

From: John Barone [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, 19 April 2024 2:00 PM
To: AER Compliance; AER Inquiry
Subject: RE: Compliance Procedures and Guidelines review – draft guidelines submission by 19 April 2024. [SEC=OFFICIAL]

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Dear AER

I submit to you my input on how AER can improve the Guidelines;

Better Bills Guideline Version 2 –

42. The purpose of a plan summary is to help small customers easily understand and compare the key features of their plan.

Tier 2 information 41. Tier 2 information omits Meter Number and Register for each individual Current Read and Previous Read – how does this help small customers easily understand and compare their usage?

I argue the small customer as of 1 January 2024 has now far less information to easily scrutinise their individual consumption. Hot water services on off-peak or in-slab heating consumption is usually placed on the second meter on the first or last register.

The fact that a consumer's bill now has no associated Meter/Register information for each meter read is disgraceful and can only serve to obscure potential errors from the consumer in reading the meter be it accumulation, interval meters, smart meters, or solar export meters.

I strongly believe 41. Tier 2 information be amended with Meter Number: Register Number be re-introduced as soon as possible in order to genuinely help small customers easily understand and compare.

How does this 'streamline the reporting requirements in relation to billing'? How does omitting Meter/Register numbers alongside Current and Previous Reads 'streamline' bills?

In addition, proposal to change the reporting frequency of quarterly reporting to half-yearly reporting is an insane proposition for the average and savvy consumer.

Receiving bills every quarter is bad enough for people to budget, to then expect the average consumer in Australia to swallow a half-yearly bill is totally insane.

Imagine if your mortgage repayments/or Rent we're only payable every 6 months or for that matter once per year. How many defaults do you think would surface?

The only possible reason for introducing a 6 monthly billing cycle is to keep the average consumer in the dark so as to abate or quell the amount of adverse media coverage the Federal Government is receiving regarding the 'cost of living' and ever rising 'cost of energy' – even this rationale is somewhat lame. It adversely impacts the average consumer's household's cash flow and further obscures inevitable errors, and exacerbates defaults, and overall anxiety within the community.

How can this be good? Who in AER dreams up this nonsense?

If there is a good rationale for these changes, then I'm yet to read about it and understand. That's because there is no rationale that benefits the consumer, only the ideologues in Canberra.

I urge a complete rethink to this insane and misguided proposal.

Your sincerely
John BARONE