

19 February 2018



Paula Conboy
Chair
Australian Energy Regulator
GPO Box 520
Melbourne VIC 3001

Dear Ms Conboy,

Draft Retail Performance Reporting Procedures and Guideline

The Public Interest Advocacy Centre (PIAC) is an independent, non-profit legal centre based in New South Wales. Established in 1982, PIAC tackles systemic issues that have a significant impact upon disadvantaged and marginalised people. We ensure basic rights are enjoyed across the community through litigation, public policy development, communication and training. The Energy + Water Consumers' Advocacy Program represents the interests of low-income and other residential consumers, developing policy and advocating in energy and water markets.

PIAC welcomes the opportunity to respond to the AER's draft Retail Performance Reporting Procedures and Guideline.

Retail electricity prices across NEM states have steadily increased in real terms since deregulation of the retail electricity market began in the 1990s.¹ In addition to this, the price rises in July 2017 have highlighted the need for clearer and more transparent information for consumers. The impact of these price rises on all energy customers – and particularly on low-income and vulnerable households – has been raised in a number of forums such as the ACCC inquiry into electricity and gas supply and reports such as NSW Council of Social Services' *Turning off The Lights: The Cost of Living in NSW*.²

As such, providing greater transparency in both electricity and gas retail markets is essential and PIAC strongly supports the intent of the new reporting procedures and guideline. In particular, PIAC looks forward to the new data from this reporting motivating retailers to deliver better outcomes for consumers.

¹ Carbon + Energy Markets, *Australia's retail electricity markets: who is serving whom?*, 2016.
² NCOSS, *Turning off The Lights: The Cost of Living in NSW*, June 2017, 2017.

Continued engagement

PIAC would welcome the opportunity to meet with the AER and other stakeholders to discuss these issues in more depth.

Yours sincerely,

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