



Notice

14 August 2019

Financial hardship policy guidelines for electricity and gas licences

Amendments approved

The Economic Regulation Authority has amended its [financial hardship policy guidelines](#) for electricity and gas licences.

Many of the amendments result from changes to the *Code of Conduct for the Supply of Electricity to Small Use Customers*. Amendments were also made to improve clarity and ease of reading.

The ERA received [seven submissions](#) on its proposed amendments to the hardship guidelines: four from licensees and three from consumer representative organisations.

Consumer representative organisations highlighted the need for retailers to ensure payment plans were realistic, by including measures like avoiding large upfront payments, accounting for ongoing usage when determining a payment plan, and considering a customer's capacity to pay when setting the duration of a payment plan. Although the Energy Codes¹ require a payment plan to be fair and reasonable, the hardship guidelines have been amended to emphasise that payment plans need to be manageable for customers.²

The submissions raised several issues that were outside of the scope of the review of hardship policy guidelines. These issues would be best addressed in the next review of the Electricity Code, which will commence later this year. The ERA will refer these issues to the Electricity Code Consultative Committee for its consideration as part of that review.

Further information

General enquiries

Paul Reid
Ph: 08 6557 7976
info@erawa.com.au

Media enquiries

Natalie Warnock
Ph: 08 6557 7933 | Mob: 0428 859 826
media@erawa.com.au

¹ The Electricity Code and the *Compendium of Gas Customer Licence Obligations* (together the Energy Codes).

² Clause 6.4(2) of both the Electricity Code and the *Compendium of Gas Customer Licence Obligations*.