
4 June 2025

Energy Retail Code of Practice review – Response from Albury Wodonga Regional FoodShare



We welcome the opportunity to comment on the Energy Consumer Reforms proposed by the ESC. As a local organisation working with people experiencing financial and social disadvantage, we support changes that make energy more affordable and fairer. We believe that these changes are driven by a genuine desire to help people experiencing financial hardship, and applaud the work of the ESC to this end.

For individuals and families doing it tough, access to simple, fair and affordable energy is not just a financial issue, it impacts their health, wellbeing, and dignity.

In particular, we support:

- Automatically giving customers experiencing payment difficulty the best available energy deal, with the option to opt out.
- Making it simpler and easier for people to switch plans.
- Helping customers access the concessions they are eligible for.
- Including contact details for help services like EWOF on energy bills.
- Phasing out old contracts with unfair conditions or penalties.

At FoodShare we certainly see the need to support vulnerable people with their energy costs and these reforms would help reduce cost pressures and support the wellbeing of the communities we work with.

Since March 2025, FoodShare has been trialling [ReThink Sustainability's](#) Virtual Energy Network (VEN) and we have seen considerable savings.

We plan to launch a Powered by our Community campaign to encourage businesses and homes with excess solar to donate it to FoodShare to reduce our energy costs further (the only challenge is everyone has to be on the one retailer but they are working on removing this barrier).

We hope this initiative will be greatly supported, and once we reach the point of having more energy than needed to support our operations, we plan to open this network up to vulnerable members of our community to reduce their energy costs.

Deakin University is doing a study into [Virtual Energy Networks](#) and I am on the advisory board.

This concept is growing rapidly overseas, and I hope to see the same uptake in Australia.

Yours sincerely

Katrina Pawley
CEO