



Bill contents - customers with interval meters

Final determination published

The Australian Energy Market Commission has made a final rule determination to not make the proposed rule requiring retailers to include start and end meter readings in electricity bills for customers with interval meters.

Rule change 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.

Final determination

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 analysis undertaken by the AEMC found 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.

Having regard to the issues raised in the rule change request and during consultation with stakeholders, the Commission is not satisfied that the proposed rule will, or is likely to, contribute to the achievement of the NERO at this time.

No new evidence has been put forward during the second round of consultation on the rule change request that could alter the Commission's conclusion in the draft determination. On this basis the AEMC has determined not to make the proposed rule.

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