Investing in Cheaper, Cleaner Energy and the Net Zero Transformation

- Interim Report

FED

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MASTER ELECTRICIANS AUSTRALIA

Master Electricians Australia (MEA) is a peak industry association representing electrical contractors and is recognised by industry, government and the community as a leading business partner, knowledge source and advocate. You can visit our website at www.masterelectricians.com.au

MEA welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Productivity Commission's (PC) interim report on ***Investing in Cheaper, Cleaner Energy and the Net Zero Transformation.*** Australia's pathway to net zero must be driven by policies that are not only effective, but also economically efficient.

Our submission outlines targeted opportunities to reduce emissions at the least cost to households, businesses, and taxpayers, while enhancing energy resilience, stimulating private investment, and unlocking national productivity gains.

In particular, we highlight the role of bi-directional Electric Vehicle (EV) chargers and small-scale Consumer Energy Resources (CER) as critical, underutilised tools in this transition; complementing utility-scale projects while offering decentralised, low-impact options that do not require significant transmission investment.

We also identify key regulatory reforms to reduce costs and ensure national consistency in quality standards. Finally, we highlight missed opportunities in climate resilience planning, specifically the absence of electrification data in proposed resilience tools that, if addressed, would improve adaptation outcomes for households and businesses facing increasingly frequent extreme weather events.

Reducing Cost of Meeting Emission Targets

EV Bi-Directional Chargers

The interim report highlights duplication of EV incentive schemes across jurisdictions, consequent of the National Vehicle Efficiency Standard's (NVES) recent implementation. However, it is MEA's position that current policies fail to adequately recognise or support the broader value of bi-directional EV chargers associated with EVs which go beyond EV adoption incentivisation.

Bi-directional EV chargers complement existing CER assets such as rooftop solar by providing an additional reservoir of energy storage. They enable stored EV battery energy to be discharged back into homes, appliances, or the grid during peak demand, supporting greater energy flexibility and resilience.

These chargers do more than benefit the individual household or businesses investing in an EV, they also have the potential to:

- enhance grid stability and resilience, allowing consumers to respond to tariff signals

- allow households and businesses to maintain energy access during disruptions such as storms, bushfires or cyberattacks.

Recent updates to AS/NZS 4777.1 have permitted the installation of these chargers. However, slow approval processes, market capacity and high costs remain key barriers to widespread uptake. Policies supporting the update of EV bi-directional chargers will send a strong government signal to market to increase consumer and vehicle manufacturer confidence and therefore market investment.

MEA calls for bi-directional EV chargers to be included under the Small-scale Renewable Energy Scheme (SRES), to be eligible for Small-scale Technology Certificates (STCs). These should be installed by accredited professionals and subject to appropriate audit provisions. This initiative would not duplicate existing EV incentives, but rather complement them, supporting grid reliability, stimulating private investment in home charging infrastructure, and delivering economic benefits through lower energy costs and increased disposable income for households.

We submit the Federal Government should implement measures to accelerate the adoption of bi-directional EV chargers as a means of enhancing national productivity. This is a necessary next step to complete the CER ecosystem. It will also drive productivity by enabling households and businesses to extract greater value from

their energy assets. As EV adoption continues to grow, ensuring chargers are bi-directional from the outset will maximise both individual and system-wide benefits.

Additional Points

National consistency is critical in the following areas to support market efficiency, safety, and affordability:

- *Connection and communication requirements for DER products*, which would enhance product availability and reduce costs through standardisation.

- *Installation requirements for inverters and batteries*, including mandatory accreditation of installers by the SAA, to ensure consistent quality and safety outcomes across jurisdictions.

Addressing Barriers to Private Investment in Adaptation

Databases

While the interim report discusses the proposed climate risk database, resilience rating system, and cost-effective resilience upgrades, its focus remains largely on building infrastructure to address heat and water resistance. However, it overlooks a critical opportunity to strengthen energy resilience for households and businesses.

CER, such as small-scale batteries and solar panels, enable continued access to power when transmission infrastructure is disrupted by events like storms, bushfires, or cyclones. Recent experiences, including extended outages following ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred, have highlighted the vulnerability of communities that rely solely on grid-supplied electricity.

Prolonged outages are particularly damaging for businesses, especially small enterprises operating from residential properties or entities reliant on remote work arrangements. Without access to electricity, businesses are unable to charge devices or connect to the internet, halting operations and productivity. This not only results in

lost revenue but also broader economic consequences, including reduced tax contributions and delayed service or output delivery.

MEA urges the inclusion of electrification information, such as the presence of small-scale batteries, in relevant property databases and resilience guidelines. Providing this information to property owners, lessors, and buyers supports informed decision-making and investment in energy resilience assets, ultimately strengthening Australia's climate readiness, economic productivity, and disaster response capacity.

Conclusion

The Productivity Commission has emphasised the importance of cost-effectiveness in climate policy. This submission outlines practical, low-cost, and high-impact opportunities to reduce emissions, support resilience, and enhance national productivity by unlocking the full potential of CER and bi-directional EV chargers.

These decentralised technologies reduce the need for large-scale infrastructure investment, lower costs for households and businesses, and provide greater energy security for households and businesses especially in the face of climate-related disruptions. Including bi-directional EV chargers in the Small-scale Renewable Energy Scheme (SRES) is a critical next step in completing the CER ecosystem and ensuring households and businesses can fully realise the value of their energy assets while adopting EVs.

In addition, national consistency in product standards and installation requirements, will strengthen consumer confidence, enable smarter investment, and deliver better outcomes for the economy, the environment, and the energy system.

Now is the time for government to lead with smart, enabling policies that maximise the return on past investments and position Australia for a productive, resilient, and cost-effective transition to net zero. MEA looks forward to the final report and would welcome further discussion on the topic.