

7 November 2018

Dr Ron Ben-David
Chairman
Essential Services Commission Victoria
Level 37, 2 Lonsdale Street
Melbourne VIC 3000

Submitted online at: www.esc.vic.gov.au/family-violence

Providing family violence support: Exploring ways energy retailers can provide family violence assistance that is safe and effective.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission in response to the ESC's discussion paper, providing family violence support: Exploring ways energy retailers can provide family violence assistance that is safe and effective.

Momentum Energy is a 100% Australian-owned and operated energy retailer. We pride ourselves on competitive pricing, innovation and outstanding customer service. We retail electricity in Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia, Queensland, the ACT, and on the Bass Strait Islands. We offer competitive rates to both residential and business customers along with a range of innovative energy products and services. We also retail natural gas to Victorian customers.

Momentum Energy is owned by Hydro Tasmania, Australia's largest producer of renewable energy.

Momentum appreciates the ESC's leadership in response to the recommendations of the 2016 Royal Commission into Family Violence. As a provider of an essential service, energy retailers come into contact with all elements of society. Sadly this includes victims/survivors and perpetrators of domestic violence. Similarly, as we are an organisation who is proud of their record of diversity and inclusion, it would be naïve to believe that there are not individuals who have been affected by family violence within our employ and we have and moral duty to understand and cater to their needs.

Relatively recent experiences with customers who may have been at risk of family violence have highlighted the need for appropriate policies and processes to exist to protect all involved. While we are satisfied that in the individual circumstances which arose, Momentum's staff acted in the best interests of the victims/survivors, and management provided appropriate support to the staff members involved, it highlighted the need for a systematic approach to managing these situations. To this end Momentum (as part of the broader Hydro Tasmania group) is undergoing a process of cultural change to build awareness of the issue with a view to becoming a community leader in gender equality, saying no to family violence, and being in a better position to support our customers and staff through instances of family violence.

As a first step on this journey, Hydro Tasmania has released a family and domestic violence support package which we are pleased to confirm aligns closely with the better practice principles articulated in the ESC's discussion paper. While this policy relates primarily to our people, we are committed to building upon the processes we have put in place to assist our customers, to make sure that at the very least, their interactions with Momentum do not exacerbate the web of complexities they need to navigate as a result of family violence.

We are eager to make a real difference in the lives of our customers. The Payment Difficulty Framework, to the extent that this identifies customers whose financial circumstances are due to instances of family violence, will help to ensure that the assistance we provide customers comprises the support that they need. We acknowledge however, that we will need to approach the issue more broadly to ensure that we are in a position to assist victims/survivors whose circumstances are not captured by the framework. We look forward to continuing to support the ESC in its leadership on this egregious societal problem.

If you require any further information with regard to this issue, please contact me on (03) 8612 6433 or email amy.childs@momentum.com.au

Yours sincerely



Amy Childs
Managing Director
Momentum Energy