

1 July 2024

Dear Retailer

Better Bills Guideline energy bill relief message

The Australian Energy Regulator (AER) has decided:

- (1) not to exercise its powers under section 37 of the Better Bills Guideline (Version 2) (the Guideline) to amend its [10 August 2023 decision](#) made under section 37 of the Guideline (as previously [amended on 27 September 2023](#)) to replace the four existing Tier 1 energy bill relief statements with a single statement as set out in a request from the Commonwealth Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment, and Water on 5 June 2024; and
- (2) to amend its [10 August 2023 decision](#) made under section 37 of the Guideline (as previously [amended on 27 September 2023](#)) to include a statement on small customers' electricity bills as part of Tier 1 information.

This amended decision has been made in response to a change in the [National Energy Retail Law \(Queensland\) Amendment Regulation 2024](#) (Queensland Regulations), with reference to the bill objective and principles set out in rule 25A(3)–(4) of the National Energy Retail Rules.

The AER's amended decision

Effective from 1 July 2024:

1. Retailers who sell electricity in South Australia, New South Wales and Tasmania (with the exception of Icon Retail Investments Limited and AGL ACT Retail Investments Pty Ltd, trading as ActewAGL Retail) must include the following statement as Tier 1 information on electricity bills for small customers in those states.

The Australian Government and your State Government are supporting customers to reduce bills. Check the understand your bill section to see if you have received a rebate or concession. More information at energy.gov.au.

2. Retailers who sell electricity in Queensland must use their best endeavours to include the following statement as Tier 1 information on electricity bills for small customers in Queensland.

The Australian Government and your State Government are supporting customers to reduce bills. Check the understand your bill section to see if you have received a rebate or concession. More information at energy.gov.au.

3. Retailers who sell electricity in the Australian Capital Territory (with the exception of ActewAGL Retail) must include the following statement as Tier 1 information on electricity bills for small customers in the ACT.

The Australian and ACT Governments are supporting customers to reduce bills. Check the understand your bill section to see if you have received a rebate or concession. More information at energy.gov.au.

4. ActewAGL Retail must include the following statement as Tier 1 information on electricity bills for small customers:

The Australian Government and your State or Territory government are supporting customers to reduce bills. Check the understand your bill section to see if you have received a rebate or concession. More information at energy.gov.au.

Background

On 5 June 2024, the Commonwealth Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment, and Water, wrote to the AER, formally requesting that the AER consider exercising its powers under section 37 of the Guideline to request that the four existing Tier 1 energy bill relief statements are amended to the single following statement:

The Australian Government is supporting customers to reduce bills. Check the understand your bill section to see if you have received a rebate. More information on the Energy Bill Relief Fund at energy.gov.au.

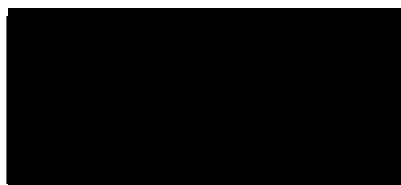
On 28 June 2024, the Queensland Government notified an update to the Queensland Regulations requiring retailers selling electricity in Queensland to use their best endeavours to include an updated message at the beginning of small customers' bills in relation to the cost of living rebate in the 2024–25 financial year, including for small business customers. Previously, the Queensland Regulations only included a message for residential customers.

We consider that the AER's amended decision will better support consumer comprehension of the bill relief message included in Tier 1 of small customers' bills following the amendment of the Queensland Regulations.

Implementation considerations

We recommend that retailers consider any customer enquiries received in relation to the message or rebates as an opportunity to identify and support consumers who may be experiencing payment difficulty. Customers reaching out to enquire about the rebate (including to clarify whether it has been applied to their bill or when it will be applied to their bill) may be experiencing or at risk of payment difficulty. Therefore, these enquiries present an important opportunity for retailers to engage these customers and ensure they are aware of available assistance.

Yours sincerely,



Clare Savage
Chair
Australian Energy Regulator