

11 June 2025

Energy Retail Code of Practice review

We welcome the opportunity to comment on the energy consumer reforms proposed by the Essential Services Commission. As a local organisation working with people experiencing financial and social disadvantage, we support changes that make energy more affordable and fairer.

DIVRS is a not-for-profit volunteer-powered community organisation working with the Darebin community for 50 years. Our mission is to connect people to opportunity, community and support. Our programs reduce financial stress, social isolation and barriers to accessing information. We promote health and wellbeing, inclusion and sustainability and provide opportunities for community participation.

Access to simple, fair and affordable energy is not only a financial issue, it impacts people's health, wellbeing and dignity. In 2023-24, DIVRS worked with over 2,500 households reaching more than 6,000 people. Energy expenses are consistently one of the top reasons people seek support.

Many of the people we work with live in poor energy performing homes and lack the resources or control – such as living in public and private rental - to implement solutions. People are needing to make tough choices about which bills to pay and going without food, medicine and other essentials to pay bills. Lack of digital access and digital literacy also impact people's ability to access the best energy deals, switch plans and access concessions and energy hardship programs.

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 EWOV on energy bills.
- Phasing out old contracts with unfair conditions or penalties.

These reforms would help reduce cost pressures and support the wellbeing of the communities we work with.

Sincerely



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CEO