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7 September 2023

Mr Saad Rafi  
Executive General Manager – Retail Operations  
Next Business Energy  
[REDACTED]

**By email to:** [REDACTED]

Dear Mr Rafi

### Application under section 33 and 34 the Better Bills Guideline


I refer to Next Business Energy's application of 16 August 2023 under sections 33 and 34 of the Better Bills Guideline (**Guideline**) for approval to include an additional message among Tier 1 information. In particular, Next Business Energy has requested to include business operating hours (the words *9:00 am to 5:00 pm Monday to Friday*) among Tier 1 on its small customer electricity bills (**Next Business Energy's application**).


The AER has considered Next Business Energy's application and has decided under section 35 of the Guideline to refuse to approve the request.

## Electricity Tax Invoice

**Need help?**


Next Business Energy Pty Ltd ABN 91 167 937 555

 **Customer Service & Complaints:** 1300 466 398

 9:00am to 5:00pm Monday to Friday

 **Faults & Emergencies:**

Ausgrid – 13 13 88

 **Ombudsman Enquiries:** 1800 451 524

The AER acknowledges this additional message is potentially useful for customers, however Tier 1 of the Guideline is intended to contain key, essential information only. The AER considers that business operating hours are not necessary to meet the billing objective outlined in Rule 25A(3) of the National Energy Retail Rules.

Next Business Energy's operating hours are consistent with a standard business model. The AER considers that most customers would not expect a retailer's call centre to be open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Next Business Energy can include business operating hours after Tier 2 information on a small customer bill. Business operating hours can be included in any covering email attaching an electronic bill and prominently on Next Business Energy's website.

It would also be open to Next Business Energy to have a pre-recorded answering machine message, explaining their operating hours and asking the customer to leave a message for a call back, in the event the customer phoned outside these hours. This may go some way to managing customer expectations, mitigating the risk of frustration or complaints.

Should you wish to discuss any of the above, please contact Georgiana Copeland on

[REDACTED]

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

Justin Oliver  
Member  
Australian Energy Regulator