

Contact Officer: David Chan
Contact Phone: (03) 9290 1446

1 February 2019

Mr Joe Dimasi
Senior Commissioner
Independent Competition and Regulatory Commission (ICRC)
PO Box 161
CIVIC SQUARE ACT 2608


Dear Mr Dimasi

Re: Submission to the Issues Paper on the Consumer Protection Code Review

The Australian Energy Regulatory (AER) welcomes the opportunity to make a submission in response to the Independent Competition and Regulatory Commission's Issues paper on the review of its Consumer Protection Code (Code).

As you would be aware, we are responsible for the economic regulation of gas and electricity networks in all states and territories, except Western Australia. We also enforce the National Energy Retail Law and Rules to protect energy consumers.

The Code primarily applies to water and sewerage services. Clause 11 and the schedule of minimum service standards, however, also apply to authorised electricity and gas retailers and to electricity and gas distributors. Our comments focus on these issues.

The Issues paper notes that the review will focus on ensuring that, amongst other things, the Consumer Protection Code complements the National Energy Customer Framework and is accessible and easy to understand by stakeholders. We support the principle of harmonisation to the national framework to reduce complexity, cost and regulatory burden, and encourage retail competition where this is appropriate.

We support automatic electricity Guaranteed Service Level scheme payments be paid directly to customers when stipulated service levels are not met. We note that this is likely to make payments more accessible to consumers and supports the objective of consumer protection.

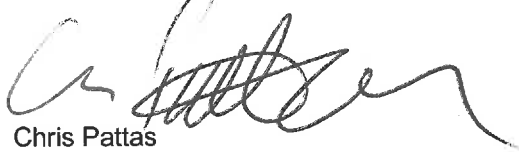
We also suggest that, in setting up the minimum service standards for supply reliability, the ICRC considers adopting definitions, parameters and measures in our recently published *Distribution Reliability Measure Guideline*.¹ The guideline which stemmed from an AEMC

¹ <https://www.aer.gov.au/networks-pipelines/guidelines-schemes-models-reviews/distribution-reliability-measures-guideline-2018>

review of distribution reliability measures, sets out common definitions and parameters to assess and compare the reliability performance of distributors across all jurisdictions.

Please contact David Chan on (03) 9290 1446 or myself on (03) 9290 1470 if you would like to discuss further.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Pattas', written over a horizontal line.

Chris Pattas
General Manager
AER Networks (Distribution)