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1st June 2014

Marc Tutaan
Australian Energy Market Commission
PO Box A2449
Sydney South NSW 1235

Project Reference Code: "ERC0171"

Dear Marc,

Energy Tailors welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Consultation Paper regarding Customer Access to information about their Energy Consumption, published by the AEMC on 8 May 2014.

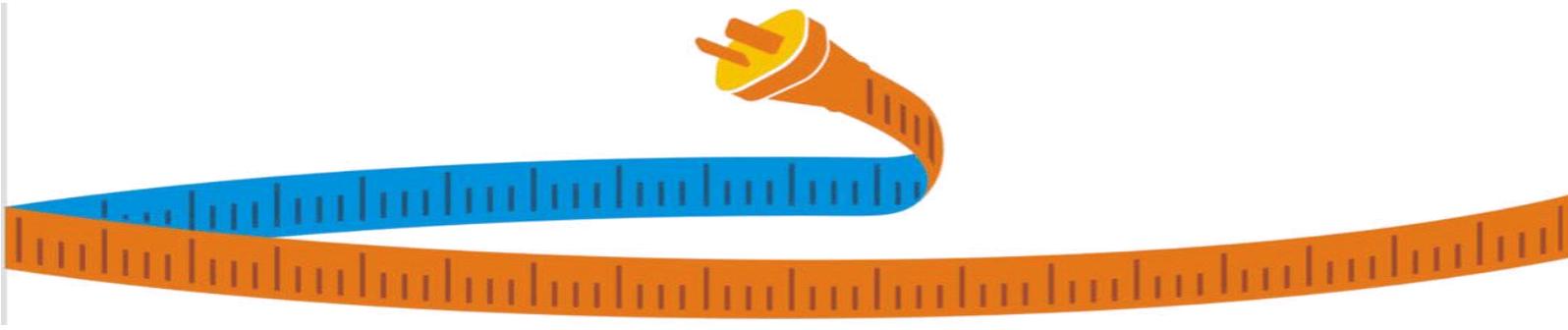
Energy Tailors is an energy brokerage company operating predominantly in Victoria. Our goal is to promote competition in the electricity industry by helping customers choose the right energy plans for their usage habits, thus reducing their energy bills. Providing easy customer access to their own usage data is a critical component of customer energy education, customer acceptance of smart meters and increased retail competition.

Please find attached our responses to the questions outlined in the Consultation Paper.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
CEO
Energy Tailors
[REDACTED]



Question 1: Proposed assessment framework under the NEL

- a) Do you consider that the proposed issues to consider are appropriate for this rule change request? Are there any other issues that we should consider?

Energy Tailors considers that the issues of *enhancing consumer participation and decision-making*, *competition*, and *transparency of regulatory frameworks* are appropriate issues for this change request. We also agree that the issue of *regulatory and administrative burden* is appropriate; however, we would recommend that the AEMC also consider the administrative burden on consumers and third parties in addition to those of existing market participants in judging this issue.

Question 2: Proposed assessment framework under the NERL

- a) Do you consider that it is appropriate that the proposed issues to consider, which we will use as a basis to assess whether the proposed rule meets the NERO, should be the same as those used for assessment against the NEO?
- b) Are consumer protections that relate to the provision of information to customers the relevant class of consumer protections for consideration in this rule change request? Are there any other relevant classes of consumer protections that we should consider?

Energy Tailors agrees with the AEMC's proposal regarding the assessment framework under the NERL.

Question 3: Obtaining access to electricity consumption data

- a) Do you think it is appropriate that the NER be amended to allow a customer to access its consumption data by requesting that data from its DNSP?
- b) Should MDPs be able to provide electricity consumption data directly to customers or their agents?

Energy Tailors firmly believes that customers should have quick and easy access to their own consumption data.

Such access will:

- a) Improve retail and DSP competition by giving customers the key information with which to choose retail and DSP offers, thus remedying the information asymmetry that currently exists between retailers and customers.
- b) Improve transparency and trust in the electricity industry by customers
- c) Improve customer responsiveness to price signals and hence make the electricity industry more efficient.

Energy Tailors considers that DNSP's ought to also have the obligation to provide meter data to customers. As suggested in the consultation paper, this would harmonise the approach in the NER with the NERR and would also increase customer choice. We point out that some DNSP's (e.g. Jemena and United Energy Networks in Victoria) already have sophisticated portals enabling



customer access to smart meter data. As the technology already exists we consider that the administrative burden on DNSP's would be minimal.

As to whether MDP's should also have the obligation to provide meter data, Energy Tailors considers that this question should be considered in conjunction with the proposed rule change regarding competition in metering and related services. At this stage, to simplify matters for market participants we would recommend that only DNSP's have this obligation.

Question 4: Minimum format requirements for electricity consumption data

- a) **What is the nature and magnitude of costs on market participants of providing data in raw format and summary format to their customers?**
- b) **What information should be required in the summary data format?**
- c) **Should the NER stipulate a specific period of time in relation to which the electricity consumption data must cover? If so, what is the appropriate period of time?**

Energy Tailors considers that the costs incurred by market participants on providing data in raw format and summary format to their customers can be greatly minimised if automated solutions are implemented. We note with interest the scoping study on the potential need for an energy information hub. We would be supportive of such a hub. Even if the energy information hub is not implemented, we believe that costs can be reduced by a web portal (front end) being developed centrally and provided to all market participants. Each market participant would then need to integrate with their back-end meter data management system only, as opposed to building an entire solution.

We do not agree with the AEMC's Power of Choice view of not mandating a particular delivery method. By standardising the delivery method as electronic, the ongoing cost burden of providing data to customers is reduced and information delivery to customers is efficient and timely. Without a mandated delivery format market participants will each develop their own format, to the confusion and detriment of customers. In a market that is moving towards improved competition, and customers switching more often, we believe there is a very strong case for formats and delivery methods to be simplified and standardised.

We consider that market competition and innovation will drive the most meaningful summary format data for customers. The most important thing for the NER to provide is the access to the raw data, which can be manipulated by customers or their agents. Energy Tailors would therefore argue for very simple and minimal summary data to be provided alongside the raw data, but with all data provided in a standardised format.

We consider that a year's worth of meter data would smooth out any seasonality trends and provide the customer with an intuitive dataset for analysis.



Question 5: Time frame to respond to a request for electricity consumption data

- a) **Is 10 business days an appropriate time frame for market participants to respond to a request from their customers for their electricity consumption data?**

Energy Tailors does not agree that 10 business days is an appropriate time frame for market participants to respond to a request from their customers for their electricity consumption data. We consider that with automated systems in place, the provision of consumption data ought to be possible within 2 business days in the majority of cases.

We do recognise that in some cases where there are meter data validation exceptions or other unexpected issues that this timeframe may not be achievable. However, we would argue that this should be the exception, not the rule, and hence we suggest that the AEMC should require market participants to make *reasonable endeavours* to provide meter data within two business days.

Question 6: Fees payable by a customer

- a) **How often should customers be able to request their energy consumption information free of charge in the NERR?**
- b) **Are there any other consumer protections we should take into account when assessing this aspect of the rule change request?**

Energy Tailors reiterates that with automated solutions in place, there should be minimal administrative burden on retailers in providing energy consumption information to customers. With this in mind, we would recommend that customers be able to request their energy consumption information free of charge **once per calendar week**. If requested more often than that, then retailers and DNSP's can charge a reasonable fee.

This proposal:

- a) Removes the potential ambiguity of "billing period", in light of the fact that monthly billing is now being offered by major retailers (e.g. AGL).
- b) Incentivises the building of automated solutions which reduces the per request cost.
- c) Gives customers and third parties confidence that their own consumption data is easily accessible by them.

Question 7: Time frame for making and revising the data provision guidelines

- a) **When should the first data provision guidelines be published?**
- b) **Should there be an obligation review these guidelines? If so, how often should such reviews take place?**

To give sufficient time to market participants to build systems to comply with these data provision guidelines, Energy Tailors would recommend that guidelines are published at least 3 months before the obligations come into effect. We would recommend that guidelines are reviewed annually.



Question 8: Request from large customers to provide electricity consumption data

- a) **Should proposed rule 56A of the NER only apply to small customers or should it apply to all customers, which would include large customers?**

Energy Tailors believes that all customers should have access to this information. We note that large customers are more likely to already have arrangements in place with their retailer or DNSP to access their data, so in some respects this question is moot.

Question 9: Access by authorised agents or service providers to their customers' electricity consumption information

- a) **What is the appropriate term to refer to these third parties (eg agents, authorised parties) in the NER?**
- b) **Beyond existing privacy laws, should the NER specify:**
- **the nature of consent a customer must give to authorise a person to access its data; and**
 - **any additional privacy obligations on authorised parties, retailers or DNSPs in relation to the disclosure of electricity consumption data?**

Energy Tailors agrees with the COAG and Power of Choice proposals to improve third party access to customers' electricity consumption information. We believe that the term "agent" is an appropriate term to describe third parties who have authorised access to customer data.

Energy Tailors believes that privacy of customers' electricity consumption information is important to maintain customer trust in the energy industry and smart meters in particular. We believe that there is currently a lack of clarity regarding the nature of consent a customer must give to authorise a person to access their data and the privacy obligations required by authorised parties, retailers and DNSPs. Therefore we recommend that the NER should specify these matters with a view to standardising practices across market participants. This will result in greater market efficiency and simplify processes for customers.

To maintain customer privacy protections, Energy Tailors recommends that the following measures are introduced in the NER or accompanying regulations:

- a) All "agents" (third parties who are allowed to seek access to customers' electricity consumption information) are registered with AEMO. This should be a low-cost exercise and be designed to provide market participants with a finite list of centrally registered parties for contact.
- b) Existing security measures for access to customer data (from the National Privacy Principles) be utilised for agent access as well, given that this level of security has not posed any significant privacy issues to date. Currently customers with at least some major retailers can call and provide their account number or service address, full name and date of birth in order to obtain



access to their customer data. We recommend that these same measures are required of agents, who obtain the information from customers and pass it through in a request to retailers and DNSPs. Retailers are clearly already aware of this information, and DNSP's are informed of this information through the Customer Details Notification B2B transaction. Therefore both market participant types are able to validate the customer request, as retailers currently do.

- c) Customers must give explicit informed consent to the agent to authorise a person to access its data. Given the nature of the agent's role in forming an ongoing relationship with the customer, that authorisation should be open-ended (i.e. does not have an end-date). If a change of occupant was to take place at the site without the knowledge of the agent (for example a customer was to move out), then the validation performed by the retailer would fail and the request be rejected. Energy Tailors recommends that simple, concise and customer-friendly language be used. We propose: "Do you consent that [Agent] will be able to request your electricity consumption information on your behalf until explicitly revoked by you?"

Question 10: Informing customers about the uses of their electricity consumption data

- a) **Is there a significant risk or problem in the NEM that necessitates the publication of standard information on the websites of retailers and DNSPs about how electricity consumption data is used? What are the benefits associated with this proposal? Are there examples where a similar approach has been applied in other industries?**
- b) **Is it appropriate for energy-specific regulations to be used to extend privacy law by requiring information about how electricity consumption data is used to be published on the websites of retailers and DNSPs?**
- c) **Is there a significant risk or problem in the NEM that would require the creation of 'metering data common terminology guidelines'? What are the benefits associated with this proposal? Are there examples where a similar approach has been applied in other industries?**
- d) **Are there any other consumer protections we should also take into account?**

Energy Tailors is cognisant of customer concern regarding the usage of electricity consumption data. We believe that the question of whether there is a significant risk or problem in the NEM should be considered in relation to customer perception of a significant risk or problem in the NEM regarding usage of electricity consumption data. We believe that there is this perception, and therefore, there would be benefits in publishing standard information on the websites of retailers and DNSPs. In order to minimise the regulatory burden on retailers and DNSPs, we recommend that this information be collated centrally (by the AER, for example) and then published by market participants.

