27 February 2026

Parliament of Victoria
Legislative Assembly Environment and Planning Committee
Parliament House, Spring Street
EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002

Dear Legislative Assembly Environment and Planning Committee

Submission to the Inquiry into Renewable and Affordable Energy for Apartments

The Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering (ATSE) is a Learned Academy of independent, non-political experts helping Australians understand and use technology to solve complex problems. Bringing together over 900 of Australia's leaders in applied science, technology and engineering, ATSE provides impartial, practical and evidence-based advice on how to achieve sustainable solutions and advance prosperity.

ATSE thanks the Legislative Assembly Environment and Planning Committee for the opportunity to make a submission towards the Inquiry into Renewable and Affordable Energy for Apartments.

Widespread adoption of renewable energy technology for residential purposes is crucial to furthering Australia's net zero transition and addressing cost-of living pressures faced by Victorians. Current policy settings in Victoria incentivise household electrification and uptake of consumer energy resources for owner-occupied houses. Developing new policy settings for apartments, rented dwellings and social housing would enable further reduction in emissions from residential energy use and enable more Victorians to financially benefit from doing so.

ATSE's explainer on demand-side management, Power to the People, outlines emerging technology and policy solutions for empowering energy consumers to manage and shift their energy usage to reduce demand on the grid and electricity costs. A copy is attached to this submission. Of particular interest for apartments is the ability to use control systems to manage electric vehicle charging, and virtual power plants that enable optimal use of consumer energy resources. Vehicle-to-grid and vehicle-to-home capabilities, identified as an emerging technology in the explainer, could also be of interest for rentals as they supplant the need for a home battery system, however, there is a need to develop the infrastructure and policy settings to implement this.

Despite the recent increasing availability of residential energy generation, storage and efficiency technologies, all occupants in apartments or multi-house dwellings face significant hurdles in accessing these technologies. In the Victorian rental market, there is no incentive or obligation for landlords to install commercially available residential energy technologies. This could be alleviated through mandating the installation of full electrification, generation and storage technologies in new multi-unit dwellings, as well as targeted financial incentives for landlords to install these technologies in existing dwellings. With almost one-third of Victorian households being renters, incentivising uptake of consumer energy resources represents a significant opportunity to reduce emissions from residential electricity.

As households with more disposable income electrify, and with electric appliances mandated for new builds in Victoria from 2027, the increasingly smaller number of households still using gas will face increasing bill costs (the "gas death spiral"). Supporting and incentivising electrification for low-income households, rentals

and social housing before gas prices escalate would protect these community members from being impacted by increased gas bills.

Solar leasing programs, income-contingent loans, and retrofitting buildings with insulation, electric appliances and rooftop solar, would also increase access to affordable renewable energy. Policy options for equitable access to consumer energy resources are outlined in the following recent ATSE submissions, which we encourage the Committee to consider:

ATSE's 2023 Submission to the Inquiry into Residential Electrification recommended that the federal government:

- Implement regulations and legislation that mandate full electrification, rooftop solar generation, battery storage, and high energy efficiency standards for new residential buildings across Australia, and;
- Provide incentives for landlords to implement electrification and energy-efficient measures.

ATSE's 2023 Submission to the National Energy Performance Strategy contained the following recommendations:

- Incentives for lower-income households and regional areas to reduce the upfront costs of installing energy efficient upgrades, including secondary glazing and battery storage.
- A national solar leasing program for low-income households.
- The strengthening of mandated national building standards alongside the retrofitting public housing stock with more efficient insulation, double-glazed windows and rooftop solar systems.
- A targeted tax credit for rental property owners who invest in energy saving technologies in their properties.

ATSE's 2024 Submission to the Electricity and Energy Sector Plan also recommended:

- Funding or loan schemes to help low-to middle income households reduce the upfront cost of acquiring solar, battery systems and electric vehicles.
- Funding upgrades for social housing to install energy efficient appliances, rooftop solar and battery systems, and;
- Incentivising landlords to install energy efficient appliances, solar systems and storage capacity.

ATSE would be pleased to connect the Victorian Legislative Assembly Environment and Planning Committee with energy and infrastructure experts from our Fellowship to provide deeper expertise at the Committee's hearings. For further information, please contact: academypolicyteam@atse.org.au.

Yours sincerely

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