



Economic Regulation Authority

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

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## NOTICE

### **New arrangements for Electricity Pre-Payment Meters in WA**

#### **AMENDMENTS TO THE CODE OF CONDUCT FOR THE SUPPLY OF ELECTRICITY TO SMALL USE CUSTOMERS**

The Economic Regulation Authority has approved amendments to the *Code of Conduct for the Supply of Electricity to Small Use Customers* in relation to the operation of electricity pre-payment meters in Western Australia.

Electricity customers usually pay for electricity every 2 to 3 months after it has been used. This is known as a credit meter arrangement. Pre-payment meters require that a customer purchase this credit before the electricity is used. This can be done by buying a recharge card which is inserted into the pre-payment meter. When all of the credit has been used the pre-payment meter will disconnect the electricity supply until a new card is inserted.

The Authority is responsible for making and amending the rules regarding the operation of these pre-payment meters.

A copy of the final amendments to the Code, in both mark-up and clean copy, are available in the Authority's decision document on the Authority's [website](#).

The amendments are slightly different from those that were proposed by the Authority in December 2009.

From 1 July 2010, electricity retailers will be able to offer pre-payment meters in areas to be determined by the Minister for Energy.

There will be improved customer protection for pre-payment meter customers, including:

- a trial period, where customers can go back to a normal meter;
- a restriction on the times when a meter can be programmed to disconnect a customer;
- allowing a customer to use up to \$20 of electricity during a time where there is no credit left on the meter but the customer can't be disconnected (e.g on the weekend);
- repayment arrangements so the customer can pay back this \$20 over a number of days;
- new requirements for retailers to collect information and report on issues such as the number and frequency of disconnections; and
- actions that must be taken by a retailer if a customer is considered to be in financial hardship.

The Authority has agreed that the amendments will start on 1 July 2010 for most pre-payment meters installed from that date.

Some exceptions will be made for pre-payment meters that are scheduled to be installed between 1 July 2010 and 1 July 2011.

Retailers will have until 1 July 2012 to ensure that the pre-payment already in use prior to 1 July 2010 meet the new requirements.

The Authority has made this decision after receiving advice from the Electricity Code Consultative Committee in December 2009 and February 2010. The ECCC undertook public consultation before providing this advice. Copies of this advice and the public submissions received are available on the Authority's [website](#).

For further information contact:

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