

'Ensuring energy contracts are clear and fair' draft decision

Submissions received through Engage Victoria

Date submitted: 10 December 2019

Submission written by: Rebecca Lamble

What is your interest in this project? Energy customer

What do you think of the proposals in our draft decision?

The proposal is a great improvement for Victorian consumers, thank you.

My comments are:

1. the various "discount" options appear to still be allowed, and they will continue to cause confusion i.e., some electricity deals allow for a "pay on time discount" which can be either on the kWh consumed (not on daily supply costs which are then pumped up) or the total overall bill. And some offers are in ex gst or inc gst making it hard to compare, while other offers might declare a "40% discount" but then have really high rates, making it difficult to compare - you literally have to deduct 40% from the listed rate. This should be banned.
2. there is still concern around energy equity from those individual households that are able to afford rooftop solar and reap the benefits whereas those who are renters or unable to afford or have an appropriate roof for solar, will end up paying significantly higher electricity costs - there needs to be more fairness across the board in pricing.

Date submitted: 15 January 2020

Submission written by: Ken Richards

What is your interest in this project? Energy customer

What do you think of the proposals in our draft decision?

1. Retailers must present their gas and electricity offers clearly.

This is an important standard and should be implemented

2. Retailers can only change contract prices when the price of the Victorian Default Offer changes.

Additionally, when customers agree to a price for supply of electricity or gas, and the customer receives an offer in writing or electronically, a minimum for application of those prices should be mandatory. The previous recommendations of 1 July 2019 suggested that this period be 12 months. This should be an acceptable period for customers. The period should be in no case less than 3 months. It takes time to research different offers, and the consumer's efforts should be valued.

3. Any discounts that retailers offer must last for the whole length of a customer's contract.

An important standard which should be implemented

4. If a customer reaches the end of a fixed-term contract and does not choose another contract to move onto, the retailer will have to move them onto a certain contract.

Important and should be implemented

5. The size of pay-on-time discount that a retailer can offer is limited by the Essential Services Commission.

Important and should be implemented

6. Retailers must tell customers how they can access the Victorian Default Offer on each electricity bill.

Important and should be implemented

7. If a retailer has undercharged a customer for energy, at no fault of the customer's, the retailer is only allowed to seek payment of any unbilled energy up to four months before the retailer notifies the customer of the error.

Important and should be implemented