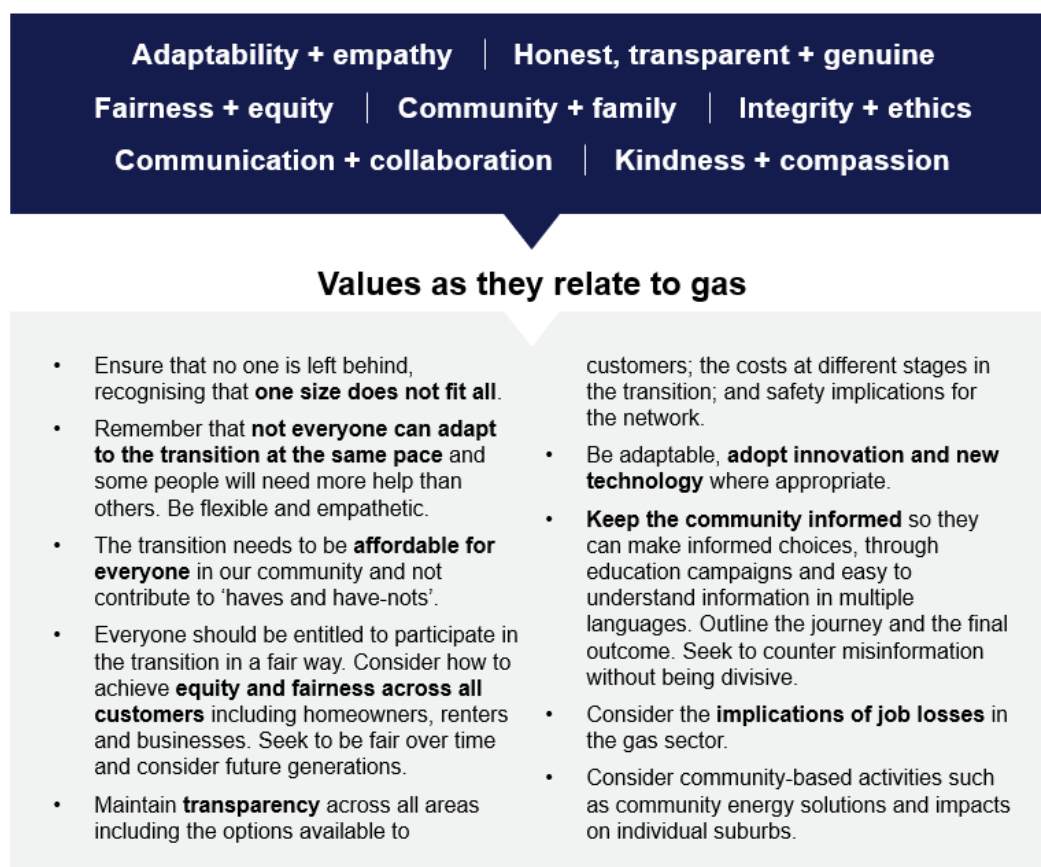
Our community forum's delivery was deliberative and methodical:<sup>4</sup>

- we covered all elements of the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation from “inform to empower” across the forum sessions
- we asked participants to consider what they valued most from a personal perspective and then to translate those values as they relate to the phasing out of gas. The outcome of the values exercise is provided in Figure 4 – the community forum was asked to continuously reflect on these values as they considered various options and their implications across sessions
- we used scenarios to show potential impacts of different approaches and illustrative personas (developed with census data) to aid in understanding and enable participants to consider impacts for a range of residential and business customers
- we included the provision of appropriately framed detailed information and access to SMEs to respond to questions and provide clarification so that participants could understand the issues under consideration as they weighed up options and provided feedback

<sup>4</sup> Appendix 1.2: Communication Link report of feedback from community forum sessions 1–10, June 2025, p. 7.

- we allowed time and support for participants to consider information, issues and options, and exchange ideas, with the community forum preparing a report to Evoenergy.

*Figure 4 Values as defined by the community forum*



Forum member numbers remained largely stable across the ten sessions, from 35 recruited in May 2024 to 28 current members. We saw a high attendance from forum members throughout, with an average of 87 per cent across the ten sessions.<sup>5</sup> Our forum members actively participated in discussions and activities, providing feedback and asking questions in person and through various available channels including their dedicated online group chat on Slack, interactive online polling via Slido and a story-wall.

The community forum members provided generally positive feedback about their experience, with exit survey results suggesting capacity building.<sup>6</sup> Forum members also expressed a willingness to participate in additional sessions and future engagement opportunities outside the gas forum.<sup>7</sup> We welcome this as an opportunity to retain a strong spine of community representatives.

Detailed information on community forum sessions and outcomes, including meeting dashboard summaries and the forum's report to Evoenergy is provided by the independent consultant in Appendix 1.2: Communication Link report of feedback from community forum sessions 1–10.

We have shared the community forum's report to Evoenergy with the ACT Government and other stakeholders, including the AER, for consideration.

<sup>5</sup> Appendix 1.2: Communication Link report of feedback from community forum sessions 1–10, June 2025, p. 7.

<sup>6</sup> Appendix 1.2: Communication Link report of feedback from community forum sessions 1–10, June 2025, p. 18.

<sup>7</sup> Appendix 1.2 Communication Link report of feedback from community forum sessions 1–10, June 2025, p. 51.

## 2.2 Energy Consumer Reference Council

Established in 2014, the ECRC plays a vital role in our business-as-usual (BAU) engagement, meeting bi-monthly to represent constituents' views and interests through open dialogue on key operational and long-term strategic considerations. Through the ECRC, we maintain a continuous channel for hearing customers' perspectives, testing ideas, seeking advice and sharing information. The ECRC consists of diverse representatives, including consumer advocates, community organisations, business groups and social services.

Over the past 18 months, as we have developed our five-year gas plan, we maintained consistent dialogue with the ECRC, exploring complex issues and tapping into their networks to facilitate engaging with hard-to-reach cohorts such as small businesses and developers.

To enable open and inclusive engagement, we used various tools including group discussions, Slido and presentations. These tools helped explore trade-offs and gather feedback in a structured but flexible way.

Focused discussions on our five-year gas plan were held across 11 ECRC meetings.

A summary report of ECRC meetings, activities and feedback is provided in Appendix 1.3: ECRC engagement report.

## 2.3 Energy Matters Forum (large commercial and industrial customers)

Energy Matters Forums are designed to enable continuous engagement with our largest energy (gas and electricity) customers. These forums provide an opportunity for us to share information about our planning process and to open discussions around large energy customers' concerns and considerations.

There are 44 large commercial and industrial customers connected to our gas network. These customers are geographically dispersed and include tertiary education facilities (such as the universities), large hotels, ACT Government sites including swimming pools and hospitals, and manufacturing customers. Our large customers also include Commonwealth Government-owned buildings and institutions.

A summary report of Energy Matters meetings, activities and feedback is provided in Appendix 1.4: Energy Matters Forum report.

## 2.4 Energy Regulatory Advisory Panel

In December 2023, we established an independent five-person advisory panel, the ERAP. The panel consisted of industry experts from a variety of interests and expertise, who challenged our thinking and provided advice on key regulatory issues that promote the long-term interests of gas customers. Its member contributions informed our engagement program and discussions on regulatory approaches, providing guidance by helping us to ask the right questions and challenging us to consider all options. The ERAP acknowledged the significant challenges for gas consumers in applying the current regulatory framework in the context of the ACT's pathway to electrification. The ERAP concluded in October 2024.

ERAP meeting materials are available on our [webpage](#) and meeting summaries are provided in Appendix 1.5: ERAP meeting summaries.



## 2.5 Retailers

We engaged directly with the region's retailers, including ActewAGL, Energy Australia, Origin Energy and Red Energy three times each over the past 18 months as we developed our reference service proposal (RSP), access arrangement and reference service agreement (RSA) – meetings occurred in May 2024, October 2024 and May 2025. Feedback from early conversations in May 2024 informed the development of our RSP, including our proposed approach to our services, the tariff variation mechanism (TVM) and early thinking on permanent disconnections.<sup>8</sup>

In October 2024 we explored with retailers our approach to permanent disconnections in more detail, seeking their views on the introduction of a basic and a complex permanent disconnection for residential customers. For more details on our approach to engaging on permanent disconnections, see Appendix 8.1: Disconnection services.

We continued conversations with retailers at follow-up one-on-one meetings in May 2025, where we provided an opportunity to discuss our proposed access arrangement approach following public consultation on our draft five-year gas plan, including the proposed changes to our RSA.<sup>9</sup>

## 2.6 Other key stakeholders

We continue to discuss the challenges and impacts of the transition with the ACT Government, Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council (QPRC), regulators, and industry bodies. The ACT Government made a submission to the AER on our RSP, which indicated preference for an approach that supports the achievement of its net zero emissions targets, noting an expectation that its policies will reduce demand for gas over the coming period. The submission highlighted a recognition of the cost-of-living pressures and barriers to transition that many ACT households are facing.<sup>10</sup>

Engagement with the QPRC has involved discussing our draft five-year gas plan to seek their views on the implications of the ACT's electrification plan on NSW gas customers and will continue as we progress work to understand the practicality and viability of maintaining elements of our gas network to service NSW and any remaining gas customers.

We were invited to present at an in-person workshop hosted by the ACT Council of Social Service (ACTCOSS) on 16 June 2025, attended by community organisation representatives. We presented on our proposal and answered questions to assist ACTCOSS in developing its submission to the AER on our proposal. We presented on the following topics:

- the impact of the proposal on people vulnerable to financial/energy hardship
- gas disconnections
- investment cost recovery.

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<sup>8</sup> Evoenergy's RSP was submitted to the AER in June 2024. The AER's final decision was released in November 2024 and is available on the [AER's website](#).

<sup>9</sup> An opportunity to meet and a copy of our RSA was provided to all retailers for their feedback.

<sup>10</sup> ACT Government, Minister Rattenbury, Submission: Evoenergy reference service proposal, August 2024, available on the [AER website](#).



## 2.7 Other insights – customer research

In addition to qualitative engagement, we conducted surveys and one-on-one interviews with residential and business customers. We engaged Sagacity Research in early 2024 to undertake a survey of the preferences and future intentions for gas of around 1,600 residential gas customers, repeating a similar survey undertaken in 2020.<sup>11</sup>

We also engaged the Centre for International Economics (CIE) to prepare our demand forecast. The CIE delivered a first-of-its-kind approach for our gas network, combining econometric modelling with extensive customer research across residential, commercial and industrial segments on our network. This included a choice modelling survey of 1,885 residential gas customers, a survey of 36 small to medium commercial customers, and targeted interviews with 24 very large customers on Evoenergy's demand tariff.

What we heard across these studies is that there are diverse factors influencing household and business electrification decisions, including environmental and affordability concerns, which consistently rated as primary drivers.<sup>12</sup>

For more detailed information on the CIE's study and our demand forecast, see Attachment 2: Demand forecast.

## 3. How we promoted our engagement

Our digital communication channels were utilised to ensure stakeholders were informed of the opportunities to engage with the development of our five-year gas plan. Our gas network plan webpage provides an anchoring point for our engagement program. The website includes information on the review process, material and reporting from engagement activities, and how the community can provide feedback. An online form was used to gather feedback on our draft five-year gas plan as part of Stage 2 engagement.

Table 4 outlines the promotional tactics used across Stages 1 and 2 of our engagement program and their performance.

*Table 4 Communication channels used to promote engagement opportunities*

Channel	Performance
<b>Webpage – Gas network plan</b> March 2024 - May 2025	1,965 views
<b>Website news item – Have your say on Evoenergy's draft gas five-year plan</b> March 2025	367 views

<sup>11</sup> Sagacity Research undertook a similar study for Evoenergy in 2020, available on the [AER website](#).

<sup>12</sup> We also included questions about electrification intentions and preferences in both our Annual Customer Survey and Large Customer Annual Surveys, run in 2024 and 2025. Responses to these questions were consistent with responses to the CIE and Sagacity Research studies.

Channel	Performance
<b>Social media</b> (posts across Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and X)	36,000 views
<b>Email to recruit for the community forum</b> (March 2024)	11,500 recipients 4,900 opens
<b>Email for Evoenergy's gas demand survey by Sagacity Research</b> (March 2024)	20,000 recipients 1,600 responses
<b>Email for Evoenergy's gas usage research by the CIE</b> (November 2024)	40,000 recipients 1,885 responses

## 4. Outcomes from engagement

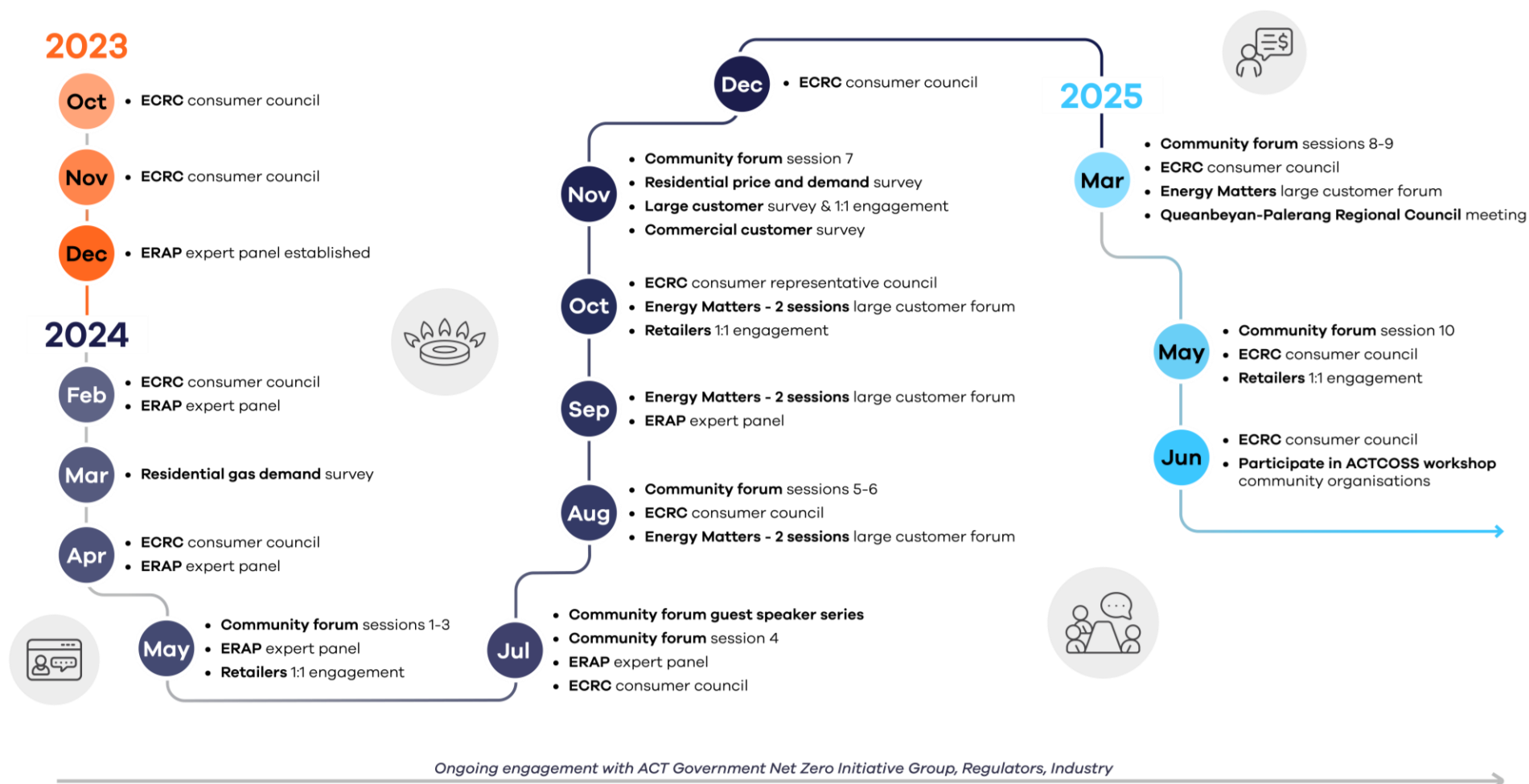
This section provides an overview of the outcomes from our engagement with our consumers and key stakeholders to date, and how their feedback has shaped our five-year gas plan. We aim to highlight instances where our customers had differing or conflicting views and how we took this into account as we developed our five-year gas plan. More detail on this is provided in the relevant attachments and appendices referenced in Table 6.

Since October 2023, we have held:

- 10 hybrid community forum sessions and three optional online guest speaker sessions
- 11 hybrid ECRC meetings
- 7 online Energy Matters Forums
- 6 ERAP meetings
- numerous one-on-one meetings with retailers, ACT Government, regulators and industry, and a meeting with the QPRC<sup>13</sup>.
- We also undertook customer research via surveys of residential and commercial customers, and one-on-one interviews with our large customers, to help us understand the preferences and intentions of our gas customers.
- An overview of our engagement journey to date is provided in Figure 5.

<sup>13</sup> The QPRC is the local government council for the region covering our regulated NSW network.

Figure 5 Our engagement journey



## 4.1 Draft five-year gas plan engagement feedback

The draft five-year gas plan was informed by feedback we received from engagement in the 12+ months prior to its release in March 2025. The public consultation period was five weeks from 3 March to 4 April 2025.

Following the publication of our draft five-year gas plan, we undertook extensive engagement with a range of stakeholders, including the community forum, the ECRC, large customers, the ACT Government and QPRC, regulators, retailers and consumer advocates. We sought to test whether we had reflected the views and priorities of our key stakeholder voices.

Most of the feedback we received on the draft five-year gas plan was via our existing forums, as well as a small number of ad hoc comments on social media and a written submission from the Tuggeranong Community Council, a member of our ECRC, highlighting the level of commitment and involvement members have with our regulatory processes.

The feedback, themes and messages we received in response to our draft five-year gas plan were consistent with what we heard in the 12 months prior to its release.

Generally, the feedback we received was positive. In particular, the majority of our community forum members expressed the view that their feedback was reflected and addressed within the current Government policy and regulatory framework in which we are bound and operate.<sup>14</sup>

A summary of key themes and feedback we received is provided in Table 5.

*Table 5 Key themes and feedback on our draft five-year gas plan*

Topic	What we heard
Recovery of capital asset base	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concern about full investment recovery via the regulatory framework alone</li> <li>ACT Government funding role debated, and whether we should fully recover our costs</li> </ul>
Accelerated depreciation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some support for some accelerated asset base recovery approach proposed to achieve an equitable transition</li> </ul>
Revenue cap TVM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some support for a revenue cap on the basis that customers should only pay what is necessary to maintain network safety and reliability</li> <li>Recognition that without revenue certainty, our ability to provide safe and reliable gas services into the future may be jeopardised</li> <li>Short-term price variability concerns for vulnerable customers</li> </ul>
Rebalancing of tariffs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>General support for flatter tariffs, acknowledging trade-offs</li> </ul>
Permanent disconnection targeted approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support for the proposed approach to target permanent disconnection upon house sale/demolition</li> </ul>

<sup>14</sup> Appendix 1.2 Communication Link report of feedback from community forum sessions 1–10, June 2025, p. 57.

Topic	What we heard
NSW network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support for differentiated permanent disconnection services to reduce costs for residential customers</li> <li>• Some would like to see an upfront contribution charge for new Queanbeyan-Palerang residential connections</li> </ul>

Feedback received on the draft five-year gas plan has been considered together with the extensive feedback we received over the past 18 months. High level information on our approach to engagement, overall engagement feedback, and how we have responded to feedback is set out in Table 6. Detailed information is provided in specific attachments and appendices as indicated in the table.

The feedback received to date will guide ongoing engagement with the community as well as our continued consideration of key issues as we develop our revised five-year gas plan.

## 4.2 How engagement has helped to shape our five-year gas plan

Table 5 provides a summary of our approach to engaging with our community and stakeholders on each topic. More information on our engagement approach for each topic can be found in the referenced attachments and appendices.

*Table 6 How our community has shaped our five-year gas plan*

Topic	Summary of our approach	What we heard	How we are responding
<b>Emissions reduction</b>	<p>At the commencement of our engagement journey with stakeholders, we set out the ACT Government's emissions reduction targets and IEP to set the context for our five-year gas plan within the ACT's electrification transition.</p> <p>At community forum 3 we proposed a set of principles to guide our tariff approach, including the value of emissions reductions. We sought feedback on the principles used to guide our review of tariffs, including whether any were missing. We also presented the tariff principles to the ECRC and our large customers at an Energy Matters Forum.</p>	<p>Our customers told us that they generally support the emissions reduction objectives of the Government and expect us to enable an equitable transition path to 2045.</p> <p>When considering principles to guide our approach to setting tariffs, the majority of community forum participants supported the principle that tariffs should support emissions reduction and ACT Government targets.<sup>15</sup> Feedback from the ECRC and our large customers was that our tariff principles appear sound and reasonable.</p> <p>We also heard through our customer research that environmental concerns were a key driver in electrification decisions (detailed information on the CIE's study and our demand forecast is</p>	<p>As the region's electricity and gas network provider, we play an important role in supporting the ACT Government's 2045 net zero emissions target. As outlined in the Overview of our five-year gas plan, the decline in gas use over the period will deliver considerable benefit to the community in terms of the associated value of emissions reduction. Our five-year gas plan also demonstrates our alignment with the ACT Government's emissions reduction objectives as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our proposed gradual and measured flattening of our volume tariff blocks over the 2026–31 access arrangement period will better signal the value of emissions reductions to large customers</li> </ul>

<sup>15</sup> Appendix 1.2 Communication Link report of feedback from community forum sessions 1–10, June 2025, p. 31.

Topic	Summary of our approach	What we heard	How we are responding
		provided in Attachment 2: Demand forecast).	<p>See Attachment 7: Transportation (including metering) reference service and tariffs for more information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The incentives implicit in our proposed revenue cap approach are consistent with the ACT Government's legislated emissions reduction targets while allowing us to provide safe and reliable gas distribution services.</li> </ul> <p>See Attachment 9: Tariff variation mechanism for more information.</p>
<b>Future use of gas (demand)</b>	<p>We used illustrative demand scenarios to discuss demand uncertainty at deliberative forums and asked participants to consider how fast they would transition away from gas, then consider the transition through the lens of different customer profiles presented through 'personas'. We adopted scenarios and personas on the recommendation of the ERAP to support our stakeholders' consideration of impacts in terms of different consumption levels</p>	<p>Our customers told us that there is a diverse range of factors influencing their electrification decisions, including upfront costs, costs over time, environmental concerns, appliance quality, and housing type and ownership status.</p> <p>Some households will make their choice based on the price of new appliances, some intend to switch before their appliances fail, and others prefer to stay on gas regardless of price. During one-on-one interviews with our large customers for the CIE's research, many indicated that they</p>	<p>Demand for our gas services has been in decline for over a decade and in 2023–24 gas use on our network fell by 14 per cent, to the lowest level observed in 17 years.</p> <p>We engaged independent experts, the CIE, to develop a detailed gas demand forecast for the 2026–31 access arrangement period, and beyond to 2045. CIE delivered a first-of-its-kind approach for our gas network, combining econometric modelling with extensive customer research. The results from CIE's forecast show demand for Evoenergy's gas services declining by 24 per cent over the 2026–31 access</p>

Topic	Summary of our approach	What we heard	How we are responding
	<p>and to contextualise the diverse customer base.<sup>16</sup></p> <p>We engaged the CIE to develop our demand forecast for the 2026–31 access arrangement period, and beyond to 2045. The CIE delivered a first-of-its-kind approach for our gas network, combining econometric modelling with extensive customer research. We presented the CIE's approach and results to our stakeholders.</p>	<p>were considering the timing and technical options of their transition.<sup>17</sup></p> <p>Our residential customers have an ageing stock of gas appliances (over 25 per cent of heaters are over 16 years old).<sup>18</sup></p> <p>Energy Consumers Australia research found that over 65 per cent of ACT households plan to disconnect from gas in the next 10 years.<sup>19</sup></p> <p>Stakeholders supported our approach to demand forecasting.<sup>20</sup></p>	<p>arrangement period, and customer numbers declining by 28 per cent.</p> <p>Our gas demand forecasts will be updated, to include winter 2025 data. These results will be used to support our revised proposal.</p> <p>See Attachment 2: Demand forecast for more information on our approach to forecasting demand for the next five years, and beyond.</p>
<b>Ensuring our network is safe and reliable</b>	<p>We presented our preliminary expenditure forecasts to our community forum and through our draft five-year gas plan<sup>21</sup> and emphasised our continued commitment to keep costs down where we can while</p>	<p>We heard from our community forum<sup>24</sup> and other stakeholders including the ACT Government in its submission to our RSP,<sup>25</sup> that expenditure on the gas network should be limited to only the costs required to ensure the network is safely,</p>	<p>The costs of operating a gas distribution network safely and reliably are largely fixed, meaning the cost does not materially decrease as customers leave the network. However, Evoenergy will ensure that over the next five years network expenditure will</p>

<sup>16</sup> Appendix 1.5 Evoenergy, ERAP meeting summaries, p.6.

<sup>17</sup> Appendix 1.4 Energy Matters Forum report, p. 6.

<sup>18</sup> Attachment 2 Evoenergy Demand forecasts, June 2025.

<sup>19</sup> Energy Consumers Australia, 2024 Consumer Energy Report Card, December 2024.

<sup>20</sup> Appendix 1.2 Communication Link report of feedback from community forum sessions 1–10, June 2025, pp. 44–45 and Appendix 1.3 ECRC engagement report, June 2025, pp. 10–11.

<sup>21</sup> Evoenergy's draft five-year gas plan, access arrangement proposal 2026–31, March 2025, pp. 37–38 and Appendix 1.2 Communication Link report of feedback from community forum sessions 1–10, June 2025, p. 41.

<sup>24</sup> Appendix 1.2 Communication Link report of feedback from community forum sessions 1–10, June 2025, pp. 42–43.

<sup>25</sup> ACT Government, Minister Rattenbury - Submission - Evoenergy reference service proposal, August 2024, p. 2.



Topic	Summary of our approach	What we heard	How we are responding
	<p>maintaining a safe and reliable gas supply for customers.<sup>22</sup></p> <p>We also sought feedback on whether we should propose a step-change measure to support customers through the electrification transition through the provision of reliable and accessible information, such as providing information about safely disconnecting from the gas network.<sup>23</sup></p>	<p>securely, and reliably maintained and operated.</p> <p>We did not receive written feedback on the proposed step-change in the draft five-year plan. We did, however receive mixed views from the community forum on the customer support proposal, with many observing that this is a shared responsibility with other key stakeholders including the ACT Government and retailers who also play an important role.<sup>26</sup></p> <p>There was support from the community forum for the safety control program and for costs to be included in the temporary disconnection charge.<sup>27</sup></p> <p>Some stakeholders expressed a view that we should impose an upfront connections charge for new customers connecting to the network in NSW.</p>	<p>be limited to only what is required to safely and reliably operate and maintain the gas network and meet our obligations to supply gas services as demand continues to decline. We have worked with our service providers to ensure that our operational and asset management costs are as low as possible, and we are absorbing cost increases, such as rising insurance premiums, wherever possible.</p> <p>We have opted not to include a step-change measure to support customers through the electrification journey and we do not propose to impose connection charges on NSW customers at this time.</p> <p>We are proposing not to include the capital expenditure incentive scheme to ensure the benefits of any potential savings achieved during the 2026–31 access arrangement period primarily flow to our customers in the next access arrangement period.</p> <p>See Attachment 3: Operating expenditure and Attachment 4: Capital expenditure for more information on our proposed</p>

<sup>22</sup> See community forum session 7 (14 November 2024) presentation available on [Evoenergy's website](#).

<sup>23</sup> Appendix 1.2 Communication Link report of feedback from community forum sessions 1–10, June 2025, p. 44.

<sup>26</sup> Appendix 1.2 Communication Link report of feedback from community forum sessions 1–10, June 2025, p. 38.

<sup>27</sup> Appendix 1.2 Communication Link report of feedback from community forum sessions 1–10, June 2025, p. 44.

Topic	Summary of our approach	What we heard	How we are responding
			approach to efficiently, safely, and reliably maintain the gas network over the next five years.
<b>Safely disconnecting from our network</b>	<p>Our approach to disconnections has been ongoing and iterative, as we adapted our proposed disconnection approach to take account of stakeholder feedback and new information obtained through our independent safety review. We also engaged with the ACT Government and the ACT Utilities Technical Regulator on safety matters.</p> <p>At earlier engagement sessions, we sought our community and stakeholder's views on different approaches to recovering the costs of permanent disconnection services (including user-pays, or costs recovered from remaining customers) and how these cost recovery approaches aligned with their values.</p> <p>Once available, we shared the findings of our independent safety review at later sessions and sought views on our proposed approach to recovering</p>	<p>At earlier sessions, the community forum told us that the cost of permanent disconnections is currently too high and may be acting as a disincentive to request the service. There were also concerns about disconnection costs for those left on the network.<sup>28</sup></p> <p>Once informed about the outcomes of the safety assessment, community forum members generally supported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a targeted approach to disconnections</li> <li>• differentiation of services to reduce permanent disconnection costs for residential customers</li> <li>• the proposed introduction of the Safety Control Program, highlighting that the costs presented and charging the disconnecting customer for the service were reasonable.<sup>29</sup></li> </ul>	<p>We recognise that much of our engagement was prior to having completed a technical safety assessment of non-consuming customers connected to our gas network.</p> <p>We have taken on board feedback from our community and our stakeholders by developing an approach intended to facilitate delivering an energy transition that is economically efficient and in the long-term interests of customers.</p> <p>An independent safety assessment of non-consuming services of detached residential dwellings connected to Evoenergy's network concluded that the costs associated with permanently disconnecting all non-consuming properties are disproportionate to the risk. Instead, to maintain the required level of network safety, permanent disconnections are only necessary for building demolition and for</p>

<sup>28</sup> Appendix 1.2 Communication Link report of feedback from community forum sessions 1–10, June 2025, p. 37.

<sup>29</sup> Appendix 1.2 Communication Link report of feedback from community forum sessions 1–10, June 2025, p. 44.

Topic	Summary of our approach	What we heard	How we are responding
	disconnection costs, including the indicative charges and introduction of a Safety Control Program funded through the temporary disconnection charge to increase awareness of gas network safety and help customers make informed choices.	In early discussions with the ERAP, members recommended that we should adopt a user pays cost recovery approach for disconnections to avoid shifting the cost of the service to customers who remain on the network for longer. <sup>30</sup>	<p>residential property sales if all appliances have been electrified. On this basis, we are proposing to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• adopt a targeted approach to permanent disconnections to maintain safety at the lowest overall cost</li> <li>• retain user-pays to ensure that the primary beneficiary of the service pays for the costs of the service and avoids shifting the cost burden to customers remaining on the network for longer</li> <li>• introduce differentiated permanent disconnection services (basic, basic (urgent), and complex) to reduce costs for most customers and provide flexibility for customers as they electrify their homes and businesses</li> <li>• develop a 'Safety Control Program' to educate the community and provide targeted information for those with a non-consuming service. The cost of this program is proposed to be recovered through the temporary disconnection charge.</li> <li>• See Appendix 8.1: Disconnection services for more information on our</li> </ul>

<sup>30</sup> Appendix 1.5 ERAP meeting summaries, June 2025, p. 21.

Topic	Summary of our approach	What we heard	How we are responding
			proposed approach to safely managing customer disconnections over the next five years.
<b>Recovering past infrastructure investment, network costs and implications for affordability</b>	<p>On the issue of recovering past investment costs, we engaged with our community forum three times to build an understanding of depreciation and then discuss options and understand their preferences. We also discussed this issue with the ECRC and our large customers.</p> <p>The focus of our engagement with stakeholders on depreciation was firstly on ensuring a base level of understanding of the concepts and challenges. We then engaged with our stakeholders on the options for depreciation in the ACT context and within the current regulatory framework, i.e., under the assumptions of full cost recovery by 2045, recovery of costs through gas customers only, no change in policy direction, a declining demand profile and all other components of the retail bill held constant.</p>	<p>The community is concerned about the immediate and longer-term costs of the energy transition, particularly for hard-to-transition and vulnerable customers.</p> <p>There has been strong and consistent feedback for consideration of:<sup>31</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the ACT Government contributing through tax-payer funding</li> <li>costs recovered through both the electricity and gas networks</li> <li>Evoenergy not fully recovering its costs.</li> </ul> <p>There was in-principle support from the community forum for bringing forward some depreciation to achieve an equitable transition (the sum-of-years'-digits approach was considered reasonable as it aligns with the community forum's priorities in their report to Evoenergy on the need to share costs fairly).<sup>32</sup> However, there was</p>	<p>We propose a balanced approach to depreciation that lays the foundations for an equitable transition pathway, while providing a reasonable opportunity for Evoenergy to recover its efficient investment costs. We propose to align the remaining life of gas assets to 2045 and accelerate the depreciation profile of gas network assets over the next five years while there is still a large customer base.</p> <p>Taking action now to bring forward some depreciation will provide the greatest opportunity for an equitable transition. This means that these costs will be shared across a wider customer base and reduces the risk of significantly rising prices in the second half of the transition for those customers who are least able to transition early, such as those facing financial hardship, renters, multi-occupant dwelling</p>

<sup>31</sup> Appendix 1.2 Communication Link report of feedback from community forum sessions 1–10, June 2025, p. 61.

<sup>32</sup> Appendix 1.2 Communication Link report of feedback from community forum sessions 1–10, June 2025, p. 39.

Topic	Summary of our approach	What we heard	How we are responding
	<p>The presentation of options involved demonstrating the indicative retail-level bill impacts and the amount of depreciation per customer in each five-year access arrangement period through to 2045 relative to the current approach. We asked our community forum to consider the customer impacts of the options against the values they had developed. The options discussed included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• straight line depreciation method</li> <li>• customer-weighted depreciation method</li> <li>• sum-of-years'-digits depreciation method</li> <li>• introducing an exit fee.</li> </ul> <p>We also sought views on options to recover past investment costs beyond the regulatory framework.</p>	<p>concern about medium-long term bill associated with full capital base recovery through the regulatory framework alone for those remaining on the network.</p> <p>There was no support for an exit fee as customers felt that it could disincentivise customers from disconnecting from the gas network and would be an addition to already significant transition costs.<sup>33</sup></p> <p>ECRC members highlighted the fact that equitable recovery of costs will be dependent on the ACT Government, in terms of policy implementation and support. ECRC members also questioned whether we could pursue more innovative or flexible cost-recovery mechanisms, a sentiment shared by other stakeholders including our community forum.<sup>34</sup></p> <p>Large customers highlighted a concern that a faster transition by large customers could lead to increased costs for those remaining on the network. There was interest in understanding how costs would be shared fairly and whether alternative</p>	<p>residents and businesses that rely heavily on gas.</p> <p>We have not proposed to introduce an exit fee.</p> <p>As all gas assets will remain fully utilised over the 2026–31 access arrangement period, we do not propose to identify redundant assets.</p> <p>See Attachment 6: Depreciation for more information on our approach to recovering past investment costs over the next five years.</p> <p>In our five-year gas plan, we have sought to strike a balance between gas network price increases for the next five years while managing a safe and equitable energy transition through to 2045. This includes proposing a gradual flattening of our volume tariff blocks to improve affordability for small customers while managing bill impacts for larger users.</p> <p>See Attachment 5: Revenue requirement and price impacts for more information on</p>

<sup>33</sup> Appendix 1.2 Communication Link report of feedback from community forum sessions 1–10, June 2025, p. 54.

<sup>34</sup> Appendix 1.3 ECRC engagement report, p. 8.

Topic	Summary of our approach	What we heard	How we are responding
		<p>uses of the gas network could be considered to mitigate this issue.<sup>35</sup></p> <p>ERAP encouraged us to explore options for recovering past infrastructure investment costs beyond the regulatory framework, particularly noting our ownership of the ACT's electricity network.<sup>36</sup> ERAP also considered that we should engage with the community forum on the option to identify assets as redundant and not fully recover the costs of the redundant assets.<sup>37</sup></p>	the proposed bill impacts for customers over the next five years.
<b>How our tariffs are structured</b>	<p>We discussed tariffs with our community forum, the ECRC, large customers, and retailers.</p> <p>At our deliberative forums, we explained the characteristics of the Volume Individual (VI) tariff, which applies to nearly all of our customers. At early engagement sessions, we sought feedback on the principles used to guide our review of our tariffs.</p>	<p>Feedback received from our stakeholders consistently told us that tariffs should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• signal emissions reduction objectives (especially for larger customers)</li> <li>• support customers moving off gas while managing impacts for those left behind (including vulnerable customers)</li> <li>• consider customers' ability and willingness to respond and be easy to</li> </ul>	We are proposing to adopt a gradual and measured transition to a "flatter" tariff for the majority of our customers. The approach will lower Block 1 charges in our VI tariff while increasing Blocks 2–4, resulting in flatter prices across different usage levels. This change will better signal the value of emissions reductions, especially for larger customers, and help manage small customer bill impacts. We will retain our existing automatic reset of chargeable demand for our demand

<sup>35</sup> Appendix 1.3 Energy Matters Forum report, p. 5.

<sup>36</sup> Appendix 1.5 ERAP meeting summaries, meetings 4, 5.

<sup>37</sup> Appendix 1.5 ERAP meeting summaries, meetings 4, 5, 6.

Topic	Summary of our approach	What we heard	How we are responding
	<p>Through our draft five-year gas plan and in forums, we sought views on proposed tariff flattening options, including a proposal to consider a gradual rebalancing of our VI tariff to reduce the fixed and block 1 charges and increase charges in blocks 2–4, and to not change the demand tariffs.<sup>38</sup></p> <p>Following feedback received on our draft plan and at deliberative forums, we re-engaged with stakeholders on a revision to our tariff approach to flatten the VI usage blocks and not rebalance the fixed charge.</p>	<p>understand and simple for retailers to adopt.</p> <p>There was general support for our flattening approach with the community forum and ECRC members. Some questioned whether small tariff changes would result in customers responding to price signals; while others were concerned about the affordability impacts of flattening for larger residential and commercial users.</p> <p>There was also an overarching theme from stakeholders, including retailers, to maintain simple tariffs that are easy to pass through to customers and easy for customers to understand.</p> <p>Further, the ERAP emphasised the need for the design of tariffs to be enduring, provide price stability and consider the intergenerational and long-term impacts on customers.<sup>39</sup></p>	<p>customers to improve their customer experience and reduce administrative burden.</p> <p>See Attachment 7: Transportation (including metering) reference service and tariffs for more information on our proposed approach to setting tariffs over the next five years.</p>
<b>How we will adjust gas</b>	We engaged on the TVM earlier than we ordinarily would have due to a new	Initially, there were mixed views about the benefits of a price cap or revenue cap. Customers observed that a price cap may	<b>Transportation (including metering) reference service</b>

<sup>38</sup> See community forum session 7 (14 November 2024) presentation available on [Evoenergy's website](#).

<sup>39</sup> Appendix 1.5 ERAP meeting summaries, June 2025, p. 12.



Topic	Summary of our approach	What we heard	How we are responding
<b>network prices</b>	<p>requirement by the AER to propose a TVM in our RSP.</p> <p>The ERAP highlighted the complexity of engaging with consumers on the TVM in their submission to our RSP.<sup>40</sup> We recognised the complexity of understanding the TVM as a revenue recovery option and revisited this complex topic on four occasions with our community forum to build capacity and understanding.</p> <p>In early sessions with our forum members, we introduced the regulatory framework and the different types of TVMs and demonstrated how they can be used to manage demand forecasting uncertainty. We asked forum members to consider an example of how gas network prices would be adjusted under different TVMs and the implications of these different approaches on a range of customer personas. We also presented the differences between a revenue cap, a price cap, and a hybrid TVM. We explained the implications for tariffs under different demand scenarios both within</p>	<p>provide price predictability through the access arrangement period, while a revenue cap provides certainty for Evoenergy through the energy transition and reduces price variability between five-year access arrangement periods. Some customers considered merit in exploring a hybrid approach.</p> <p>However, participants' preferences shifted as their understanding of the impacts of different demand scenarios increased.<sup>41</sup></p> <p>Our community forum ultimately supported our proposed revenue cap and approach to address price variability (including the treatment of government fees and charges, our demand forecast, and proposed flattening of the VI tariff) on the basis that customers should pay only what is necessary to maintain a safe and reliable gas network regardless of outturn demand. Our community also recognised that, without revenue certainty Evoenergy's ability to provide safe and reliable gas services into the future may be jeopardised.</p>	<p>We consider the revenue cap to be the most appropriate option for the ACT and Queanbeyan-Palerang region, allowing for an efficient energy transition while accounting for government policy, customer electrification intentions and our community's feedback. A revenue cap ensures customers pay no more or less than necessary for us to maintain a safe and reliable gas network, even if actual gas demand is different to forecasts.</p> <p>A revenue cap removes demand forecasting risk for both customers and Evoenergy by allowing the AER to approve an updated demand forecast every year. It avoids intra-period price variability by allowing prices to incrementally adjust annually reflecting the actual pace of the transition relative to the forecast.</p> <p>A revenue cap enables consistent approaches between gas and electricity networks, which are substitutes within our operating footprint. This provides efficient price signals, and a natural hedge against demand uncertainty to support total energy</p>

<sup>40</sup> Energy Regulatory Advisory Panel, Submission on Evoenergy Access Arrangement 2026-31 (GN26) – Reference Service Proposal (RSP), 9 August 2024.

<sup>41</sup> Appendix 1.2 Communication Link report of feedback from community forum sessions 1–10, June 2025, pp. 23–30.



Topic	Summary of our approach	What we heard	How we are responding
	<p>the five-year access arrangement period and between access arrangement periods, to consider the longer-term impacts of the different TVM approaches. We also sought the community's views on their priorities for TVM approaches.</p> <p>In the final sessions with our ECRC and community forum before submitting our five-year gas plan, we presented our proposed approach to address price variability under a revenue cap.</p>		<p>bill stability (noting that gas customers are also electricity customers).</p> <p>See Attachment 9: Tariff variation mechanism for more information on our proposed approach to varying our tariffs over the next five years.</p>

## 5. Balancing our community's diverse views

We have been on a long journey with our community as we considered complex topics and developed our five-year gas plan. We consulted with various stakeholders as part of our commitment to ensure that we heard from, understood and considered the diverse perspectives and needs of our key stakeholder voices during a complex period in the ACT with the transition away from gas.

While we were able to triangulate some common feedback themes from the various stakeholder voices, we recognised and have transparently highlighted varied and at times conflicting feedback we have received while developing our five-year gas plan. We have also consistently shared this feedback across our deliberative forums and with key stakeholders, including the ACT Government and regulators, to ensure a continuous feedback loop. Conflicting feedback was focused on issues such as the full recovery of past investment costs, the TVM, accelerated depreciation and disconnections, where our community is concerned about the cost implications to vulnerable customers and those who are left on the gas network. We have outlined in our five-year gas plan our approach to addressing these concerns by ensuring that we support a fair and equitable transition for our customers.

While we sought consensus from our deliberative forums to the extent possible, we did not expect that this would always be the case, given our commitment to deliberative engagement, which invited diverse and balanced views from participants. To enable deliberation and informed provision of feedback from the community forum, we took time to educate, inform and respond to questions and areas requiring clarification or further information. The community forum's report to Evoenergy prepared at session 6, was developed collaboratively and independently, and finalised to the satisfaction of 32 participants.<sup>42</sup>

At community forum 8, we presented an overview of our draft five-year gas plan to test overall acceptance of the draft plan and whether we had adequately captured and considered their feedback. We provided additional opportunity for feedback on our draft plan at community forum 9. Most of our community forum members expressed the view that their feedback was reflected and addressed within the current ACT Government policy and regulatory framework, in which we are bound and operate.<sup>43</sup>

At more recent sessions with our deliberative forums, we provided an overview of our five-year gas plan, highlighting the key themes from engagement feedback and how we have addressed this feedback in our five-year gas plan. Our community forum provided generally positive feedback, with commentary around their feedback being considered and incorporated.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Appendix 1.2 Communication Link report of feedback from community forum sessions 1–10, June 2025, p. 38.

<sup>43</sup> Appendix 1.2 Communication Link report of feedback from community forum sessions 1–10, June 2025, p. 42.

<sup>44</sup> Appendix 1.2 Communication Link report of feedback from community forum sessions 1–10, June 2025, p. 46.

## 6. Performance monitoring and evaluation

As per our engagement objectives, we developed several performance measures to enable us to evaluate and continuously improve our engagement approach. How we have tracked is supported by qualitative and quantitative data from conversations we had and exit surveys of forum participants. Table 7 outlines our evaluation of engagement to date.

*Table 7 How we are tracking on engagement*

Goal	How it will be measured	Target	Result
<b>Inform, consult, involve consumers and the general community</b>	Participant survey seeking feedback on their level of engagement in the process	<p>80 per cent of participants feel they were engaged in the development of the key aspects of the regulatory submission at the “involve” level as defined by the IAP2 Spectrum of engagement.</p> <p>This will be supported by ensuring feedback loops on the outcomes of engagement activities.</p>	<p>●</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appendix 1.2: Communication Link report of feedback from community forum sessions 1–10 (p. 50) shows the results of amalgamated community forum post-session evaluations. 83 per cent of participants felt that the ability to participate and contribute to the discussion was easy or very easy.</li> <li>At community forum 8, we presented our draft five-year gas plan to test whether we had appropriately reflected and considered the feedback we heard. Overall, participants indicated support for the draft plan and how their feedback was reflected.</li> <li>We have received generally positive feedback from community forum participants about their involvement in the process (see Figure 6).</li> </ul>
<b>Inform and involve the ERAP (December 2023 to October 2024)</b>	Ongoing engagement and check-ins throughout	ERAP to be sufficiently satisfied that they have been engaged at the “involve” level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We aimed to inform and involve the ERAP at the six sessions held before the panel concluded in October 2024. Feedback and suggestions from ERAP members are referenced in our five-year gas plan. An overview of ERAP meeting summaries is provided in Appendix 1.5.</li> </ul>

Goal	How it will be measured	Target	Result
<b>Involve ECRC</b>	Check-ins throughout	Ensure the ECRC is satisfied that they have been engaged at the “involve” level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Across 11 ECRC meetings over the past 18 months, members were updated and invited to provide input.</li> <li>● The ECRC was informed and consulted early, with feedback shaping both process and content, including the framing of community forum discussions and the draft five-year gas plan. Feedback loops were built into meeting agendas (see Appendix 1.3: ECRC engagement report for meeting details).</li> <li>● Members actively contributed to discussions and expressed that their views were heard and considered. This aligns with the “involve” level of the IAP2 spectrum.</li> </ul>
<b>Participation: Representative and number of participants</b>	Analysis of data gathered from participants in the engagement program	Ensure the data gathered is representative of Canberra’s demographics and ensure all target groups are represented.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Our community forum has a diverse mix of representatives including residential customers and business owners, First Nations peoples, CALD people, young people (emerging customers), renters and homeowners (see Table 3 and Appendix 1.2: Communication Link report of feedback from community forum sessions 1–10 (p. 14)) who have actively participated in deliberations across the ten sessions held to date.</li> <li>● We conducted surveys with our residential and commercial gas customers, and targeted interviews with our largest customers, to better understand their transition preferences and intentions. Our survey of residential customers captured 1,885 households with a wide range of demographic profiles. We compared the survey sample against census data to ensure the results were representative of customers on our network.</li> </ul>

Goal	How it will be measured	Target	Result
<b>Clear, accurate and timely information</b>	Participant surveys	70 per cent of participants report that information is easy to understand and timely.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appendix 1.2: Communication Link report of feedback from community forum sessions 1–10 (p. 50) shows the results of amalgamated community forum post-session evaluations. 69 per cent of participants felt that the information provided was easy or somewhat easy to understand.</li> </ul>
<b>Accessible and inclusive - electronic and hard-copy information, venues and presentations will be accessible</b>	Participant surveys  Review against accessibility and inclusiveness requirements	100 per cent in accordance with identified guidelines.  No instances of people expressing concern or dissatisfaction about accessibility or inclusiveness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appendix 1.2: Communication Link report of feedback from community forum sessions 1–10 (pp. 46 and 51) includes feedback and participant reflections regarding the community forum process and delivery. We received positive feedback from the community forum regarding the delivery of sessions (in-person and online) and easy-to-understand presentations, activities and materials.</li> </ul>
<b>Transparent through the provision of timely and complete information</b>	Participant survey	70 per cent of survey respondents believe they have been provided with transparent information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appendix 1.2: Communication Link report of feedback from community forum sessions 1–10 (p. 50) shows the results of amalgamated community forum post-session evaluations. 86 per cent of participants felt that the information provided was transparent.</li> </ul>
<b>Establishing a relationship with consumers that is lasting and long-term</b>	Participant survey	70 per cent of participants found they had a newfound understanding or appreciation of energy transition and the regulatory process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appendix 1.2: Communication Link report of feedback from community forum sessions 1–10 (p. 18) shows the results of entry and exit surveys completed by community forum participants after ten forum sessions. The results show</li> </ul>

Goal	How it will be measured	Target	Result
			confidence that the community's feedback will influence our planning and lead to useful recommendations.

Goal	How it will be measured	How we are tracking
<b>On-going insights</b>	Regular communication, event reports and status updates will ensure that our internal stakeholders have access to continual insights gathered through engagement activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We have reported back all engagement feedback to our Executive team and staff to enable consideration and refinement of our strategies.</li> </ul>
<b>Consultation reports</b>	A consultation report will be produced at the end of each of the three phases, enabling the information gathered to be accurately analysed and synthesised to produce actionable feedback that will shape our proposals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>External consultant Communication Link prepared a community forum mid-way report at the end of Stage 1 of our engagement. The report is available on our webpage. Appendix 1.2: Communication Link report of feedback from community forum sessions 1–10 provides details on sessions held to date.</li> </ul>
<b>Considering feedback</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Careful and accurate collection of data –includes minutes, reports and data analysis of feedback from all interactions with stakeholder groups.</li> <li>Public release of feedback – regular reports on consultation activities and consultation reports will be accessible. Consumers will be able to challenge Evoenergy if stakeholder feedback has not been accurately recorded.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We have ensured that engagement session presentations, summaries and materials have been made publicly available on our webpage.</li> <li>Our Executive team has shown commitment to the process, hearing from all our key voices along the journey by attending deliberative forums and responding to questions from our customers. They have shared feedback from these sessions with key stakeholders to</li> </ul>

Goal	How it will be measured	How we are tracking
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation by our leadership team – leadership from Evoenergy will be involved across all engagement activities and will be in a position to hear directly from consumers and other stakeholders as they discuss issues and provide feedback.</li> <li>• Direct input to management – feedback will be regularly reported to key internal stakeholders so that it can directly inform the development of the regulatory proposal.</li> <li>• Demonstrate resulting changes to strategies – in the regulatory proposal, changes resulting from engagement activities will be clearly identified. Where feedback may differ from the final position in the submission, the reasons for this difference will be clearly explained.</li> <li>• A consultation report will be produced at the end of each engagement phase that summarises activities undertaken, feedback received, and response to that feedback.</li> </ul>	<p>ensure that concerns raised are addressed and considered.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback we have received, and how we have addressed it, is highlighted in section 4 of this attachment.</li> </ul>

Figure 6 Community forum participant session 10 feedback



See Appendix 1.2 Communication Link, Report of feedback from community forum sessions 1–10, June 2025, p. 46.



## 7. What's next on our journey

Our engagement journey is ongoing, and we are committed to continuing discussions on the energy transition and implications beyond the next five-year regulatory period. We intend to continue to engage with the community through our existing forums and new targeted channels based on identified gaps and opportunities.

As we consider the AER's draft decision and our revised proposal, we intend to reconvene the community forum later this year, continue to engage with our ECRC through standing meetings and where possible engage with other customer cohorts and stakeholders as relevant. We aim to discuss any new or outstanding issues and provide an update on our thinking including our demand forecast, following public consultation on our five-year gas plan, and ongoing conversations with regulators, governments and industry. We recognise the important role we play in the transition and how the need to continue to engage with our community is vital in the transition journey.

## Glossary of terms and acronyms

Term or acronym	Definition
access arrangement	Access arrangement
ACT	Australian Capital Territory
ACTCOSS	ACT Council of Social Service
AER	Australian Energy Regulator
BAU	Business-as-usual
CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
CIE	Centre for International Economics
Draft five-year gas plan	Evoenergy's publication of an initial position on its access arrangement proposal shaped by consumer and stakeholder engagement, for public consultation. The draft five-year gas plan was released on 3 March 2025 until 4 April 2025 and is available on the gas plan <a href="#">webpage</a> .
ECRC	Energy Consumer Reference Council
ERAP	Energy Regulatory Advisory Panel
FAQ	Frequently asked questions
Five-year gas plan	Evoenergy's gas plan for the 2026–31 access arrangement period.
IAP2	International Association for Public Participation
IEP	ACT Government's Integrated Energy Plan
NSW	New South Wales
Permanent disconnection	The permanent disconnection of a gas connection at the premises. A permanent disconnection involves the removal of the gas meter and the physical disconnection of any pipeline to the property. This is considered the safest option as it removes all risks associated with having a pressurised gas pipe, including the risk of gas leaks and excavation strikes.

Term or acronym	Definition
QPRC	Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council
RSA	Reference service agreement
RSP	Reference service proposal
SME	Subject matter expert
Temporary disconnection	A disconnection is a temporary closure of a gas connection on a premises. It involves disabling the meter equipment by introducing a plug, wad, meter lock or blanking device to the inlet of the meter, preventing gas flow through the meter. A temporary disconnection does not disconnect the pipeline to the premises, meaning the gas pipeline is still active and pressurised. A temporary disconnection can be reversed.
VI	Volume Individual
TVM	Tariff variation mechanism