Australian Energy Market Commission

AEMC

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RULE

Final report

National Energy Retail Amendment (Improving the ability to switch to a better offer) Rule

Proponents

The Honourable Chris Bowen MP, Minister for Climate Change and Energy, as Chair of the Energy and Climate Change Ministerial Council

11 September 2025

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About the AEMC

The AEMC reports to the energy ministers. We have two functions. We make and amend the national electricity, gas and energy retail rules and conduct independent reviews for the energy ministers.

Acknowledgement of Country

The AEMC acknowledges and shows respect for the traditional custodians of the many different lands across Australia on which we all live and work. We pay respect to all Elders past and present and the continuing connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to Country. The AEMC office is located on the land traditionally owned by the Gadigal people of the Eora nation.

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Summary

1 The Australian Energy Market Commission (AEMC or Commission) has made a more preferable final rule to increase customers' awareness of savings that can be achieved from switching plans with their retailer. This would increase the number of customers who switch to lower cost plans, saving them money and improving competition in the retail market.

2 This rule change request was submitted by the Hon. Chris Bowen MP, Minister for Climate Change and Energy, as Chair of the Energy and Climate Change Ministerial Council (ECMC). The request sought to amend the National Energy Retail Rules (NERR) to make changes to switching processes. This forms part of a broader package of consumer-focused rule changes that Minister Bowen submitted on behalf of ECMC.

The final determination seeks to increase the number of customers who regularly switch by increasing awareness of savings

3 The Australian Energy Regulator (AER)'s Better Bills Guideline (BBG) requires customers' bills to contain an important message ('the better offer message') that alerts customers to opportunities to save by switching to a different plan ('deemed better offer'), how they can switch, and, on positive deemed better offer messages, a prompt to visit the Energy Made Easy website to compare offers from other retailers.

4 Despite this message, many customers do not switch to their retailer's best offer or to an offer from a different retailer. The ACCC has found that these customers could save on their energy bills by switching more regularly.

5 A significant number of customers are likely paying higher prices as they have not switched plans in a number of years. Newer plans generally have a lower cost than older ones. This rule change seeks to encourage customers on more expensive plans to switch.

6 The proponent's proposition was that customers do not switch as the time and effort required to action the switch (transaction costs) are too high. Therefore, proposed changes to switching processes. Our investigation and engagement with stakeholders found that there is little evidence to support this hypothesis. While stakeholders generally stated that comparing varied and complex plans is difficult and time-consuming, once a customer decides to switch to a plan, the process is usually straightforward.

7 We have found that the primary opportunity to increase the rates at which customers switch to their retailer's better offer is to increase awareness of the deemed better offer message, and the savings customers could access.

8 One reason for this is that many customers do not always open their bill and therefore do not see this message. There are several reasons this might occur. Many customers have direct debit arrangements that mean they are not required to open their bill in order to pay, they may find bills too confusing, or they may simply pay based on summary amounts provided in cover communications.

9 Evidence from the Behavioural Economics Team of the Australian Government (BETA) shows that customers who are presented with the deemed better offer message are more likely to switch plans (both with their retailer and through using Energy Made Easy). This indicates a low awareness of the potential to save by switching.

10 Our final rule focuses on addressing the lack of awareness of opportunities to save among

consumers. It will require retailers to include comparative information in communications that relate to and accompany a bill, to advise small customers they could save by switching plans. For example, this information would be required in the email summary if a retailer provides when issuing a new bill.

11 We expect that this will result in a greater number of customers seeing the message and taking action to switch to lower cost plans. This could either be switching to a better offer with their current retailer or another retailer (using Energy Made Easy).

12 In particular, our final rule, combined with the *Improving consumer confidence in retail energy plans* final rule, which restricts retailers from increasing prices more than once every 12 months for all existing and new market retail contracts, will help to ensure that customers are on better offers for longer.[1] The *Improving consumer confidence in retail energy plans* rule change will also limit the extent of the 'loyalty penalty' customers face through ensuring customers who are on market offers with benefits that change or expire do not pay more than the standing offer price.

The rule change is part of broader reforms to drive outcomes for consumers

13 Raising awareness of opportunities to save is important. However, we also acknowledge that there are barriers to engaging that are broader than this rule change can seek to address.

14 The complexity customers face when engaging with the retail market is an issue that has been raised in broader reforms. Many customers find the retail market complex and confusing and have difficulty comparing alternative offers and/or retailers. Comparison costs are distinct from transaction costs and are a significant barrier to customer engagement. These costs include the time and effort required to understand and compare different offers from different retailers that might have varied pricing structures and characteristics.

15 The AEMC is undertaking a forward-looking review (The pricing review: Electricity pricing for a consumer-driven future) to consider future electricity products and services, and the prices that consumers pay for these. The objective of the pricing review is to ensure that the pricing framework supports the availability of the products and services that consumers want in the future, while also delivering a lower-cost system for all consumers. We are investigating if and how this review can address issues in the retail market to ensure the products and services needed will be available. This review could examine some of the underlying complexity of pricing that contributes to comparison costs customers face in engaging with the retail market.

Customer engagement and explicit informed consent

16 We note that this rule change maintains the onus on customers to take action to switch to new contracts. A number of consumer advocates wanted this to be re-considered and retailers required to actively switch customers on their behalf or apply lower prices associated with new contracts. We consider this creates a number of issues, including through interactions with explicit informed consent (EIC) requirements.

17 EIC is required for a customer to enter a new retail contract. EIC requirements are enshrined in the National Energy Retail Law (NERL), and it is not within the AEMC's powers to amend these. We consider that EIC is an important way to recognise consumer agency and choice, and, in line with our understanding of equity, EIC recognises that consumers have a diverse range of needs, experiences, and preferences that must be accounted for. We cannot assume that all customers want the same thing. As such, EIC allows customers to reflect their own preferences for non-

1 AEMC, Improving consumer confidence in retail energy plans, rule determination, June 2025.

financial benefits and services. It also plays a role in addressing the asymmetry of information that retailers have access to that customers do not, by requiring the provision of information that enables customers to exercise their preferences.

18 Any reforms to EIC to ensure it is fit for purpose for the future need to be done carefully and in an holistic way, rather than via incremental reform. The Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) is progressing the Better Energy Customer Experiences (BECE) work to understand reforms needed to modernise and ensure the consumer protections framework remains suitable for the evolving energy market. As part of this, DCCEEW is assessing how the current protections regime is operating, including its strengths and weaknesses. This includes examining protections such as EIC and information provision requirements, and how these may need to evolve as the market transitions.

The final rule promotes the National Energy Retail Objective and equitable outcomes for consumers

19 The Commission has considered the National Energy Retail Objective (NERO)[2] and the issues raised in the rule change request.

20 We have assessed the final rule against our statutory objectives, leading us to make a more preferable final rule. This rule will promote the NERO by raising awareness of cheaper offers, to reduce the number of customers who pay more than they could be for their energy bills. This improved switching of customers in the retail market also produces competition benefits that place downward pressure on prices. We consider these benefits are material, while the costs this final rule will impose are minimal. The costs are low because this rule will require communication of information retailers are already required to generate, though the information may vary for different communication types. Further, compared to the draft rule, this final rule explicitly confines the scope of communications for which this obligation applies. Therefore, we consider this rule will promote the NERO and be in the long-term interest of consumers.

21 We considered stakeholder feedback and considered costs and benefits in relation to the following criteria to assess whether the proposed rule change, no change to the rules (business-as-usual), or other viable rule-based options are likely to better contribute to achieving the NERO. We assessed the final rule against four criteria:

- Outcomes for consumers - the final rule will improve consumer outcomes by raising awareness of the potential savings available from switching. It recognises and builds on research into consumer behaviour, so is likely to have long-lasting impacts.
- Principles of market efficiency - the final rule promotes innovation in products and services by encouraging customers to consider their options and reducing information asymmetry between retailers and consumers through providing customers with information on which they can more actively participate in the market.
- Implementation considerations - the final rule builds on current requirements (such as providing a better offer message on a bill) to minimise costs for retailers. The communications the AER may make requirements about is clearly defined to improve regulatory certainty for retailers and prevent scope creep. Furthermore, this rule uses established concepts to reduce complexity for customers and retailers. As the AER is already reviewing its guidelines, it also uses planned processes to reduce costs for the regulator.

2 Section 13 of the NERL.

- Principles of good regulatory practice - the final rule aligns with current requirements in Victoria to display the best offer message, so is likely lower cost for retailers and represents better practice with this consistency. We have also more clearly defined what the AER may make requirements about.

22 We have sought to balance consumer protections and market efficiency to deliver policies to drive outcomes that best serve Australian energy consumers in the long term. The Commission considers that the final rule aligns with our strategic priorities to inform, empower, and protect consumers individually and as a collective.

23 For this final determination, we also have had regard to promoting equitable energy outcomes. This complements the new guidance we have developed to ensure issues of equity are consistently and transparently addressed in a structured way when we are making rule changes and delivering recommendations. That is, putting a consistent focus on:

- removing structural barriers to engagement in the retail market through making the message to switch and save more accessible to customers
- avoiding creating or exacerbating vulnerability by increasing the number of customers who switch to better offers while minimising the cost imposition on retailers
- the diversity of customer needs, experiences, and preferences by encouraging customers to engage with their retailers to find the offer that suits them.

24 We further note that improving equity through better access to information and removing structural barriers to engagement also improves efficiency. Higher levels of switching and engagement with Energy Made Easy results in improved competition and more efficient outcomes that benefit all customers.

The final rule will come into effect in December 2026

25 The final rule requires the AER to update the BBG to specify that comparative information is included in written communications related to and sent at the same time as a bill, for example, a bill summary email that accompanies a new bill being issued.

26 The AER is required to update its guideline by 30 September 2026 to reflect this rule change before this commences on 30 December 2026.

The Commission has considered stakeholder feedback in making its decision

27 We published a draft determination on 19 June 2025, which set out our draft rule, our assessment of the key barriers customers face, and implementation considerations.

28 Submissions closed for the draft determination on 31 July 2025. We received 12 submissions and have since further engaged with stakeholders to understand proposed alternative solutions to the issues raised through this rule change. This input has informed the minor changes from draft to final rule, specifically to further clarify the communications this rule will apply to and prevent scope creep over time.

Contents

1 The Commission has made a final determination

The Australian Energy Market Commission (AEMC or Commission) has decided to make a more preferable final rule in response to a rule change request submitted by the Hon Chris Bowen MP, Minister for Climate Change and Energy the Environment and Water. The rule change request sought to improve the ability for customers to switch to a better offer.

This final determination has the following structure:

- This chapter outlines our process for considering the rule change request.
- Chapter 2 discusses the key barriers customers face in switching as well as related issues raised through stakeholder engagement.
- Chapter 3 outlines how our rule will operate, including how we consider the AER will implement this final rule.
- Chapter 4 assesses our final rule against our assessment criteria and discusses how our final rule will achieve the NERO.
- Appendix A discusses the barriers customers face in switching to a better offer
- Appendix B assesses several alternative options that we consider areout of scope for this rule change.
- Appendix C sets out the rule making process.
- Appendix D sets out the relevant legal tests and requirements to make a more preferable final rule.

1.1 The rule change request sought to increase the number of customers who switch to a better offer

On 12 and 28 August 2024, the Hon Chris Bowen MP, Minister for Climate Change and Energy, the Environment and Water, as Chair of the Energy and Climate Change Ministerial Council (ECMC) (the proponent), submitted a package of consumer-related rule change requests.[3]

This rule change request stated that high transaction costs associated with switching to a better offer result in many customers not switching.[4] The rule change request stated that these transaction costs represent a market failure, and proposed a streamlined process for switching plans with their retailer (often referred to as 'product switching').

1.2 Customers who switch regularly achieve better price outcomes

As identified in the rule change request, the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission's (ACCC's) December 2023 Inquiry into the National Electricity Market (NEM) report found that:[5]

- "customers may achieve better price outcomes if they switch regularly
- customers need to continually re-engage in the market to obtain the benefits of competition
- customers who have not switched are more likely to pay higher prices"

3 See the broader package here: https://www.aemc.gov.au/rule-changes/improving-ability-switch-better-offer.

4 The Hon Chris Bowen, Improving the ability to switch to a better offer rule change request.

5 ACCC, Inquiry into the National Electricity Market, December 2023, p. 69.

Furthermore, the ACCC found in the December 2024 Inquiry into the NEM report that 81 per cent of customers could be on a better offer.[6] Thus, there is a significant number of customers who could realise savings on their energy bill through switching.

This could be due to a number of reasons:

- the process of switching is challenging (the hypothesis of the rule change request)
- consumers are not aware that new plans could offer savings and therefore do not go through the process of switching plans
- consumers think reducing energy consumption is the only way to save money
- the plans that consumers are on meet their needs and preferences in other ways (such as non-price related benefits or convenience)
- comparing plans from other retailers is challenging, and these comparison costs discourage switching
- the savings that other plans offer are insufficient to encourage switching.

See appendix A for discussion of the key barriers and our finding that awareness would likely increase switching.

1.3 We considered four different options

Throughout the rule change process a number of solutions came to light. We considered four high-level solutions:

- no rule.
- streamling switching processes to a better offer with the current retailer. This was considered between the publication of the consultation paper and the draft determination. As detailed in appendix A the evidence and potential improvements that could be made were lacking, and we considered the potential benefit to be limited. This solution was ruled out in the draft determination.
- improving awareness of savings. This was identified in the draft determination as a potential root cause for a lack of switching for some consumers. Feedback to the draft determination largely agreed with this characterisation. Further engagement with stakeholders led to the consideration of multiple ways to increase awareness, including embedding in the rules or through the Better Bills Guideline (BBG). Implementing this through the BBG was identified as the best approach and forms the more preferable final rule.
- automatic switching and other options to ensure no customer pays less than they could if they switched. These were identified as a means to achieve the outcome of customers paying the cheapest amounts with their current retailer. However, it was not considered in the long-term interest of consumers. See section 2.3.1 and appendix B.2 for discussion on these items.

Chapter 2 outlines our consideration of the key opportunity we have identified for improving switching. Chapter 3 discusses how our preferred approach would operate, including implementation considerations for the AER.

6 ACCC, Inquiry into the National Electricity Market, December 2024, p. 54.

1.4 Our rule change will likely increase the number of customers who switch

The Australian Energy Regulator (AER)'s BBG requires customers' bills to contain an important message ('the better offer message') that alerts customers to opportunities to save by switching to a different plan ('deemed better offer'), how they can switch, and a prompt to visit the Energy Made Easy website to compare offers from other retailers.

This final rule will require this message to also be provided in communications that they receive related to and at the same time as their bill. We think this will increase awareness and switching rates because:

- often customers do not know that they could save money through switching
- evidence indicates that presenting customers with potential savings messages increase awareness and the likelihood of switching.

These two arguments are set out in chapter 2.

Our final rule supplements existing processes by requiring the AER to update its billing guideline to improve visibility of opportunities to save. This is set out in chapter 3.

The more preferable final rule promotes the National Energy Retail Objective (NERO) by encouraging more active switching by raising awareness of opportunities to save. The final rule will likely impose minimal costs on retailers to implement, while the benefits for consumers who are encouraged to switch are significant. Chapter 4 sets out our analysis for how this rule change meets the NERO.

1.5 Stakeholder engagement has informed our decision

We published a consultation paper on 6 February 2025, which sought feedback on the extent to which transaction costs are impeding switching. During this consultation stage, we consulted on two main implementation approaches for reducing transaction costs. Stakeholder input through this process helped us understand the root cause of consumers not switching to a better offer.

We published a draft determination on 19 June 2025. The draft determination identified awareness as a potential cause of reducing switching and proposed a solution that increased awareness of potential savings. We received 12 submissions to our draft determination. Since submissions closed for the draft determination on 31 July 2025, we have engaged further with stakeholders to better understand the issues raised.

The views expressed by stakeholders in response to our consultation paper, draft determination and bilateral meetings have shaped our final determination.

2 Increasing visibility of potential savings would increase switching

Low engagement with energy bills is contributing to low rates of customers switching. This represents a barrier to engagement in the market. Mitigating the impact of low engagement with bills promotes more equitable outcomes in the market. We found that the primary opportunity to increase the rates at which customers switch to their retailer's better offer is to increase awareness of the better offer message, and the savings they could access.

There are other issues that we have identified earlier in our process. These are discussed further in appendix A and appendix B.

This chapter outlines:

- there is low awareness of savings that can be achieved from switching
- being provided information increases switching.

2.1 Low awareness of savings is resulting in reduced customer switching

This section identifies that:

- customers do not always see the better offer message,
- seeing this message increases the likelihood of switching.

2.1.1 Currently, not all customers know the savings they could achieve by switching

The AER's BBG requires customers' bills to contain an important message ('the better offer message') that alerts customers to opportunities to save by switching to a different plan ('deemed better offer'), how they can switch, and a prompt to visit the Energy Made Easy website to compare offers from other retailers.[7]

Evidence from market research reports, including research conducted by the Behavioural Insights Team (BIT) on the better offer notice on bills, found that many customers do not open up and look at their actual bill.[8] This research corroborated research BIT conducted for the Essential Services Commission (ESC) in Victoria in 2018, which found that roughly 40 per cent of customers would pay their bill without opening and reading it.[9]

There are several reasons this might occur. Customers may have direct debit arrangements that mean they are not required to open their bill in order to pay, they may find bills too confusing, or they may simply pay based on summary amounts provided in cover communications. This could also feasibly be a simple case of customers being busy when trying to pay bills and simply following a payment link in a cover email rather than opening their bill. As a result, many customers who have not switched in some time may not be aware of savings, and miss this important information.

AGL and Energy and Water Ombudsman Victoria (EWOV) also identified in their submissions to the consultation paper that low engagement with energy bills contributes to low rates of

7 AER, Better Bills Guideline - Version 2, January 2023.

8 Behavioural Insights Team, Testing the better offer notice on energy bills - Final report, February 2022.ESC, Victorian Energy Market Report, September 2023, p. 8.

9 BIT, Testing the impact of behaviourally informed energy bills and best offers, 2018, p. 35.

customers switching to the deemed better offer.[10] This is also provided as a potential cause of low switching rates in the ESC's September 2023 Victorian Energy Market Report.[11]

2.1.2 Seeing the better offer message increases switching

Evidence from market research shows that customers who are presented with opportunities to save are more likely to engage in the market and switch products.[12]

BETA is the Australian Government's unit dedicated to applying behavioural economics to public policy questions. They have conducted a post-implementation evaluation research on the impact of the BBG. One of the findings of this research is that the deemed better offer message, which retailers have been required to provide since September 2023, is an effective tool for prompting customers to engage in the retail market. Since the introduction of the BBG, a greater proportion of customers who visit the Energy Made Easy website do so as a result of seeing the deemed better offer message. Furthermore, a greater number of customers who visit the Energy Made Easy website have not switched retailers before.[13] This research shows that the deemed better offer message is effective in encouraging proactive engagement in the market. The methodology and findings of BETA's research are discussed in more detail below.

BETA research indicates that the Better Bills Guideline is having a positive impact

In 2023-2024, BETA conducted, in partnership with the AER, a review of the impact of the BBG on customers' comprehension of bill contents and engagement in the retail market. In order to examine these impacts, BETA:[14]

- monitored Energy Made Easy usage
- interviewed consumers and collected eye tracking data
- ran an expert review activity.

The findings of this research have been instrumental in informing our position on the most effective ways to improve product switching rates, particularly by engaging otherwise disengaged customers. Evidence from this evaluation research into the BBG showed that the deemed better offer message is effective in engaging customers who would otherwise not have engaged in the market.

The research used a pop-up survey on the Energy Made Easy website, as well as Google Analytics, to better understand the factors driving engagement with the website. The proportion of customers on Energy Made Easy who were using the website as a result of having seen it on their energy bill increased from seven per cent pre-implementation of the BBG to 23 per cent two months post implementation, when the link to Energy Made Easy began to be featured on the first page in the deemed better offer message.[15] This proportion fluctuated slightly in subsequent months but remained near those levels.

Of those customers who reported visiting Energy Made Easy as a result of seeing it on their deemed better offer message, more than 60 per cent had never switched retailers before.[16] Engagement with Energy Made Easy and the propensity of customers to switch retailers is not

10 AGL, submission to the consultation paper, 6 March 2025, p. 6.EWOV, submission to the consultation paper, 6 March 2025, p. 2.
11 ESC, September 2023 Victorian Energy Market Report, p. 8.
12 BETA, Better Bills impact report, 6 August 2025, p. 31.
13 BETA, Better Bills impact report, 6 August 2025, p. 31.
14 [BETA in 2024: Behavioural insights with impact | Behavioural Economics]
15 BETA, Better Bills impact report, 6 August 2025, p. 30.
16 BETA, Better Bills impact report, 6 August 2025, p. 31.

directly the purpose of this rule change, which seeks to improve the rates at which customers switch to the deemed better offer. However, this insight is informative for two reasons. Firstly, this speaks to the ability of the deemed better offer message to engage customers generally in the retail market. Secondly, we consider that while improving the rate at which customers switch to the deemed better offer is the objective of this rule change, an added benefit of achieving this objective is likely to be better engagement in the retail market more generally. This includes improving the number of customers who engage with offers from other retailers. This is likely to be the outcome since the mechanism by which this rule change will improve switching rates is through engaging otherwise disengaged customers.

Another finding of the research is that absent of a better offer message, consumers are more likely to consider changing their energy usage habits in order to save than switching retailers. By extending the provision of the deemed better offer message to written communications relating to and sent at the same time as a bill (for example the cover email to a bill), this rule removes the necessity for customers to open their energy bill to see the message. This means a greater number of customers will engage with the message and, by extension, with the retail market. This approach maximises the number of customers who engage with the retail market and the likelihood they will proactively switch.

2.2 Increasing visibility of potential savings would effectively increase switching

We have identified that the best opportunity to increase switching is to increase the visibility of the better offer message. The better offer message is an effective tool to convey that savings can be achieved with the customer's current retailer and against current usage.

Nine of the submissions to the draft determination broadly supported the policy direction of the draft rule.[17] However, many of these stakeholders sought changes to the draft rule in how we are implementing this policy position. We have amended the draft rule in accordance with stakeholder feedback, though some stakeholders sought implementation entirely through the rules. See section 2.2.2 for a description of this.

Three stakeholders explicitly opposed this rule.[18] Two retailers, ENGIE and Alinta, argued that the case for change has not been sufficiently made.[19] Given the above identified evidence, we believe this case has been made. Specifically, too few customers are on the cheapest available offer, and the deemed better offer message is effective in increasing the rate of product switching. However, many customers do not engage with their bill, and thus do not see this message. This final rule, therefore, improves visibility of opportunities to save.

2.2.1 We will do this through the AER Better Bills Guideline

The final rule, by extending the provision of information pertaining to customers' ability to compare plans, will remove the necessity that customers open bills in order to see the deemed better offer message. Improving the visibility of the deemed better offer message will increase the number of customers who switch.

17 submissions to the draft determination, AEC, AGL, EWO's, JEC, Origin, Red and Lumo, SAPN, Shell, 31 July 2025.
EnergyAustralia, submission to the draft determination, 30 July 2025.

18 ECA, submission to the draft determination, 31 July 2025.
ENGIE, submission to the draft determination, 31 July 2025.
Alinta, submission to the draft determination, 31 July 2025.

19 ENGIE, submission to the draft determination, 31 July 2025, p. 3.
Alinta, submission to the draft determination, 31 July 2025, p. 1.

This is best implemented through an update to the AER's billing guideline. The BBG uses behavioural research to inform its requirements, including the BETA research discussed above that informed the policy taken in this final rule. This research analysed the effectiveness of the BBG at a level of detail that is not conducive to implementation through the rules. That the deemed better offer message is effective in engaging consumers in the market is a reflection of particular formatting and wording requirements on the bill. By implementing this through an update to the billing guideline, the AER can reflect these insights in communication requirements.

This final rule will operate with the AEMC's *Improving consumer confidence* rule change to help address the loyalty penalty issues.[20] This rule change will limit the extent of the 'loyalty penalty' customers face through ensuring customers who are on market offers with benefits that change or expire do not pay more than the standing offer price.

See chapter 3 for how this rule will work.

2.2.2 Some stakeholders suggested implementing this requirement through the NERR

While broadly supportive of the approach taken in the draft determination, many stakeholders expressed concerns about the scope of communications the AER's guideline could make requirements over. Shell considered that an obligation to further communicate the deemed better offer message should exist entirely within the NERR, rather than be made by the AER's billing guideline. Shell commented "there is a risk that where this rule is required to be captured through the BBG, that it's application will become rigid and difficult for retailers to subsequently request a change should the rule require adaptation to new methods of communicating."[21] AGL took a similar view that a principles-based rule change should make this requirement, rather than an update to the AER's billing guideline. They commented, "there is a risk that by deferring the specifications of the proposed rule to the AER, industry could be further burdened by additional requirements that exceed the AEMC's original intention, and compound the costs and complexities associated with this rule."[22]

We consider that implementing this obligation entirely through the NERR is less effective than the final policy position. This is because:

- The market research that informed the draft rule considers the benefits of the particular formatting of items on customers' bills, including the deemed better offer message. The AER, under this approach, would not have the flexibility to tailor the message to specific communications to reflect this and other ongoing research, as they do with implementation through their guideline.
- There is no benefit in terms of accelerated implementation. This is because:
  - for alignment with other rule changes, including *Assisting hardship customers*, definitions would be implemented in 2026[23]
  - the AER is updating the guideline anyway, and any update to the message would potentially create a risk of double implementation costs should a rule change be implemented prior to the review being completed.
- Related rules about bills provide for details to be included in guidelines. This includes, for example, the information that bills must include and how bills are calculated. It represents poor regulatory practice to deviate from this in the case of this particular requirement. The

20 AEMC, Improving consumer confidence, Rule Determination, 19 June 2025..

21 Shell, submission to the draft determination, 31 July 2025, p. 2.

22 AGL, submission to the draft determination, 31 July 2025.

23 AEMC, Assisting hardship customers, rule determination, 19 June 2025.

AER is also best placed to provide this level of detail. To deviate in this case imposes excess regulatory burden through being unpredictable and inconsistent with surrounding rules.

2.3 Submissions to the draft determination raised other policy options that we do not consider would be effective

While most stakeholders broadly supported the policy position taken in the draft determination, three stakeholders explicitly did not. ECA considered that more should be done to ensure that customers do not pay more than they otherwise could be if they were on another offer.[24] Alinta proposed an alternative model of directing customers to the existing deemed better offer message. We do not consider that either of these proposed alternatives would meet the NERO.

2.3.1 ECA argued that retailers should automatically provide customers with the lowest available price

ECA acknowledged in their submission to the draft determination that explicit informed consent (EIC) requirements preclude the AEMC from requiring retailers to automatically place customers on the best available offer.[25] They argue, however, that there is no EIC requirement that could prevent the AEMC from requiring retailers to change the prices their customers receive. However, we consider that EIC is an important feature of the retail market to be retained, a position Shell supported in its submission.[26] Moreover, as ECA identified in its submission, and as AGL further emphasised, price is only one element of retail contracts.[27] We consider that ECA's proposed approach therefore would miss an important step in the interaction between customers and retailers, whereby retailers improve their understanding of customers' needs and customers make informed choices. We further consider that this approach would:

- **Remove acquisition offers and raise prices generally**. Through requiring uniform pricing, customers have a reduced incentive to engage in the market. This would result in limited competition and therefore higher costs generally for all consumers in the absence of competitive forces placing downwards pressure on prices.
- **Stifle innovation and the capacity for retailers to provide varied products to meet customers' needs.** This is because retailers would be disempowered from recovering costs associated with developing new products and services, managing wholesale risk, or providing non-financial benefits or characteristics to their bills. Customer needs vary significantly and depend on a plethora of factors such as the value placed on non-financial benefits, consumer assets, and risk appetite. In requiring that all customers have access to the same price, this either prevents retailers from accommodating these needs, or results in higher costs for all customers in order to recover the costs associated with meeting them. This makes it more difficult for retailers to adapt their business models, including pricing frameworks, to the evolving needs of the consumer base. It could also harm customers experiencing vulnerability.
- **Represent poor regulatory practice.** This rule change is not the appropriate medium for such a significant change to the nature of the retail market. This is particularly true in the context of other ongoing processes that seek to take a more holistic approach to reviewing the key features of the retail market, including outcomes for consumers. A rule change focused on encouraging customers to switch should not fundamentally change the nature of the retail market. This is particularly true in the context of BECE and the ongoing pricing review, which are consulting heavily with stakeholders on many of the issues the ECA has raised,

24 ECA, submission to the draft determination, 31 July 2025, p. 5.
25 ECA, submission to the draft determination, 31 July 2025, pp. 4-5.
26 Shell, submission to the draft determination, 31 July 2025, p. 1.
27 AGL, submission to the draft determination, 31 July 2025, p. 1.

For these reasons, we have decided not to progress with the ECA's proposal to require retailers to ensure no customers pay more than the cheapest offer available to them.

2.3.2 Alinta proposed to direct customers to the existing deemed better offer message

Rather than replicating the deemed better offer message on communications documents, Alinta considered that a more effective approach would be to require retailers to provide a message that directs customers to the existing deemed better offer message on the customer's bill.[28] They argue that this achieves the same effect at lower implementation cost to retailers.

We do not have any evidence that customers will be more inclined to engage with their bill when directed to do so in cover communications to a bill. This is in contrast to market research BETA has conducted which shows the deemed better offer message is an effective prompt to engagement.[29] This rule change requires retailers to replicate a message they are already required to generate. The implementation costs of this, therefore, as opposed to Alinta's proposal, are minimal. Thus, we do not consider that Alinta's proposal meaningfully reduces transaction costs or increase switching in a more cost effective way than the final rule.

28 Alinta, submission to the draft determination, 31 July 2025, p. 1.

29 BETA, Better Bills impact report, 6 August 2025, p. 31.

3 How our rule will operate

The final rule will do two things:

- add to the requirements for the *billing guideline* to communications related to and sent at the same time as a bill, in relation to comparative information; and
- require the AER to update the *billing guideline* to address how retailers should provide comparative information in communications sent at the same time as bills, as well as in bills.

3.1 Our final rule will amend the scope of the billing guideline to include written communications related to billing

The NERR contains two rules that are relevant to this rule change and its intent:

- rule 25 says that in preparing and issuing bills to a small customer, a retailer must comply with the billing guideline
- rule 25A then contains the objectives of the billing guideline.

To ensure that comparative information (a requirement that currently exists for bills) also appears on written communications related to a bill, we are extending both rules to 'written communications relating to and sent at the same time as a bill'.

This will allow the AER to make requirements about the information retailers provide small customers in separate communications documents, such as bill summaries, emails or cover letters. This accommodates item [3] of the final rule discussed below, which makes provisions for additional information the AER must require retailers to provide.

3.2 The AER will implement this through an update to the *billing guideline*

Box 1: The AER will update its *billing guideline* to require information in written communications relating to and sent at the same time as a bill

- The final rule will require the *billing guideline* to specify that comparative information is required in any written communications related to and sent at the same time as a bill. This comparative information is currently the deemed better offer message. The AER may prescribe other forms of comparative information in its guideline.
- Where customers receive the bill with a covering communication they will also receive the comparative information in that communication
- The AER should outline how retailers meet thi requirement for different communication types
- The AER will be required to update its guideline by 30 September 2026 to reflect this rule change and retalers will need to comply by, at the soonest, the commencement date of 30 December 2026.

The guideline contains a number of requirements for how a retailer should calculate and present the better offer message. This includes the wording, where it should be on the bill and exemptions (such as final notices and carry-over customers).

3.2.1 Comparative information will be required for any written communications related to and accompanying a bill

The AER's BBG outlines the information that retailers must include in the bills they provide to customers, and the manner in which it must be provided.[30] The AER currently requires retailers to present the deemed better offer message as a means to assist customers with comparing their customer retail contract with other energy offers available to them.[31] In order that the better offer message appears on any written communications related to and sent at the same time as a bill, we are requiring the AER to update their guideline to include new provisions for communications. This final rule will amend Rule 25A by inserting, following subrule 25A(6), subrules (7) and (8).

> (7) In the *billing guideline*, the AER must specify that a retailer must provide comparative information for the purposes of subrule (3)(c)(ii) to a small customer in a bill and in any written communications relating to and sent at the same time as a bill, in the manner and form required by the *billing guideline*.
>
> (8) For the avoidance of doubt, the written communications referred to in subrules 25(1), 25A(1), and 25A(7) are communications that accompany a bill, and do not include the notices provided in accordance with subrules 30(2)(c), 31(1), 46(3), 48(2), and 48A(1).

3.2.2 Where customers receive the bill with a covering communication they will also receive the better offer message in that communication

Where a customer has opted into a communication channel, then this communication should also include the deemed better offer message. For example, if the customer has opted to receive email bills, and they receive a covering email summary then this would apply. Retailers will not be required to create new communications, such as providing cover letters to physical bills, where previously they had not done so.

Some stakeholders expressed concerns about the scope of communications the draft rule would apply to. They considered this could be addressed through more clearly defining the scope in the final rule. EnergyAustralia recommended a more clearly defined set of communication documents, commenting "we are concerned that the proposed wording of the draft rule is too broad and could lead to a more onerous obligation than envisioned by the AEMC."[32] AEC also expressed a desire for the scope of the rule change to be clarified, while also identifying an opportunity to embed this obligation in the rules.[33]

To this end, we have clarified the scope of communications about which the AER may make requirements through their billing guideline. We have limited the scope of written communications included to those written communications that accompany a bill, and not other related communications. This clarifies the original intent of the rule but does not meaningfully change the envisaged outcome. The AER retains discretion over the particulars as to how this should be implemented, while the risk of excessive scope creep that could impose unnecessary costs on retailers are mitigated.

The final rule also explicitly excludes certain forms of communication from being under the purview of this rule. Retailers' obligations to provide other notices, such as an overcharge notice to

30 See rule 25A of the NERR.

31 See rule 25A(3)(c)(ii)

32 EnergyAustralia, submission to the draft determination, 30 July 2025, p. 1.

33 AEC, submission to the draft determination, 31 July 2025, p. 1.

small customers, are elsewhere described in the rules. While retailers may also provide small customers with a bill to accompany these notices, they will not be under the remit of the AER's billing guideline. The billing guideline will therefore not require retailers to provide the deemed better offer message on these notices:

- overcharge notice
- undercharge notice
- tariff change notice
- end of fixed term contract notice
- benefit change notice

Other stakeholders wanted us to go further. Origin suggested, "a more precise definition of 'written communication' should be included in the final rule so that this is limited to emails or letters accompanying energy bills and does not extend to other forms of customer communication."[34] Below we outline that the AER will have some discretion in this as a means to future proof the requirement.

The final rule will not require retailers to create new communications types of communications. Retailers will only be required to amend the communication documents that customers have provided their explicit informed consent to receive and thus retailers would already create.

3.2.3 The AER's billing guideline will detail the specific nature of these requirements

There are a number of requirements in the BBG around the wording and presentation of the deemed better offer message, as well as exemptions for where it would apply. These would apply to communications too, at the AER's discretion. For example, it is not required for a final bill or carry over customers.[35] It is important that similar considerations are made for the message in written communications related to the bill, where there is any.

The final rule provides the AER with roughly 12 months to review and update their billing guideline to accommodate this rule change. The AER will also need to consider through consultation with stakeholders how, if at all, those requirements will need to change in light of this new obligation.

The AER guideline will consider the manner and form of the message as well as how those may vary for different forms of communication. For example, where a communication form is not suited to accommodate the full deemed better offer message, the AER could prescribe a more streamlined message that is better suited to that particular medium. Currently, email PDF is the most common format for communicating bills. However, this could change, with app notifications, SMS, and postal physical bills also being potential channels.

The AER and BETA have conducted extensive research into the formatting requirements for bills. This includes consideration of the deemed better offer message. The AER will, under this rule, have discretion to action these learnings in the presentation of the deemed better offer message in communication documents. This includes considering how the message can be tailored to suit each communication medium.

34 Origin, submission to the draft determination, 31 July 2025, p. 1.

35 See section 2 of the NERL.

3.2.4 The billing guideline will be updated by 30 September 2026 and determine when retailers need to comply

The AER will be required to update their guideline by 30 September 2026 to reflect this rule change. The commencement date is 30 December 2026.

The BBG will determine the date by which retailers must to comply with the updated guideline, though this cannot be before 30 December 2026.

4 The final rule will contribute to the energy objectives

We have sought to balance consumer protections and market efficiency to deliver policies to drive outcomes that best serve Australian energy consumers in the long term. The Commission considers that the final rule aligns with our strategic vision for a consumer-focused net-zero energy system and our AEMC strategic priorities to inform, empower, and protect consumers individually and as a collective.

The more preferable final rule promotes the National Energy Retail Objective (NERO) by increasing awareness of opportunities to save and thereby reducing the number of customers who are paying more than they could be for their energy bills. This improved product switching of customers in the retail market also produces competition benefits that place downward pressure on prices. The final rule will impose minimal costs on retailers to implement, while the benefits for consumers who are encouraged to switch are significant.

The Commission compared a range of viable policy options that are within our statutory powers. The Commission analysed the following options:

- no rule with a recommendation that the AER update their billing guideline
- a rule to require retailers to provide more streamlined mechanisms for product switching
- a more preferable final rule to require the AER to update their billing guideline such that retailers are required to provide plan comparison information in written communications
- a rule to require retailers to provide customers with the deemed better offer message in written communications
- a rule to require retailers to provide a message in communications that directs small customers to the existing deemed better offer message on their bill
- a rule to require retailers to ensure that customers are not paying more than they could be if they switched to another offer.

The Commission’s analysis for this rule change involved identifying the stakeholders impacted and assessing the benefits and costs of policy options. The depth of analysis was commensurate with the potential impacts. The Commission focused on the types of impacts within the scope of the NERO.

The Commission considered the primary potential costs and benefits of policy options against the assessment criteria. Based on this analysis, the Commission considers that this more preferable final rule will better contribute to the achievement of the NERO than the other options by generating benefits for consumers through improved switching rates while imposing minimal costs on retailers who are already required to create and communicate better offer messages.

4.1 The Commission must act in the long-term interests of energy consumers

The Commission can only make a rule if it is satisfied that the rule will or is likely to contribute to the achievement of the relevant energy objectives.[36]

For this rule change, the relevant energy objective is the NERO:

The NERO is: [37]

36 Section 236(1) of the NERL.

37 Section 13 of the NERL.

> to promote efficient investment in, and efficient operation and use of, energy services for the long term interests of consumers of energy with respect to-
>
> (a) price, quality, safety, reliability and security of supply of energy; and
>
> (b) the achievement of targets set by a participating jurisdiction-
>
> (i) for reducing Australia's greenhouse gas emissions; or
>
> (ii) that are likely to contribute to reducing Australia's greenhouse gas emissions.

The targets statement, available on the AEMC website, lists the emissions reduction targets to be considered, as a minimum, in having regard to the NERO.[38]

4.2 We must also take these factors into account

In making this final rule, the Commission must consider if a more preferable rule better achieves the NERO, which, in this case, we consider it does. We have also considered the consumer protections test for this rule change.

4.2.1 We have decided to make a more preferable final rule

The Commission may make a rule that is different, including materially different, to a proposed rule (a more preferable rule) if it is satisfied that, having regard to the issue or issues raised in the rule change request, the more preferable rule is likely to better contribute to the achievement of the NERO.[39]

For this final determination, we also had regard to promoting equitable energy outcomes. This complements the new guidance we have developed to ensure issues of equity are consistently and transparently addressed in a structured way when we are making rule changes and delivering recommendations. That is putting a consistent focus on:

- the diversity of customer needs, experiences, and preferences by encouraging customers to engage with their retailers to find the offer that suits them
- removing structural barriers to engagement in the retail market through addressing customer inertia and low engagement with bills
- avoiding creating or exacerbating vulnerability by increasing the number of customers who switch to better offers while minimising the cost imposition on retailers.

For this rule change, the Commission has made a more preferable final rule. The reasons are set out in section 4.3 below. As discussed in section 4.3.2, improving equity outcomes through better access to information and removing structural barriers also improves efficiency of the market, leading to better outcomes for all consumers.

4.2.2 We have considered the consumer protections test for this rule change

In addition to applying the NERO, the Commission must, where relevant, satisfy itself that the rule is "compatible with the development and application of consumer protections for small customers, including (but not limited to) protections relating to hardship customers" (the consumer protections test).[40] Where the consumer protections test is relevant in making a rule,

38 Section 224A(5) of the NERL.

39 Section 244 of the NERL.

40 Section 236(2)(b) of the NERL.

the Commission must be satisfied that both the NERO test and the consumer protections test have been met.[41] If the Commission is satisfied that one test, but not the other, has been met, the rule cannot be made (noting that there may be some overlap in the application of the two tests).

The Commission is satisfied that the final rule meets the consumer protections test for the reasons set out in section 4.3 below.

4.3 How we have applied the legal framework to our decision

The Commission must apply the legal framework in considering the issue in this rule change request, which is: how to address the issue of many customers paying more than they could be for their energy bill because they have not switched to the better offer.

We identified the following criteria to assess which option is likely to better contribute to achieving the NERO:

- Outcomes for consumers
- Principles of market efficiency
- Implementation considerations
- Principles of good regulatory practice.

These assessment criteria reflect the key potential impacts – costs and benefits – of the rule change request, for impacts within the scope of the NERO. Our reasons for choosing these criteria are set out in section 4.2 of the consultation paper.

The rest of this section explains why the final rule best promotes the long-term interest of consumers when compared to other options and assessed against the criteria. The benefits of this rule in improving outcomes for consumers and fostering competition to improve market efficiency exceed the implementation costs, which we consider minimal.

A more preferable rule will better contribute to the achievement of these objectives. This is because the more preferable rule engages otherwise disengaged customers without imposing significant costs on retailers. This will result in a greater number of customers switching to the deemed better offer or otherwise engaging in the market than a rule change that only seeks to reduce the transaction costs associated with switching.

4.3.1 This rule will increase awareness and lower costs for consumers

As discussed in chapter 2, our rule change will likely result in a greater number of customers engaging in the market and switching to a better offer. This will likely result in individual customers paying less for their energy as a result of switching to better plans. As discussed in chapter 1, the ACCC found in the December 2024 Inquiry into the NEM report that 81 per cent of customers could be on a better offer.[42] Thus, there is a significant number of customers who could realise savings on their energy bill through switching.

The level of savings available for an individual customer is not fully clear. For some it could be significant, while for others it could be marginal. The ACCC further reports that “customers on flat rate offers that are two or more years old have calculated annual prices on average 16.9 per cent or $317 higher than those on newer offers.”[43] The ECA provided in their submission that the

41 That is, the legal tests set out on sections 236(1) and (2)(b) of the NERL.

42 ACCC, Inquiry into the National Electricity Market, December 2024, p. 54.

43 ACCC, Inquiry into the National Electricity Market, December 2024, p. 3.

figures that the ACCC reported imply potential savings across the market in excess of $800 million.[44]

While it is not realistic that this rule change will achieve total customer engagement across the NEM, this illustrates the level of potential benefits that customers could realise as a result of increased awareness of better offers. Evidence from the AER's BIT shows that even when presented with simple switching, customers still require savings in excess of $200 in order to be willing to switch.[45] However, the final rule will require retailers to further communicate messaging they are already required to provide on bills. Therefore, we consider the implementation costs are minimal. We consider the benefits of this rule will likely exceed the costs imposed.

The final rule differs from the draft rule in that it clarifies the types of communications the AER may make requirements about. The final rule also explicitly excludes certain notices and information that the rules otherwise require retailers to provide.[46] This improves the level of certainty that retailers may have as to the requirements an updated billing guideline will make, and also limits the scope of the guideline from expanding over time beyond the intentions of this rule change, namely written communications related to and accompanying a bill. This further limits the implementation costs of this rule, which are ultimately borne by consumers.

4.3.2 More active switching will result in increased market efficiency

A greater number of customers switching to the deemed better offer, or otherwise engaging in the market, places downward pressure on energy pricing. This occurs for two reasons. Firstly, fewer customers remain on contracts for longer periods of time, where, the evidence shows, they are more likely to pay a 'loyalty penalty'.[47] Secondly, evidence from BETA's evaluation research of the impact of the deemed better offer message shows that customers who see the message are more likely to visit the Energy Made Easy website.[48] Energy Made Easy allows customers to compare market offers from a range of retailers, not just their existing retailer, further increasing competition among retailers. This increases customers' visibility of the market and the different offers available, and places downward pressure on prices, encouraging innovation to minimise retailers' costs and promote equity through meeting a variety of customer needs.

4.3.3 The final rule achieves benefits while minimising implementation costs

The consultation paper outlined two broad approaches that a rule change to streamline the process by which customers switch to the deemed better offer might take. These were a prescriptive approach and a principles-based approach. For the reasons outlined in chapter 2, the Commission considers that improving the visibility of the deemed better offer message is the most appropriate mechanism for reducing the barriers customers face in engaging in the market. Thus, this is the most effective mechanism available to the Commission for reducing the number of customers who pay more than they could on their energy bills.

The mechanism proposed in the draft determination imposes fewer implementation costs on retailers than either of the mechanisms outlined in the consultation paper. In response to stakeholder feedback, we have clarified the communications this rule applies to, preventing increased implementation costs. In clarifying the scope of communications the AER's guideline

44 ECA, submission to the consultation paper, 6 March 2025, p. 3.

45 BIT, Testing the impact of behaviourally informed energy bills and best offers, 2018, p. 36.

46 See subrule (8) of the final rule.

47 ACCC, Inquiry into the National Electricity Market, December 2024, pp. 3-4.

48 BETA, Better Bills impact report, 6 August 2025, p. 31.

may make provisions about, the final rule improves regulatory certainty, prevents scope creep and thus minimises implementation costs.

We expect the final rule will require retailers, under the updated *billing guideline*, to provide largely similar information they would otherwise have to provide, such as the deemed better offer message, only that this information will also be included in written communications related to or sent at the same time as a bill. We understand that retailers have separate processes for developing bills and customer engagement. However, we consider the cost imposition of also providing some of this information in communications to be small as this is largely duplicative. This approach further allows retailers to retain flexibility in how they manage costs and meet the bespoke needs of their customers.

4.3.4 The final rule aligns with other regulatory processes currently underway

We consider the final rule represents good regulatory practice by being consistent with other regulatory workstreams. This alignment lowers costs for market bodies and participants. Two other processes in particular engage with similar issues to this rule change:

- The Essential Services Commission (ESC) in Victoria has published a Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS) that assesses potential amendments to the Energy Retail Code of Practice, one of which also seeks to improve the ability for customers to switch to the best offer.[49] Interactions with this process are discussed further below.
- The Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) is undertaking a review of the National Energy Customer Framework (NECF) through the Better Energy Customer Experiences (BECE) review.[50] This review will engage with some of the issues addressed through this rule change process, but with a more holistic approach.

This rule change forms part of a broader package of consumer-focused rule changes proposed by Minister Bowen in 2024. All of these rule changes seek to help households access cheaper energy deals, support customers experiencing hardship, and deliver more protections for consumers. This rule change, through improving visibility of opportunities to save, will result in more customers saving through engaging in the market. In this regard, the outcome of this rule change aligns with the broader objective of the consumer package rule changes. This rule complements, in particular, the *Assisting hardship customers* rule change, which introduced a principle that customers experiencing hardship will be no worse off than the deemed better offer.[51]

Alignment with the Essential Services Commission of Victoria

On 16 May 2025, the ESCV published their RIS for their final decision on their Energy Consumer Reforms.[52] This paper examines the costs and benefits of policy options for a suite of ongoing reforms which includes a change to the retail code to improve the ability to switch to the best offer.

The ESCV's RIS conducted a multi-criteria analysis of three options for improving the ability to switch offers. This analysis determined that the best approach is an outcomes-based rule change with minimum standards.[53] This is primarily based on the effectiveness of this approach in ensuring consumers have access to effective, simple and accessible switching processes.

49 Essential Services Commission, Energy Consumer Reforms, Regulatory Impact Statement, 16 May 2025.

50 ECMC, Better Energy Customer Experiences, Consultation Paper, April 2025.

51 AEMC, Assisting hardship customers, rule determination, June 2025.

52 ESC, Energy Consumer Reforms Regulatory Impact Statement, 16 May 2025.

53 ESC, Energy Consumer Reforms Regulatory Impact Statement, 16 May 2025, pp. 103-106.

Our final rule will align with the existing deemed better offer requirements in Victoria. The Best Offer Guideline in Victoria currently makes provisions for information that is provided in bills, bill change alerts, and 'bill summaries'.[54] To this end, the final rule, which extends the provision of information relating to customers' ability to compare plans to written communications related to and sent at the same time as a bill, increases regulatory alignment with Victoria. This therefore meets the NERO by reducing the regulatory burden on retailers and representing good regulatory practice.

Our final rule, however, will not make provisions on the switching processes retailers are required to provide. This is not aligned with the ESCV's RIS on improving the ability to switch to the best offer.[55] Supported by evidence from research conducted by BETA, the AEMC's view is that product switching rates are best improved through engaging otherwise disengaged customers through improving the visibility of the deemed better offer message.[56] While any misalignment between Victoria and NECF regions represents an additional regulatory burden for retailers, in this case our final rule will minimise the cost imposition on retailers, as it will not require retailers to redesign any of their switching processes. Our rule will extend the provision of the deemed better offer message, which retailers are already required to calculate and present on bills, while allowing retailers to retain flexibility in the customer engagement experience they provide.

The AER is undertaking reviews of its retail guidelines

In 2025 and 2026, the AER will be reviewing four retail guidelines. These are:

- the Benefit Change Notice Guidelines
- the Better Bills Guideline
- the Customer Hardship Policy Guideline
- the Retail Pricing Information Guidelines.

The final rule supports the AER's work to update the BBG by, firstly, aligning the timeline of a transitional requirement on the AER to update its guideline to reflect this rule change with the timeline required by the *Assisting hardship customers* rule change.[57] Secondly, by improving the visibility of the deemed better offer message, or other information to assist the customer to compare retail plans, this rule will increase the efficacy of the *billing guideline* in empowering customers to engage in the market and minimise their costs.[58]

We expect that this expanded scope will require additional resourcing from the AER. This will not only expand the scope of the upcoming review of the BBG that the AER is conducting, but will require additional resourcing from the AER's monitoring and enforcement functions in educating retailers and promoting compliance.

Though we expect that this rule change will place some additional burden on the AER, they are currently or will soon be undertaking reviews of each of the four retail guidelines. We have aligned our transitional requirements with the AER's existing review timelines to minimise regulatory burden.

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54 ESC, Guideline 1 (2023) - Form and content of deemed best offer messages, 23 November 2023. The Energy Retail Code of Practice sets out the following definition of a 'bill summary': "a communication from the retailer to the small customer that: (a) informs the small customer that the retailer has issued a new bill; and (b) includes the bill due date and the amount due."

55 ESC, Energy Consumer Reforms Regulatory Impact Statement, 16 May 2025.

56 BETA, Better Bills impact report, 6 August 2025, p. 31.

57 AEMC, Assisting hardship customers, Rule determination, June 2025.

58 BETA, Better Bills impact report, 6 August 2025, p. 31.

A We analysed a suite of barriers customers face in switching products

We engaged extensively with stakeholders to understand the transaction costs customers face, as well as the other barriers customers face associated with the switching process. These barriers are varied and impact customers' engagement in the market. This section outlines our consideration of the role of transaction costs, including those related to EIC, as well as issues relating to minimum thresholds for the deemed better offer message, and stakeholder feedback to the draft determination's characterisation of key barriers.

Our assessment for this rule change, is that raising awareness of the opportunities to save is the key opportunity to reduce barriers to switching. See chapter 2 for the discussion on this.

A.1 We have examined some additional barriers related to switching

There are a number of barriers that stakeholders have raised through this rule change process. Here we discuss the key barriers that we did not consider this rule change should address.

A.1.1 Transaction costs

Transaction costs are the time and effort required to switch to another offer. These are distinct in our analysis from comparison costs, as transaction costs only refer to those costs that customers face in the mechanism of switching. The Commission engaged with stakeholders extensively, including with a stakeholder that provides product switching services to customers. There was little supporting evidence that transaction costs are the primary issue preventing switching, and we have not identified any changes that could be made that will address this in a way that will increase switching rates, which represent a significant barrier. To this extent, the Commission considers that a rule change to reduce transaction costs would not be as effective as the final rule in improving customer engagement with the market.

Feedback from retailers in particular generally emphasised that switching is a simple process and that transaction costs are already relatively low. Several stakeholders who supported a rule change to streamline switching processes cited the ECA's June 2024 Energy consumer sentiment survey, in which it is reported, among other factors, that 25 per cent of customers who considered but did not follow through with switching said that it was too time-consuming.[59] We note that the same survey provided that the 'savings didn't make it worth it' was the most common response to the same question, with 28 per cent of households selecting this option.[60] We further consider that customers who considered the switching process to be too complicated, confusing or time-consuming, may do so on the basis of barriers other than the transaction costs associated with switching to the deemed better offer. These could include, for example, comparison costs or confusion as to duplicate plan names, which we discuss in appendix B.

A rule change to reduce transaction costs by requiring retailers to provide a streamlined switching process would likely only impact customers who are already engaged in the market. This is because customers would need to engage in the market by undertaking the product switching process to experience any reduced transaction costs. We consider that too few customers are currently engaged in the market. Because we consider transaction costs are not significant, and

59 ECA, Energy consumer sentiment survey, June 2024.

60 Note that options were not mutually exclusive.

because reducing them would not engage otherwise disengaged customers, a rule change to reduce transaction costs is likely to have minimal benefit.

A.1.2 Transaction costs due to EIC requirements

Some of the transaction costs faced by customers relate to EIC requirements. Retailers must have the EIC of customers before entering into a new contract with them. In the case of switching over the phone, this means that customers must listen to a script provided by the retailer before switching. In the case of switching online, this requires a customer to read and agree to the terms and conditions of the contract they are entering into. It is not in the AEMC's power to amend or reduce EIC requirements as these are enshrined in the law.[61]

A.1.3 Call wait times

Some stakeholders suggested that product switching over the phone is time-consuming and cited call wait times as a cause of this. The AER reports on call wait times in their Annual Retail Market Reports. Evidence from the November 2024 report shows that call wait times are generally low (3-7 minutes), though complaints about call wait times are increasing.[62] A rule change to reduce call wait times could require retailers to hire more staff or extend working hours. This represents a potentially significant cost for retailers, which customers ultimately face, for an unclear benefit.

A.1.4 Connection between retailers' plan comparison pages and the deemed better offer

The link provided to customers on the deemed better offer notice typically takes customers to the retailer's product page to compare their offers. This does not identify which is the deemed better offer but will list the available plans and their characteristics. This could potentially be confusing for customers who visit the plan comparison page as a result of seeing the deemed better offer identified on their bill. They may expect to see the better offer identified for them. The Commission considers, however, that a rule change should not be made to rectify this issue.

Addressing this may not be in customers' best interest

A direct link to the deemed better offer may not be in the customer's best interest. The deemed better offer check that retailers must conduct and present on customers' bills are calculations that reflect a point in time. Thus, these may not be reflective of the best offer at the time the customer opens their bill or sees the deemed better offer message. There are also simplification elements that are required for the deemed better offer check that retailers conduct that may mean the process misses other options that might be in the customers' interest. Therefore, the retailer's product comparison page on their website would be the most up-to-date source of information, rather than the deemed better offer message.

Engagement with retailers also revealed that they use customer engagement to 'health check' or triage the customer's existing arrangement. This potentially includes checking if concessions or payment difficulty arrangements could be applicable. Requiring retailers to provide a direct link to the deemed better offer message may mean that this opportunity is lost. A rule change to improve engagement in the retail market should not stifle opportunities for retailers to proactively improve outcomes for their customers.

Furthermore, innovative products are often not part of the deemed better offer calculation. Innovative products may have characteristics that small customers may want. Customers may be

61 See Division 5 of Part 2 of the National Energy Retail Law.

62 AER, Annual Retail Market Report 2023-24, 30 November 2024.

able to select these offerings online, or retailers may be able to consider if these products better suit the customer over the phone. Retail innovation is a positive feature of the market that allows retailers to meet the varied needs of their customers. Fostering improved engagement in the retail market generally, further allows for innovative products to emerge. Recognising and accommodating the varied needs, experiences, and preferences of customers is important for achieving more equitable outcomes.

This would not be best addressed through a rule change

A rule change to address this issue would be complicated and potentially unworkable. The BBG specifies that retailers must provide clear instructions for switching to the deemed better offer.[63] This typically manifests as retailers providing a link to their product comparison webpage. If reforms were required to rectify this issue, the BBG would be the most appropriate tool for actioning this.

The Commission also does not consider the benefits of a rule change to rectify this issue are likely to be significant. No stakeholder submissions to the consultation paper raised this issue, nor was this issue revealed through subsequent engagement with stakeholders. Staff-level examinations of the product-switching process provided by retailers revealed this potential opportunity for streamlining. However, resolving this issue through a rule change would also require retailers to redevelop their product comparison webpages. Feedback from stakeholders suggests that the costs associated with website upgrades are potentially significant, particularly for small retailers. Thus, we consider the benefits of a rule change to mitigate this issue are likely to be minimal, while costs could be significant.

A.1.5 Customers require a minimum threshold of savings to switch

In their submission to the consultation paper, EnergyAustralia noted that the key barrier to switching may be perceived savings.[64] AGL and the AEC also noted this as a potential barrier to switching.[65] This is supported by evidence from the ECA's June 2024 Energy consumer sentiment survey, which found that the most common reason why customers do not switch is that the savings were not considered worth it.[67] Given that customers don't always see the better offer message, they may not fully know the potential savings available. The savings could be more substantial than they realise. The final rule, by requiring retailers to communicate the deemed better offer message more broadly, better informs customers of potential savings, while also prompting them to investigate better offers elsewhere.

In submissions to the draft determination, AGL and AEC also raised this issue, opining that the AEMC should review or recommend an increase to the minimum threshold for presenting a deemed better offer message.[68] This reflects the ESC in Victoria's consideration of the same issue. However, the AER determines the minimum threshold for the deemed better offer check through its billing guideline. This level is not determined by the rules. This level will continue to be determined by the AER. AER's review of the billing guideline, that this and the *Assisting hardship customers* rule change require, will present stakeholders with an opportunity to provide feedback on the billing guideline.

63 AER, Better Bills Guideline - Version 2, January 2023.
64 EnergyAustralia, submission to the consultation paper, 6 March 2025, p. 6.
65 AGL, submission to the consultation paper, 6 March 2025, p. 6.

67 ECA, Energy consumer sentiment survey, June 2024.
68 AGL, submission to the draft determination, 31 July 2025, p. 2.
ECA, submission to the draft determination, 31 July 2025, p. 2.

A.2 Stakeholder views on the key barriers to switching varied

Stakeholder submissions to the draft determination largely supported our characterisation of the key challenges and opportunities for improving the rates at which customers switch offers. Namely, that improving awareness of opportunities to save best balances implementation costs with behavioural benefits. JEC and ECA, however, objected to the draft determination's characterisation of the transaction costs customers face in switching offers. JEC warned against characterising the switching process as fairly easy. In particular, JEC disapproved of the draft determination's delineation of comparison costs from transaction costs, "[f]or most consumers there is no separation of the process – i.e. consumers consider the entire experience of switching and do not typically delineate between the time and energy it takes to compare plans and the time and energy it takes to contact their retailer to enact the switch."[69] JEC also emphasised the compounding of issues faced by vulnerable customers who struggle to engage.[70]

We agree with parts of JEC's analysis. The delineation of transaction costs from comparison costs is useful for determining the most appropriate solution. JEC are right to point out that in many cases this is a meaningless distinction from a consumer perspective. However, the best solution will differ depending on the particular sticking points that consumers face in engaging in the market. Comparison costs are not the focus of this rule change, but are indeed a barrier to engagement. BETA's research shows that engagement with the deemed better offer message leads to more customers visiting Energy Made Easy.[71] Energy Made Easy is an initiative to reduce comparison costs that customers face. BETA has also conducted market research into Energy Made Easy which considers its effectiveness and potential improvements.[72] To this extent, as well as the extent to which the deemed better offer reduces the need to compare plans to save, we consider this rule change will alleviate some of the issues comparison costs cause.

ECA similarly considered that customers face barriers to switching, particularly in relation to understanding and comparing plans.[73] In particular, ECA emphasised the increased difficulty faced by hardship customers in engaging with the market. We agree with this assessment. As discussed above, we consider comparison costs, which include the time and effort taken to understand and compare plans, are a material barrier. We similarly support ECA's characterisation of the barriers hardship customers face. We have a separate framework for assisting hardship customers. These are discussed in the recent rule change to ensure hardship customers do not pay more than the deemed better offer.[74]

69 JEC, submission to the draft determination, 31 July 2025, p. 3.
70 JEC, submission to the draft determination, 31 July 2025, p. 3.
71 BETA, Better Bills impact report, 6 August 2025, p. 31.
72 BETA, Empowered to switch: Energy made easier, 6 August 2025.
73 ECA, submission to the draft determination, 31 July 2025, p. 3.
74 AEMC, Assisting hardship customers, Rule determination, 19 June 2025.

B Two other issues were raised at the consultation stage that are out of scope for this rule change

There were two other issues raised during consultation on this rule change. These issues are being considered in other ongoing workstreams.

- Duplicate plan names exacerbate the complexities of comparing plans and retailers
- Automated switching and explicit informed consent.

B.1 Complexity of comparing plans and retailers

It is important that customers can compare plans and switch easily. Retail plans often have varying characteristics with different price structures, and comparing these is complicated. Furthermore, different retailers have different processes and offer different products.

Comparison costs, then, are most pertinent in switching between retailers. The complexity customers face engaging with the retail market is an issue that has been raised in broader reforms. Many customers find the retail market complex and confusing and have difficulty comparing alternative offers and/or retailers. Comparison costs are distinct from transaction costs and a significant barrier to customer engagement. These costs include the time and effort required to understand and compare different offers from different retailers that might have varied pricing structures and characteristics.

The AEMC is undertaking a forward-looking review, called the pricing review, to consider future electricity products and services, and the prices that consumers pay for these.[75] The objective of the pricing review is to ensure that the pricing framework supports the availability of the products and services that consumers want in the future, while also delivering a lower-cost system for all consumers. We are investigating if and how this review can address issues in the retail market to ensure the products and services needed will be available.

While switching between retailers is not within scope for this review, we consider that our final rule will have a positive impact in this regard. Evidence from BETA's evaluation research shows that the deemed better offer message is effective in prompting customers to visit the Energy Made Easy website.[76] Energy Made Easy is one of the ways in which comparison costs are simplified for customers, and encouraging greater engagement with it reduces comparison costs for consumers. Furthermore, improved visibility of the deemed better offer also reduces comparison costs for customers. Retailers are required to provide, where available, information on the cheapest plan a customer can access. This represents an opportunity for customers to save without needing to switch retailers or actively compare with other plans.

B.1.1 The AER is working to mitigate the duplicate plan name issue

Duplicate plan names create confusion with the better offer message

The complexities associated with comparing plans is exacerbated by the reuse of plan names. Particularly in regard to the deemed better offer message, customers are confused by the presentation of opportunities to save by switching to a plan that has the same name as the plan they are currently on.[77]

75 AEMC, [The pricing review: Electricity pricing for a consumer-driven future]

76 BETA, Better Bills impact report, 6 August 2025, p. 31.

77 CHOICE, The Power of Confusion: CHOICE 'super' complaint on energy plans, May 2025, p. 11.

In the ACCC's December 2024 Inquiry into the NEM report, they raised the issue that customers may not understand the deemed better offer message as the deemed better offer may present an alternative plan with the same name as the plan they are currently on.[78] The report further suggests that this may be a key barrier to the BBG resulting in improved product switching rates among customers. This issue was again raised in the proponent's submission to the consultation paper, and has been discussed in several stakeholder meetings.[79]

The AER has implemented an interim solution

The AER has published a paper outlining their interim solution to an issue that has arisen in relation to switching to a better offer several times.[80]

The AER's decision is to require retailers who reuse plan names to provide additional tier one information on customers' bills.[81] This information is to be provided under the deemed better offer message, and will state that customers may still have access to the quoted savings, even if the plan name is the same, and that customers should contact their retailer to find out more.

This is an interim decision to address this issue in the short term. A more permanent solution, which may or may not differ from the current approach, will be implemented with the completion of the ongoing reviews of the Retail Pricing Information Guidelines (RPIG) and the BBG. RPIG is responsible for the marketing and naming of retail plans and the plan information that retailers must provide. The BBG outlines how retailers must provide information on bills. The AER is thus best placed to manage this issue through one or both of these guidelines.

On 19 August 2025, the ACCC published a response to a complaint submitted by CHOICE on 21 May 2025 which specifically identified the issues caused by duplicate plan names.[82] The ACCC in their response identified the AER's ongoing process to address this issue as the most appropriate pathway, and will not be investigating this issue further.[83]

This rule change represents a mutual benefit with the work the AER is conducting to enhance the efficacy of the BBG. Through improving the visibility of the deemed better offer message, this rule will amplify the benefits of the BBG. That is to say, to the degree which the BBG increases the likelihood that a customer who sees the deemed better offer message will switch to the deemed better offer, visit Energy Made Easy, or otherwise engage in the retail market, increasing the number of customers who see the message will increase customer engagement in the market.

Similarly, the AER's work to resolve the duplicate naming issue removes a barrier currently faced by customers to switching. This improves the efficacy of the deemed better offer message in engaging otherwise disengaged customers. This, in turn, will enhance the efficacy of this rule in improving customer engagement in the market and reducing the number of customers who could pay less through switching.

B.2 Several stakeholders proposed to require automated switching

As discussed in the draft determination, several stakeholders expressed a desire to require retailers to automatically switch their customers to the deemed better offer. Explicit Informed Consent (EIC) requirements enshrined in the NERL preclude us from considering this option. EIC is

78 ACCC, Inquiry into the National Electricity Market, December 2024, p. 54.
79 Federal Minister for Climate Change and Energy, submission to the Consultation Paper, 4 March 2025.
80 AER, Section 37 decision for retailers re-using plan names, 23 May 2025.
81 AER, Section 37 decision for retailers re-using plan names, 23 May 2025.
82 CHOICE, The Power of Confusion: 'super complaint' on energy plans, 21 May 2025.
83 ACCC, Further Action Notice - Designated Complaint -CHOICE, 19 August 2025, p. 3.

an important consumer protection that the AEMC does not have the power to remove or amend. Any change to explicit informed consent would need to be carefully considered through a review of the National Energy Customer Framework (NECF). Any reforms to EIC to ensure it is fit for purpose for the future, need to be done in a holistic way rather than via incremental reform. The current review of the evolution of the consumer protection framework through the Energy Minister's Better Energy Customer Experiences (BECE) process, provides an opportunity to examine this issue further. JEC and EWON, EWOQ, EWOSA expressed a desire for improved outcomes for consumers in this regard, but acknowledged that reforms to EIC should take place in other ongoing workstreams, such as BECE.[84]

The final rule for *Assisting hardship customers* includes a new principle that sets out a clear and direct obligation on retailers to ensure that where the hardship customer is not on the retailer's lowest cost deemed better offer, the hardship customer will be no financially worse off than if they were on the deemed better offer.[85] The final rule affords flexibility to the retailer in how they must meet this new principle — either by:

- providing a financial benefit under their current plan, such as a downward price adjustment so that the total bill would be no more than if they were on the deemed better offer that is lower cost than the offer the hardship customer is on if it is available, enduring discount or credit where they cannot obtain EIC to move to the deemed better offer, or
- obtaining EIC and moving a hardship customer onto the deemed better offer as per existing mechanisms in the NERL.

This reflects the vulnerable status of hardship customers, and the fact that these customers face more significant barriers to switching than other customers. The EIC provisions under the NERL are an important consumer protection, and we would not recommend changes that weaken EIC. Any reforms to EIC to ensure it is fit for purpose for the future, need to be done in a holistic way rather than via incremental reform. ECA in their submission to the draft determination consider that a similar mechanism to that taken for the hardship rule change should apply for all customers.[86] As discussed in section 2.3.1, we do not consider this approach has merit when applied to customers more broadly.

Stakeholders in their submissions to the draft determination acknowledged that EIC requirements are enshrined in the NERL, and are not within the purview of the AEMC to amend.

84 JEC, submission to the draft determination, 31 July, 2025, p. 2.
EWON, EWOQ & EWOSA, submission to the draft determination, 30 July 2025, p. 2.

85 AEMC, Assisting hardship customers, rule determination, June 2025.

86 ECA, submission to the draft determination, 31 July 2025, p. 5.

C Rule making process

A standard rule change request includes the following stages:

- a proponent submits a rule change request
- the Commission initiates the rule change process by publishing a consultation paper and seeking stakeholder feedback
- stakeholders lodge submissions on the consultation paper and engage through other channels to make their views known to the AEMC project team
- the Commission publishes a final determination and draft rule (if relevant)
    - stakeholders lodge submissions on the draft determination and engage through other channels to make their views known to the AEMC project team
- the Commission publishes a final determination and final rule (if relevant).

You can find more information on the rule change process on our website.[87]

C.1 The process to date

On 6 February 2025, the Commission published a notice advising of the initiation of the rule making process and consultation in respect of the rule change request.[88] The Commission also published a consultation paper identifying specific issues for consultation. The Commission received 17 submissions on the consultation paper. Issues raised in these submissions were summarised and responded to in the draft rule determination. On 15 May, the Commission published a notice under s 266 of the NERL to extend the publication of the draft determination to 19 June 2025. On 12 June 2025, the Commission published a draft rule determination including a draft rule. The Commission received 12 submissions on the draft rule determination. Issues raised in submissions are discussed and responded to throughout this final rule determination.

87 See our website for more information on the rule change process: https://www.aemc.gov.au/our-work/changing-energy-rules

88 This notice was published under section [95 of the NEL/303 of the NGL/251 of the NERL].

D Legal requirements to make a rule

This appendix sets out the relevant legal requirements under the NERL for the Commission to make a final rule determination.

D.1 Final rule determination and final rule

In accordance with section 259 of the NERL, the Commission has made this final rule determination for a more preferable final rule in relation to the rule proposed by the Hon Chris Bowen MP, in his capacity as Chair of the Energy and Climate Change Ministerial Council.

The Commission's reasons for making this final rule determination are set out in Chapter 4.

A copy of the more preferable final rule is attached to and published with this final determination. Its key features are described in Chapter 3.

D.2 Power to make the rule

The Commission is satisfied that the more preferable final rule falls within the subject matter about which the Commission may make rules.

The more preferable final rule falls within section 237 of the NERL as it relates to s.237(1)(a).

D.3 Commission's considerations

In assessing the rule change request the Commission considered:

- its powers under the NERL to make the final rule
- the rule change request
- submissions received during first round consultation
- the Commission's analysis as to the ways in which the final rule will or is likely to contribute to the achievement of the NERO
- submissions received during second round consultations
- the extent to which the rule is compatible with the development and application of consumer protections for small customers

There is no relevant Ministerial Council on Energy (MCE) statement of policy principles for this rule change request.[89]

D.4 Civil penalty provisions and conduct provisions

The Commission cannot create new civil penalty provisions or conduct provisions. However, it may recommend to the Energy Ministers' Meeting that new or existing provisions of the NERL be classified as civil penalty provisions or conduct provisions.

89 Under s. 225 of the NERL the AEMC must have regard to any relevant MCE statement of policy principles in making a rule. The MCE is referenced in the AEMC's governing legislation and is a legally enduring body comprising the Federal, State and Territory Ministers responsible for energy. On 1 July 2011, the MCE was amalgamated with the Ministerial Council on Mineral and Petroleum Resources. In December 2013, it became known as the Council of Australian Government (COAG) Energy Council. In May 2020, the Energy National Cabinet Reform Committee and the Energy Ministers' Meeting were established to replace the former COAG Energy Council.

The NERL sets out a three-tier penalty structure for civil penalty provisions in the NERL and the NERR.[90] A Decision Matrix and Concepts Table,[91] approved by Energy Ministers, provide a decision-making framework that the Commission applies, in consultation with the AER, when assessing whether to recommend that provisions of the NERR should be classified as civil penalty provisions, and if so, under which tier.

Where the final rule amends a provision that is currently classified as a civil penalty provision (as set out in the table below), the Commission does not propose to recommend to the Energy Ministers' Meeting any changes to the classification of this provision. The AER has indicated it supports the Commission not recommending any changes to the classification of this provision.

Table D.1: Civil penalty provision recommendatio

Rule	Description of rule	Proposed classification	Reason
Subrule 25(1) of the NERR	The draft rule amends the existing civil penalty provision at subrule 25(1) by including a reference to any written communications relating to and sent at the same time as a bill.	Tier 3 civil penalty provision: recommend retain existing tier.	This increases the visibility of the comparative information the AER requires retailers to provide under the billing guideline by extending the scope of the guideline to include writen communications relating to and sent at the same time as a bill.

90 Further information is available at https://www.aemc.gov.au/regulation/energy-rules/civil-penalty-tools

91 The Decision Matrix and Concepts Table is available at: https://web.archive.org.au/awa/20210603104757mp_/https://energyministers.gov.au/sites/prod.energycouncil/files/publications/documents/Final%20-%20Civil%20Penalties%20Decision%20Matrix%20and%20Concepts%20Table_Jan%202021.pdf

Abbreviations and defined terms

ACCC	Australian Competition and Consumer Commission
AEMC	Australian Energy Market Commission
AER	Australian Energy Regulator
BBG	Better Bills Guideline
BECE	Better Energy Customer Experiences
BETA	Behavioural Economics Team of the Australian Government
BIT	Behavioural Insights Team
Commission	See AEMC
DCCEEW	Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water
DMO	Default Market Offer
ECA	Energy Consumers Australia
ECMC	Energy and Climate Change Ministerial Council
EIC	Explicit Informed Consent
ESC	Essential Services Commission, Victoria
EWOV	Energy and Water Ombudsman Victoria
JEC	Justice and Equity Centre
NECF	National Energy Customer Framework
NEL	National Electricity Law
NEM	National Electricity Market
NEO	National Electricity Objective
NER	National Electricity Rules
NERL	National Energy Retail Law
NERO	National Energy Retail Objective
NERR	National Energy Retail Rules
Proponent	The individual / organisation who submitted the rule change request to the Commission
RPIG	Retail Pricing Information Guideline