

Family violence victims to access landmark new energy retail protections

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Electricity and gas

In a landmark shift for the energy retail industry, the state's essential services regulator is proposing to change the energy rules to strengthen protections for customers affected by family violence.

The [proposed Energy Retail Code](#) changes would require energy retailers to have a family violence policy and meet minimum standards of conduct to boost protections for residential and small business customers.

The changes, arising out of [recommendation 109 from the Royal Commission into Family Violence](#), would include better training for frontline staff as well as improving account security, and debt management practices.

Commission chairperson Ron Ben-David says the energy sector has supported coordinated action to tackle family violence.

'The commission and the energy industry recognise that it's imperative to go the extra mile to help customers facing personal and financial challenges related to family violence,' he said.

'With these changes, customers affected by family violence will be entitled to safe, supportive and flexible assistance from their energy retailer.'

The proposed code changes would take effect 1 January 2020, giving retailers time to establish the required systems and processes. The commission is also developing a better practice industry guide

to support ongoing improvements in the sector.

In 2018, the commission implemented [similar changes to the water customer service code](#) to better protect water customers experiencing family violence.

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