

Review of Alinta Sales Pty Ltd

Customer Service Charter

8 July 2009

Economic Regulation Authority



A full copy of this document is available from the Economic Regulation Authority web site at www.era.wa.gov.au.

For further information, contact:

Economic Regulation Authority
Perth, Western Australia
Phone: (08) 9213 1900

© Economic Regulation Authority 2009

The copying of this document in whole or part for non-commercial purposes is permitted provided that appropriate acknowledgment is made of the Economic Regulation Authority and the State of Western Australia. Any other copying of this document is not permitted without the express written consent of the Authority.

DECISION

1. The Economic Regulation Authority (**Authority**) finds that Alinta Sales Pty Ltd's (**Alinta**) review of its Customer Service Charter (**charter**) for the supply of electricity and the reviewed charter meet the requirements of Alinta's Electricity Retail Licence 6 (**licence**).

REASONS

2. The Authority has assessed the review and the charter against the requirements of Alinta's licence and notes the following:

Existence

3. Clause 15.1 of the licence states that the licensee must prepare a charter if it supplies electricity to small use customers. Clause 15.2 of the licence requires that Alinta review the charter at least once every 36 months from the grant of the licence. As the licence was granted to Alinta on 19 May 2006, the charter review was due by 19 May 2009.
4. Alinta submitted an outline of the charter review process undertaken and the reviewed charter for assessment on 19 May 2009. The Secretariat of the Authority provided feedback to Alinta regarding the charter which resulted in Alinta submitting a revised, final version of the charter on 25 June 2009.
5. The Authority finds that Alinta has submitted its charter within the required timeframe.

Accuracy

6. Section 82 of the *Electricity Industry Act 2004* provides that it is a condition of every retail licence that the licensee comply with the provisions of the *Code of Conduct for the Supply of Electricity to Small Use Customers* (**Code of Conduct**) that apply to the licensee.
7. Clause 11.1(2) of the Code of Conduct states that a charter must at least include a summary of the customer's and retailer's rights and obligations under the Code. In addition, a charter should include an explanation of the retailer's complaints handling process and the difference between distribution and retail functions, reference to key documents in relation to the supply of electricity to customers, and contact details of the retailer, the Authority, Energy Safety (Department of Commerce) and the electricity ombudsman. Clause 10.11(2) of the Code of Conduct requires that a charter include the retailer's telephone numbers for TTY services and for independent multi-lingual services.
8. The Authority finds that the contents of the charter is generally consistent with the relevant legislation and licence requirements.

Consultation

9. Clause 15.4 of the licence states that any review of the charter should have regard to the Customer Service Charter Guidelines (**guidelines**). Paragraph 6.3 of the guidelines requires a licensee to engage with its customers and/or their representatives in the review of their charter.
10. Alinta has advised that it consulted the following stakeholders regarding the contents of the charter:
 - Western Australian Council of Social Service (WACOSS)
 - Small Business Development Corporation
 - Restaurant and Catering WA (industry association)
 - Food Industry Association WA Inc.

Alinta also provided the Authority with an overview of the feedback provided by each stakeholder and how that feedback was incorporated into the charter (where applicable).
11. The Authority finds that, on the basis of the information provided, Alinta undertook a sound level of public consultation with regard to this review.

Accessibility

12. Clause 15.4 of the licence states that any review of the charter should have regard to the guidelines. Paragraph 6.4 of the guidelines requires a charter to be prepared in simple language that is easily understood by customers.
13. Alinta has advised that it engaged a consultant to assist it in maximising the accessibility of the charter. The review undertaken by the consultant was directed at ensuring the charter was in 'plain English', was readable and easily understood by Alinta's small business electricity customers.
14. The Authority finds that the charter is generally written in a 'plain English' manner.

LYNDON ROWE
CHAIRMAN

For further information, contact:

Economic Regulation Authority
Perth, Western Australia
Phone: (08) 9213 1900