

7 August 2026

Climate Change Authority

By electronic submission

Re: Fossil methane: A near-term abatement opportunity

The Justice and Equity Centre (JEC) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Climate Change Authority (Authority) Fossil methane: A near-term abatement opportunity, Consultation Paper (Consultation Paper).

We welcome the Authority's work in developing recommendations to the Commonwealth Government focusing on the near-term reduction of fossil methane emissions, as a powerful short term climate change driver. We support work to enable the 30% methane reduction by 2030, in line with the Global Methane Pledge.

The CCA's advice should include recommendations related to the reduction of emissions in domestic gas networks. The Authority indicates this will not be a primary focus of its work because of the disbursed nature of distribution networks and the different regulatory regimes which cover them. We contend this undermines the completeness of the CCA's advice.

There are only a limited number of transmission pipelines, a small number of which are fully regulated, while a larger number are lightly regulated. These are operated by a very small number of companies. There are a larger number of distribution pipelines, most are fully regulated, owned by relatively few businesses who often operate more than one network. Enabling further action from these entities is, accordingly, not administratively complicated.

The Authority should seek to gather information from these gas network companies, and regulators including the AER, on the exact nature of emissions reduction pledges, and the best way to improve the detection and management of methane leaks and ensure crucial material reductions before 2030. These actions should not be assumed to be occurring through regulatory frameworks.

Establishing a specific regulatory response on methane leaks in the short term to 2030 may have limited impact on achieving the change required before 2030. These changes can be explored in parallel to more direct measures. Instead, what is required is that all gas network companies set targets to eliminate or substantially reduce methane leaks by 2030. Regulators have a role to play in approving regulated expenditure for this task. There is already likely to be sufficient regulatory power to allow the approval of such expenditure in respect of fully regulated pipelines.

The Authority should recommend that the Commonwealth Government help coordinate state governments, networks and regulators, with respect to ensuring the task of identifying and fixing fossil methane leaks from gas networks, and this is undertaken in a timely manner.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss this issue further with the Authority.

Yours sincerely,

Douglas McCloskey

Director Program Director, Energy and Water Justice

dmcloskey@jec.org.au