



Housing Supply *Interim Report*

Regulations

Federal

Georgia Holmes

29 September 2026

Master Electricians Australia (MEA) is a peak industry association representing electrical contractors across Australia, majority of which are small and medium sized businesses and has been supporting Australia's electrical businesses since 1937. We are 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 provide feedback on the Productivity Commission's interim report on *Housing Supply Regulation*. Our submission focuses on the delivery of housing-enabling infrastructure and, in particular, the role of electricity connections in supporting timely housing delivery.

Electrical contractors work directly within the connection process and are well placed to identify practical barriers that can delay the completion and occupation of new homes. Our submission draws on member experiences across several jurisdictions and focuses on opportunities to improve the timeliness, consistency, transparency and accountability of electricity connection processes.

Delivering Housing-Enabling Infrastructure

Energy Utility Connections

Delayed Connections

Energy utility services are essential to housing supply, with electrical contractors playing a critical role in getting new developments and homes connected to the grid. However, regular feedback from our members indicates that significant connection delays are occurring across multiple jurisdictions and at several stages of the process, including network design and quotation, assessment and approval, physical connection and metering.

MEA has raised connection delays with Distribution Network Service Providers (DNSPs) across Australia following member feedback. We note that DNSPs consulted with have engaged constructively with MEA on these concerns and either have commenced implementing, or are considering, opportunities to improve connection

processes – however, delays continue in the interim. MEA members in multiple jurisdictions report connection delays and concerns. These experiences indicate that connection delays are not isolated to one network or jurisdiction and warrant broader consideration of how connection processes can be improved nationally.

While the drivers of delays may differ between networks, these experiences point to a broader issue: delays are not solely caused by insufficient network capacity.

Administrative processes, network design and approvals, inconsistent compliance assessments, limited visibility over application progress and timeframes, and coordination between the different parties involved in connecting a property can all contribute.

These delays have significant consequences for housing delivery. A dwelling may be substantially complete but unable to be occupied because electricity supply has not been connected. Delays also increase holding and construction costs and create uncertainty for developers, builders, electrical contractors and consumers. Electrical contractors can also experience direct cashflow impacts where work has been completed and labour and material costs incurred, but finalisation and payment are dependent on connection.

MEA therefore agrees with the Commission that greater accountability for utility connection performance is required. We note that the Queensland Government has recently introduced KPIs for Energy Queensland relating to its Guaranteed Service Levels in response to concerns regarding connection delays. MEA welcomes this increased accountability and will continue to monitor its impact on connection timeframes.

Importantly, performance should be considered across the entire connection process, rather than solely the timeframe for the final physical connection. A connection target provides limited benefit if substantial delays have already occurred during network design, quotation, assessment or approval before that target begins.

Allowing qualified electrical contractors to undertake contestable network services would assist with speeding up housing delivery. For example, NSW has a commendable framework for Accredited Service Providers (ASPs), permitting electrical contractors to carry out works such as connecting or disconnecting homes, businesses and developments to the electricity distribution network. This would include new connections, capacity upgrades or relocating assets.

If all jurisdictions adopted the NSW approach this would benefit housing delivery across the country.

MEA recommends the below be implemented across Australia as a priority:

- Harmonised Authorised Service Provider (ASP) schemes enabling electrical contractors in all jurisdictions to perform certain metering works, speeding up alterations and rollouts. The NSW model for ASPs is a good one, and Qld for example would benefit by adopting the NSW model.
- All DNSPs be obligated to meet clear and reasonable timeframes for each stage of the connection process, supported by transparency and accountability where those timeframes are not met.

Connection and Compliance Processes

Members have reported inconsistent compliance assessments arising from differing interpretations of connection requirements, which can result in installations being defected and connections delayed. In some cases, contractors have also received defect notices that do not sufficiently identify the nature of the alleged non-compliance or the relevant provision of the applicable standard.

These issues can create avoidable delays, particularly where there is no simple and timely mechanism to review or resolve disputed decisions.

MEA recommends that connection frameworks provide:

- consistent and transparent compliance assessments for electrical contractors;
- consistent connection requirements;
- clear and sufficiently detailed defect notices, including the relevant requirement or standard;
- accessible and timely mechanisms to review disputed connection or compliance decisions; and
- processes that allow connections to proceed wherever this can safely occur rather than rectifiable or administrative issues unnecessarily preventing connection.

Reform Directions 4.1 and 4.2

MEA supports the Productivity Commission's intent to improve infrastructure planning, sequencing and accountability to support housing delivery. Better coordination between housing and infrastructure planning should help identify network requirements earlier and reduce the risk of infrastructure constraints emerging after development is already underway.

However, improved planning alone will not resolve utility connection delays. For these reforms to meaningfully address constraints to housing supply, they must translate into timely infrastructure delivery and efficient connection processes at the operational level, supported by the targeted measures outlined above.

A key implementation challenge will be coordinating the different parties involved in planning, approving and delivering infrastructure and connections. Clear responsibilities will be important to avoid gaps between these stages and ensure issues are identified and addressed early.

Conclusion

MEA welcomes the Productivity Commission's focus on ensuring housing development is supported by timely and appropriately coordinated infrastructure. Electricity connections are a critical part of housing delivery, and experiences across jurisdictions demonstrate that delays can occur well beyond issues of network capacity or infrastructure availability.

Improved infrastructure planning must therefore be accompanied by efficient, transparent and accountable connection processes. MEA encourages the Commission to ensure its final recommendations recognise the full connection process and the practical barriers that can delay energisation and, ultimately, the completion and occupation of new homes.