

Customer Forum
Recommendations
For
Jemena Gas
Networks

Jemena,

We, Jemena Gas Network customer forum, have met several times over the last ten months both in person and online to discuss the future of Jemena, the gas power industry, and the appropriate regulatory response for the next five year period. We have heard from a diverse range of speakers both within and outside of Jemena and have learned a great deal about relevant and interesting topics new to many of us. Based on our understanding of the gas industry and problems of an uncertain energy transition, and the input of the youth forum & culturally and linguistically diverse communities, through an ongoing democratic and inclusive listening/discussion process we have come together in agreement of regulatory responses to present these final recommendations.

Customer Forum recommendation - Group 1- renewable gas strategy for supporting customers

Who is in this group: Joshua, Pauline, Sea, Rohan, Kate W, Donny

We want Jemena to...

Support the best cost effective strategy & environmentally friendly pathway moving forward.
Consider how costs are distributed around the customer base.
We are in favour of equitable distribution.

The context of this recommendation is...

This is in the best interest of current and future generations of customers & society as a whole.

Why is this recommendation important?

Customers feel valued & respected in terms of their voices and opinions being heard and taken into account at all times.

We are supporting the best interest of future generations.

Financially viable for all customers regardless of circumstances.

Benefits include the positive impact on the environment while still supporting sustainability at the same time.

Hydrogen, biomethane and other emerging technologies are to be observed and considered and prepared for potential scale once the most attractive and accessible options are ready for the commercial and residential market through the Jemena infrastructure.

This is directed at biomethane and hydrogen when it becomes more readily available.

Customer Forum recommendation - Group 2 - renewable gas reliability and safety

Who is in this group:

We want Jemena to...

- invest in building a reliable renewable gas network while avoiding unnecessary redundancies (i.e. effective management & cost control)
- continue to invest in and research pilot studies and trials to properly study the safety of new/renewable gas networks (all aspects - from supplying, distribution, consumers, storage, etc.)
- benchmark and develop consensus and industry standards for reliability and safety relating to renewable gas networks
- develop appropriate transparent internal policies and measures for the management of operational, environmental, and safety risks; involve relevant subject matter experts in these
- Ensure that after the energy transition, there will be no increases in fire and explosion risks

The context of this recommendation is...

- We know that major testing is being conducted on safety and reliability of new renewable energy sources; results should be objectively evaluated and considered before decision making and implementation of network modifications
- We know that the chemical and safety characteristics of some of the renewable energy sources (e.g. hydrogen) increase the risks of fires and explosions - these all need to be considered for safe use, handling, and storage of the energy sources
- Focus on biomethane which only requires existing infrastructure.
- Business continuity.

Why is this recommendation important?

- To make sure the safety of the consumer and the network are in place so all policies and procedures are followed.
- To see the pragmatic aspect and check practicality (new technologies always have to be tested in the field) of the system modifications and adopted measures.
- Fires and explosions and related injuries and deaths already occur with natural gas; to use a more risky energy source would require a great focus on proper risk mitigation and implementation strategies.

Customer Forum recommendation - Group 3 - Renewable gas advocacy and communication

Who is in this group:

Nadia, Victoria, Norvie, Robert, Evan, Jas

We want Jemena to...

- Jemena needs to have more public presence and speak up in the media.
- Speak with the Federal and local government and councils about Renewable gas advocacy and planning for the future.
- Educate all stakeholders to ultimately reduce the numbers of customers leaving gas over safety concerns. Recognising everyone's knowledge varies, so supply more information so there isn't any misinformation when educating everyone.
- To communicate with their customers on the future of renewable gas with a personable approach, so that customers don't abandon the company. This could include cost comparison between electricity and gas
- Communicate that the option of bio-methane is an environmentally friendly solution.

The context of this recommendation is...

- Without doing anything, there is inconsistent policies
- Some customers are concerned about the safety of using gas indoors whereas its been in use for centuries.
- Banning gas is not speaking for the people, and allowing choice
- the importance of educating the public of the different options of gas

Why is this recommendation important?

- The total reliance on one form of energy could be disastrous.
- By following these recommendations, the public is reassured of the safety and reliability of gas.
- Present to the public that Jemena believes safety is non-negotiable.
- By utilising the bio-methane, as an option, we are protecting the environment by having another renewable gas option.
- For Jemena this means its a more affordable option because they don't have to change the infrastructure.
- By implementing these recommendations Jemena ensures fairness for vulnerable existing and new customers and for the company itself.

Customer Forum recommendation - Group 4 - Affordability

Who is in this group: Mark, Phillip, Pearl, Andrew, Rajat, Shirley

We want Jemena to...

- Ensure that any investment in the gas infrastructure that is necessary for the energy transition doesn't leave behind those customers who may be more sensitive to price rises.
- Finding a balance between rising cost of living and retaining customer base
- Undertake as many initiatives as possible to incentivise people to keep themselves a gas customer
- Subsidise connection costs for new customers to help increase new connections which in turn can help spread costs over a larger base and make it more affordable.

The context of this recommendation is...

- People are struggling to pay their bills. Inflation will only make this worse.
- Jemena needs to invest by increasing cost, but too much increase will lead to customers finding other solutions and leaving the gas network
- There will be a short term (five year) financial hit due to accelerated asset recovery in order to reduce the rate of bill increase in the future. This is understood but means special care needs to be taken for those needing help with this increase.

Why is this recommendation important?

Society has a moral responsibility to make sure that energy sources are affordable - its an essential service.

Certain people may have more of a cultural reliance on gas (eg cooking) and shouldn't be discriminated against.

Customer Forum recommendation - Group 5 - vulnerability

Who is in this group: Danny, Cidem, Reinilda, Tanja, Geoff, Jennifer

We want Jemena to...

- Use their profits to help vulnerable customers and invest to make it fair for customers. At the same time support customers who are willing to share the costs in supporting vulnerable customers.
- Support vulnerable customers to have a choice with gas.
- To have a balanced approach on investment and the need to increase costs to customers

The context of this recommendation is...

- People have a basic need to keep warm and safe when using gas.
- More choices for customers on types of energy offered whilst the costs are competitive in an open market.
- Keep as many customers and open to new customers to keep costs down.
- Jemena shows they care about all customers no matter what their circumstances are and offering financial assistance to vulnerable customers without passing the increased costs to mainstream customers.

Why is this recommendation important?

If people can't afford household gas, they may bring unsafe and unapproved gas appliances inside their home.

Supporting vulnerable customers is essential as we can all become vulnerable due to an unexpected change in circumstance.

Maintaining or increasing customers keeps gas prices down to all customers. By Jemena showing care to their customers in good and difficult times, it brings more positive feedback to Jemena.

Customer Forum recommendation - Group 6 - Regulatory response options

Who is in this group:

We want Jemena to...

Take these 7 recommendations into the future... while considering that these are the result of collaborative work from a diverse group of people and summarise a wide range of opinions. In addition to the recommendations produced from this group, we believe Jemena should continue to incorporate the summarised opinions from the youth and CALD groups, which do not entirely align with the final preferences presented here today.

The context of this recommendation is...

We believe that any decisions should be made with the future of all Australians in mind, and be measurable, tangible and **proactive**. Many of the preferences fall into a 'middle ground' which may slow change in either direction. If these decisions continue to be delayed, we only pass these issues on to the next round of participants in the Jemena public forum in 5 years.

Why is this recommendation important?

Jemena has curated a diverse group of people to ensure these recommendations align with the needs of the broader community. This recommendation is important because it has been the result of a long, collaborative process, and Jemena should respond to and act on these suggestions in a timely manner.