

STRONGER PROTECTIONS FOR VULNERABLE CUSTOMERS: HAVE YOUR SAY

Draft determination 6 September 2018

HELPING VULNERABLE CUSTOMERS PAY THEIR POWER BILLS

Under the draft rule, retailers must comply with new guidelines to be developed by the Australian Energy Regulator to:



show how they will identify vulnerable customers early, so they can be included on hardship programs before debts get out of control



use consistent, transparent and specific action statements in their hardship policies so customers know their rights

Retailers must also set out how they will help vulnerable customers pay their bills by:



ensuring customers are on the best energy plan that meets their needs



offering programs to help customers manage their energy use, such as home energy audits



putting customers on a manageable payment plan

NEW CIVIL PENALTIES

Having clearer hardship policies will make it easier for the Australian Energy Regulator to monitor the performance of retailers and penalise any breaches.

The draft determination includes a joint AEMC/AER recommendation for new civil penalties, such as fines, to protect customers if retailers fail to comply with the new obligations.

NEW RETAILERS

We are recommending a law change to stop new retailers starting their business until they have approved hardship policies in place.

NEXT STEPS

Submissions on the draft rule are due by 18 October 2018.

