

**2 March 2022**

Australian Energy Market Commission

*By online submission service*

### **Protecting Customers Affected by Family Violence Rule Change (RRC0042)**

Aurora Energy welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the Australian Energy Market Commission (AEMC) Protecting Customer Affected by Family Violence Consultation Paper (Paper).

As part of the Tasmanian community Aurora Energy is passionate about providing quality services and support to all of our customers, particularly when they need it most, including through our nationally-recognised Your Energy Support hardship program. Aurora Energy is also committed to being involved and supporting local communities through a range of investments and partnerships.

In late 2021, Aurora Energy started the journey of creating a Family and Domestic Violence policy to support all our customers who are impacted by Family and Domestic Violence. Aurora Energy is thankful to the involvement of stakeholders who have helped contribute to its policy development process. This work is almost complete with the Aurora Energy policy currently being prepared for approval. It is noted that the effort and commitment to designing a family violence policy will need to be equally matched when delivering new processes and training. Following approval of the policy it is estimated that a further three months will be required before it is fully embedded and operational within all relevant business units.

Aurora Energy was pleased to attend and present at the AEMC's forum on 15 February 2022 supporting the rule change process. The forum highlighted the broad engagement of not only energy market participants but a range of industries in preparing and implementing family violence policies. The forum and information sharing process was highly beneficial.

Aurora Energy has reviewed the proposed requirements under the rule change, as detailed in section 1.2 of the Paper, and supports the adoption of all elements. In addition, the following points are provided for consideration:

- Despite cross over with other retailer services, such those delivered under a hardship policy, a single separate family violence policy should be required to ensure a targeted approach to training, awareness and delivery. Given the high impact of family violence it is critical that drivers and obligations within a business are highlighted and not lost amongst other related services.
- It is recommended that any mandated family violence policy be applied to all small customers, including small business customers as well as residential customers.
- Retailers should be encouraged to work collaboratively with a wide range of stakeholders who assist and support those impacted by family violence as well as the victims and survivors of that violence.

- Retailers have and will continue to take action to implement important policies where needed. In principle, new rules should serve as guidance with no civil penalties applied given the action of addressing domestic violence is a strong motivation for retailers to deliver change and maintain compliance with those new obligations.

Aurora Energy has appreciated the open dialogue the AEMC has maintained in progressing the rule change and it looks forward to engaging further on this important evolution of the national energy retail framework.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Oliver Cousland', with a small dot at the end.

Oliver Cousland  
Company Secretary / General Counsel