

Customer protection focus for energy regulator

27 June 2019

Electricity and gas

The state's energy regulator says keeping an eye on how retailers look after vulnerable customers will be a focus of its compliance and enforcement priorities for the coming financial year.

The Essential Services Commission says protecting vulnerable customers from disconnection and debt, ensuring easy access to information and holding energy businesses to account will be a primary focus in the year ahead.

Director of energy Sarah McDowell says high prices, confusing discounts and poor retailer behaviour has eroded consumer trust and confidence.

“Over the next year we will be doing more than ever before to make retailers accountable for rebuilding customers' trust,” she said.

The commission will be focusing on how energy companies comply with new reforms designed to give customers access to a fairer price for electricity ([the Victorian Default Offer](#)) and [greater transparency](#) over their energy deals.

It will continue to closely monitor and take action where energy businesses breach energy rules including overcharging, wrongful disconnections and failing to notify about planned interruptions.

Over the past year, the commission has taken action against three energy retailers, imposing penalties totalling \$340,000 for failing to obtain explicit consent before moving a customer.

After announcing a crackdown in mid-2017, the commission has also taken action by serving penalty

notices worth \$350,000 in total against the state's five electricity distributors for failing to provide customers with adequate notice before turning off the power

Read the Essential Services Commission's [energy compliance and enforcement priorities 2019-20](#).

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