



National Electricity Amendment (Facilitating Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure under Commonwealth Grants) Rule 2026

Federal

25 June 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 Australian Energy Market Commission's (AEMC) consultation regarding the *National Electricity Amendment (Facilitating Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Under Commonwealth Grants) Rule 2026*.

MEA supports measures that facilitate the uptake of electric vehicles and recognises that more charging infrastructure is necessary to support increased EV adoption across Australia.

MEA's primary focus is on increasing private Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure (EVCI), but supports appropriate initiatives that expand kerbside and public charging solutions, particularly where they assist households without access to off-street parking, including apartments and older urban housing stock. These assets play an important role in ensuring equitable access to EV charging and supporting broader electrification outcomes.

Given the consultation paper's focus on public EVCI, MEA has adopted a high-level response in this submission.

Competitive Neutrality and Ring-Fencing

MEA notes that the proposed arrangements provide Charge Point Operators (CPOs) with a first right of refusal in metropolitan areas before DNSPs may assume responsibility for installation and maintenance of EVCI as a provider of last resort. In regional black spot locations, the proposal contemplates a more direct role for DNSPs

in the installation and maintenance of EVCI where private investment is considered unlikely.

MEA recognises that there may be circumstances where targeted and time-limited DNSP involvement is necessary to facilitate deployment where the market is demonstrably unable to deliver the required infrastructure. However, installation and maintenance of EVCI must remain contestable activities that are ordinarily undertaken by licensed electrical contractors operating within the competitive market.

Accordingly, any departure from ring-fencing principles should be narrowly confined to the specific circumstances contemplated by the program and should not establish a precedent for broader DNSP participation in contestable EVCI activities. Where DNSPs do assume responsibility for EVCI delivery, the Commission should ensure that opportunities for the competitive electrical contracting sector are preserved through transparent and competitive procurement arrangements.

Cost Recovery and Consumer Funding

MEA acknowledges the rationale underpinning the Commonwealth's proposed funding program and recognises that overcoming barriers to EVCI deployment may require some degree of government support.

However, MEA is cautious about proposals that would result in residual project costs being recovered from all electricity consumers through regulated network charges. Where public charging infrastructure is commercially viable, a user-pays approach should remain the preferred model. Electricity consumers who may never directly utilise public charging infrastructure should not bear the costs of infrastructure (acknowledging AEMC's position that more consumers will adopt a need for it in the future).

MEA notes that EV charging needs are, and will continue being, met through a variety of pathways. Many consumers will continue to invest in private charging infrastructure at their homes or workplaces and may primarily charge using their own consumer

energy resources, including rooftop solar, batteries, and eventually bi-directional charging technologies. These consumers may make limited or no use of publicly funded kerbside charging infrastructure.

In addition, while the focus of this program is on public EVCI, care should be taken to avoid disincentivising private investment in charging infrastructure, as this plays an important role in alleviating demand pressures on public charging networks both now and into the future. It is important that the policy framework supports a balanced ecosystem of both public and private charging provision. In this context, the potential for 'double charging' or overlapping cost recovery for users of privately funded infrastructure could act as a material disincentive to investment and should be avoided.

Accordingly, broad socialisation of residual EVCI costs through network charges risks creating inequitable outcomes, whereby some consumers are required to contribute toward public charging assets from which they derive little direct benefit, despite already funding their own charging solutions. MEA therefore considers that user-pays arrangements should remain the preferred model for the 70% residual costs, with any departure from this principle limited to circumstances where a genuine market failure can be demonstrated (i.e. regional blackspots).

Private Sector Capability

MEA emphasises that licensed electrical contractors have the skills, experience and capacity to support Australia's growing EV charging needs.

The private electrical industry has already demonstrated its ability to adapt to emerging technologies, including consumer energy resources, battery systems and EV charging infrastructure. Policy settings should therefore seek to leverage and strengthen this existing capability rather than displace it through unnecessary expansion of regulated monopoly functions.

Conclusion

MEA supports the objective of accelerating EV charging infrastructure deployment where genuine barriers to investment exist. Any intervention should maintain the distinction between regulated network functions and contestable activities, ensuring that DNSP involvement remains limited to clearly defined circumstances where private sector solutions are not viable.

Similarly, residual cost recovery from electricity consumers should be approached cautiously. Not all consumers will utilise public EVCI to the same extent, particularly where they have invested in private charging solutions of their own.

MEA appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback and welcomes ongoing engagement as the Commission considers the proposed rule change.