

# Gas Distribution System Code of Practice Review

**Submissions received orally through a meeting on 20 December 2023**

**Date submitted: 21/12/2023**

**Submission written by ESC staff and approved by Energy Consumers Australia**

## **Upfront charges for new connections**

Energy Consumers Australia (ECA) considers that requiring upfront charges for new connections sends the right signal, highlights that gas is expensive and customers will face ongoing costs for the network, and aligns with the gas substitution roadmap. ECA considers the impact of upfront charges on small businesses should be assessed further. This option does not distinguish small businesses from residential customers. Some small businesses may require gas connections as there may not be an equivalent electrical appliance for their business function or there may be greater expenses for the business to electrify. ECA recommends additional thinking or collaboration with other organisations such as the Australian Business Council. ECA does not want new connection charges to deter businesses from setting up. ECA encourages developing a greater understanding of businesses ability to electrify and how upfront charges may impact them differently to residential customers.

## **Provision of information and reporting requirements on abolishments and disconnections**

ECA supports reporting the number of abolishments and disconnections and the proposed provision of information obligations on gas distributors. ECA, however, notes that these obligations can be elaborated on to consider the retailer as a point of contact for the customer. ECA recognizes that customers may receive conflicting information and encourages the commission to also consider a process for customers to verify the authenticity of the information provided. ECA notes that provision of information obligations can be extended and encourages the commission to consider customers' key contact points and understanding of how customers are accessing information relating to abolishments and disconnections. For example, a customer's first point of contact is their retailer and not their gas network, and in some cases, customers may not know their gas network