



27 January 2012

Dr Ron Ben-David
Chairperson
Essential Services Commission
Level 2, 35 Spring Street
Melbourne VIC 3000

Dear Dr Ben-David

Performance indicators for customer service

Thank you for your letter of 9 December 2011.

We acknowledge your comments regarding Origin's call centre performance and level of complaints during 2010-11. While service standards for call centre performance and complaints are not regulated, Origin strives to achieve high levels of performance against both of these measures.

Origin's complaint numbers in 2010-11 compared favourably to those of other large retailers. A number of factors have contributed to the increase in complaints when compared with 2009-10:

- Billing complaints have been on the rise across the industry. In large measure, this reflects cost of living pressures on customers generally. In response, we are improving the way we explain energy bills to our customers. We have also increased our levels of assistance to customers through our Power On program, exceeding our regulatory obligations to assist customers who are facing financial hardship.
- Solar complaints rose significantly in 2010-11, to emerge as one of the industry's largest complaint drivers. The rate of solar PV installations continued to rise throughout 2010-11. Origin is a major provider of solar products, with more solar customers than any other energy retailer. Many of the issues raised by solar customers reflect a level of heightened interest that may be expected from highly engaged customers, and the rapid take-up of an emerging product supported by developing industry processes.
- Origin introduced new complaints systems and processes in early 2010 which has led to enhanced complaint capture and reporting. The full impact of this was first seen in the 2010-11 reporting year.

In addition to the impact of increased complaint numbers, call centre performance was also impacted by some significant events during the period, including widespread floods in Victoria and Queensland, which drove spikes in call volumes. Origin has sought to improve its call centre performance with the recruitment of a significant number of new call centre operators.

Please feel free to contact us if you would like to discuss these matters further.

Yours sincerely


Phil Craig
General Manager - Retail