



PUBLICATION

Financial Hardship Policy Guidelines – October 2012

NEW VERSION RELEASED

The Economic Regulation Authority has approved the *Financial Hardship Policy Guidelines – October 2012 (Guidelines)*.

The Guidelines provide guidance to retailers on the matters that will be considered by the Authority when assessing a retailer's financial hardship policy, to assist retailers in developing compliant, user-friendly and practical policies.

The Guidelines replace the previous version approved by the Authority in August 2010. In particular, the amended Guidelines provide further guidance as to the type of information retailers could include in their hardship policies to meet each requirement under clause 6.10(2) of the *Code of Conduct for the Supply of Electricity to Small Use Customers* and the *Compendium of Gas Customer Licence Obligations (Energy Codes)*. It is anticipated that the amendments will assist the electricity and gas sectors in dealing with financial hardship, and reduce corresponding regulatory burden.

Electricity and gas retailers are required to have a financial hardship policy under Part 6 of the Energy Codes.

The proposed Guidelines were released for public consultation on 14 September 2012. Public consultation closed on 5 October 2012 and submissions were received from Alinta Energy, Horizon Power and the Western Australian Council of Social Service (**WACOSS**). Copies of these submissions are available on the Authority's website.

Upon consideration of the submissions, the Authority has made one amendment to the Guidelines to encourage retailers to commence consultation with consumer representative bodies well in advance of the deadline for the retailer to submit its policy to the Authority for review.

A copy of the [Decision](#) and [Guidelines](#) are available on the Authority's website.

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