

## Responses to Questions on Notice received 1 June 2026

### Solar Victoria

1. **Jordan CRUGNALE:** Thank you. Welcome, and thank you very much for your presentation and submission. Outdated electricity distribution networks can inhibit the installation of solar or the electrification of apartment buildings. In our last hearings we had the OC from Haines Street in North Melbourne, 61 and 61A. They have got a 60s block of flats. At the moment they have got 25 amps coming in, but they actually need 70 to support full electrification of their flats, and they are very keen to progress this. However, there is the issue with Powercor, who technically own the assets, and the cost would be prohibitive for the OC to be able to do themselves. I invite you to look at their submission from the last hearing and maybe come back to us with some feedback. It seems to be a prevalent issue. As I said, we have heard from the OC of a particular block of old flats in North Melbourne. How is it that when you have got sewerage, electricity, and power, which are all assets of the utilities, they are not willing to upgrade their assets to enable OCs to fully electrify their buildings?

**Kate BARNES:** I think, yes, we may need to come back on the DNSP aspect of that, because I am not familiar with the technical reasons for that. We are aware of the Haines Street application because we worked really hard with them to try and support them through that process. Unfortunately, the cost is prohibitive for them given the age of that stock. But yes, we would need to understand that further in terms of the Powercor issue and the costs, so we are happy to take that on notice.

#### Response:

This largely reflects how electricity networks are regulated and how upgrade costs are allocated. Distribution network service providers are responsible for maintaining safe and reliable supply based on existing demand; however, where additional capacity is required, such as to electrify older apartment buildings, this is typically treated as a customer-driven upgrade, with costs assigned to the requesting party rather than shared across all users. In buildings like Haines Street, which were designed with very low electrical capacity, the scale of upgrades required can be substantial, making them difficult for owners corporations to fund. From Solar Victoria's perspective, this creates a key barrier, as programs like Solar for Apartments can support solar PV but not the significant electrical infrastructure upgrades needed first, meaning projects may not be able to proceed until those underlying constraints are resolved.

2. **Daniela DE MARTINO:** Sure, a supplementary. Hi, Jordan. Great question. I was going to ask the same one, but you put it much better than I would have. Thanks very much for coming in. Following on from that question, have you any sense of how many other apartments are in a similar situation? Obviously, the era might give you an indication, because they were explaining to us it was built during the whole time of 'Gas is great.

Make sure it is gas everything. You only need a little bit of electricity for your lighting, and everything else needs to be gas.' So clearly that capacity was never built in at the time. Do we have a sense of what that looks like across Melbourne even further? I do not know – is this in the regions as well? If so, it would be great to be able to get that kind of data from you, because they certainly struggled to get the information from Powercor

**Guy PRITCHARD:** Yes. We will probably have to come back to you on the detail, but we are aware of issues with power supply into it, so not the switchboard side but the supply side. Several OCs have raised that. I think if they get to that point, we actually do not see them because they drop out quite early. Unfortunately, we would not have good data on how many have dropped out if that is the case. But we are aware that some of them have said that, yes, it is the power supply into the area that is the issue, not so much their individual buildings.

**Response:**

Solar Victoria does not hold data on the prevalence of apartment buildings with constrained electrical capacity due to historic reliance on gas. However, electricity distribution network service providers, such as Powercor, may be best placed to provide this information given their visibility of local network capacity and connection constraints. The Australian Energy Market Operator may also be able to provide broader, system-level insights into electrification trends and network capacity constraints across Victoria.