

Strengthening protections for energy customers in embedded networks

19 September 2018

Electricity and gas

People living in apartments, caravan parks and retirement villages who buy their electricity from private networks will be protected under new rules determined by the state's energy regulator.

The Essential Services Commission has finalised [rules applying to embedded electricity networks](#).

The commission's director of energy, Sarah McDowell says it's the next step in a series of reforms aimed at giving better protection to a growing group of energy customers.

“With more than one in eight households living in apartments, over 300 retirement villages and thousands of small businesses, many Victorians are now buying their electricity through private networks.

“This latest decision will ensure these customers have better protections including clear information on their bills and access to help if they're having trouble paying a bill,” she said.

The new rules are another step forward in a process which began with the Victorian Government giving the commission expanded powers and responsibilities in 2017.

This included oversight of this growing sector, providing a [public register](#) so customers can see who their provider is and approving the [Victorian Energy and Water Ombudsman](#) as a dispute resolution provider.

The commission has been working with private network operators, consumer groups, the ombudsman and peak bodies representing embedded network operators and customers over several months to finalise how the new rules will apply.

Commencing 1 January 2019, anyone selling electricity in an embedded network will have to:

- ensure customers are provided with clear information on their electricity plan – including charges – before they agree to sign up
- give customers a separate electricity bill containing details of their energy usage, price and payment options
- provide assistance to customers who are facing difficulty paying their electricity bill
- comply with strict rules for disconnecting customers and taking care of those using life support equipment.

Find out more information about [embedded electricity networks](#).

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