



## Bill contents — customers with interval meters

### Draft determination released for consultation

The Australian Energy Market Commission (AEMC) has published a draft determination and decided not to make a draft rule to amend the NERR requiring retailers to include start and end meter readings in electricity bills for customers with interval meters. Submissions are due by 30 May 2019.

### Rule change request and current arrangements

On 18 June 2018, Mr Craig Whybrow (the proponent) submitted a rule change request to the Australian Energy Market Commission (AEMC or Commission) to amend the NERR. The proponent considered that a rule change should be made requiring all electricity retailers to display start and end meter readings in the bill for every customer with an advanced interval meter (smart meter). To implement this solution the NERR would need to be amended.

The proponent outlined the following anticipated benefits if the proposed solution is adopted:

- facilitate billing reconciliation
- improve consumer trust in energy retailers
- reduce the number of consumer complaints submitted to Ombudsman agencies, the Australian Energy Regulator (AER) and energy retailers.

Currently, the National Energy Retail Rules (NERR) prescribes that retailers must include in the bill the start and end meter readings for each billing period. A transitional provision permits retailers not to display these values for interval meter customers, only if the metering data required is not reasonably available.

### Draft determination

The Commission has decided not to make a draft rule to amend the NERR. The Commission considered, when assessing this rule change request, whether the underlying issues raised by the proponent are best addressed by competitive market interactions or changes to the rules. The materiality of the issue raised by the rule change request was found to be insufficient to make the proposed change. The Commission's analysis indicates that:

- Not including start and end meter readings in the bill is not a material issue for most electricity customers with interval meters.
- Start and end meter readings would be insufficient to allow customers with interval meters to reconcile their bills. The proposed change could have an unintended consequence of increasing consumer confusion, considering that such meter readings would not always correspond to the customer's energy usage (as interval meters measure usage in intervals and not on a cumulative basis).
- There are alternative market measures that can assist in achieving the purpose of the rule change request. The market already offers various tools for customers to verify their energy consumption that are more effective than the proposed rule change. The current rules also provide an adequate framework that assists consumers in case they need additional support to check their bill or their meter.
- It is not likely that including start and end meter readings in electricity bills would increase trust or transparency in the market. Therefore, the increased levels of regulatory and administrative costs that would arise if a rule is made would not be justified.

On this basis, the Commission has determined that the proposed change to the current bill content requirements in the NERR is not in the long-term interests of consumers and will not, or is not likely to, contribute to the achievement of the National Electricity Rules Objective (NERO) at this time.

### Consultation

The Commission is seeking stakeholders feedback on the draft determination by **Thursday, 30 May 2019**.

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