

Telstra Energy's application for an electricity and gas retail licence

Submissions received through Engage Victoria

1. **Date submitted:** 24 May 2021

Submission written by: Anonymous (Victorian consumer)

What are your views on Telstra Energy entering the retail energy market?

After working for the Telstra Corporation for some 30 years and also a customer of their communication network, I don't believe they conduct their business in a sound and ethical way in relation to customers, and the service that they provide to them, this is clearly shown in the amount of complaints made to the Communication Ombudsman's along with recent ACCC charges in relation to the unconscionable conduct to consumers in the selling of phone plans the penalty handed out was a \$50 million dollar fine, this along with a long history of questionable operating practices & poor customer service clearly demonstrates they are not a fit & proper company to hold these licences.

Do you think Telstra Energy's entry will benefit the long-term interest of Victorian consumers?

No

Comments

Telstra has a long history of poor customer service along with questionable operational procedures along with a poor ethical corporate culture.

Do you think having Telstra Energy as a new retailer in the market will create greater competition?

No

Comments

Just another company amongst a large group trying to make a profit from consumers.

What effect on energy pricing do you think Telstra Energy's entry will have on the market?

Unsure

Do you have any views on Telstra Energy's ability to comply with its regulatory obligations?

Telstra's history speaks for itself, numerous complaints to the Communication Ombudsman office along with numerous ACCC investigations and penalties handed out, clearly shows that they cannot be trusted to follow or to comply to regulatory obligations or also act in an ethical manner.

Is there anything else you think we should consider as we assess Telstra Energy's licence application?

As previously written I believe the points are all relevant in accessing Telstra's application

2. Date submitted: 25 May 2021

Submission written by: Anonymous (Victorian consumer)

What are your views on Telstra Energy entering the retail energy market?

In my view, Telstra's entry into the energy market will be beneficial for the customers by making this space more competitive.

Do you think Telstra Energy's entry will benefit the long-term interest of Victorian consumers?

Yes

Comments

Due to their current portfolio in renewable energy, it will help them bring that approach to the retail market as well. It will help them build using their extensive customer base, sentiment towards climate preservation and maintenance. Not just keeping energy needs in mind, but looking at its long term consequences of those actions before taking further steps.

Do you think having Telstra Energy as a new retailer in the market will create greater competition?

Yes

Comments

Due to their significant customer base. It should create greater competition in the market space. And help consumers save in the process.

What effect on energy pricing do you think Telstra Energy's entry will have on the market?

Unsure

Do you have any views on Telstra Energy's ability to comply with its regulatory obligations?

Telstra has been operating in the telecommunications industry since there has been communication services in Australia. It has always acknowledged its mistakes and did right by the customers.

Is there anything else you think we should consider as we assess Telstra Energy's licence application?

In my view, as long as they comply with necessary documents and plans that are required to grant them the necessary license to retail electricity and gas in Victoria. They should be allowed into the market. We have had retailers enters Victorian market before and not do good by the customer that were not backed by established parent company. So parent company should not weigh so heavily in making the decision to provide their license to operate. In order to... **[incomplete comment]**

3. Date submitted: 2 June 2021

Submission written by: Anonymous (Victorian consumer)

What are your views on Telstra Energy entering the retail energy market?

The application should be rejected. The ACCC has just found them guilty of, and fined them millions of dollars for, unconscionable conduct in their core industry. Don't let them extend this poor behaviour into another industry.

Do you think Telstra Energy's entry will benefit the long-term interest of Victorian consumers?

No

Do you think having Telstra Energy as a new retailer in the market will create greater competition?

No

What effect on energy pricing do you think Telstra Energy's entry will have on the market?

No change

4. Date submitted: 3 June 2021

Submission written by: Anonymous (customer advocate/community organisation)

What are your views on Telstra Energy entering the retail energy market?

There are many retail services available that just provide billing services, this would be one more. We already have too many, in my opinion. Telstra do not have a good track record in dealing with customers, particularly those in hardship, and one concern would be if in arrears with utilities, would that affect their telco services? Many of their outlets are franchised and recent fines indicate they are not to be trusted. It might be that additional pressure brought to bear on consumers when signing up for telco services, "would you like energy with that".

Do you think Telstra Energy's entry will benefit the long-term interest of Victorian consumers?

No

Comments

We already have too many retails services in energy.

What effect on energy pricing do you think Telstra Energy's entry will have on the market?

Prices will be more expensive

Do you have any views on Telstra Energy's ability to comply with its regulatory obligations?

From their telco track record, they need to fix that first before entering into another market.

5. Date submitted: 7 June 2021

Submission written by: Anonymous (Victorian consumer)

What are your views on Telstra Energy entering the retail energy market?

Not thrilled. As a customer of Telstra within the telecommunications sphere, I have concerns about their customer service, operational set up (e.g., call centres overseas and the challenges of getting through to someone who can help you with your queries which adds to consumer stress dealing with this retailer. Energy is an essential service how will they respond to consumer issues if they were to enter this market? Their track record on supporting consumers is far from ideal for an essential service. How will they guarantee that this culture won't carry into yet another retail arm?).

Do you think Telstra Energy's entry will benefit the long-term interest of Victorian consumers?

No

Do you think having Telstra Energy as a new retailer in the market will create greater competition?

No

What effect on energy pricing do you think Telstra Energy's entry will have on the market?

Unsure

6. Date submitted: 13 June 2021

Submission written by: Anonymous (Victorian consumer)

[Redacted for confidentiality]

What are your views on Telstra Energy entering the retail energy market?

Greedy corporation.

Do you think Telstra Energy's entry will benefit the long-term interest of Victorian consumers?

No

Comments

Their customer service is disgusting, and you need to talk to the ACCC, ACMA and TIO before even looking at the rest. ***[Redacted for confidentiality]***

Do you think having Telstra Energy as a new retailer in the market will create greater competition?

No

Comments

Just more bad customer service which we have plenty of.

Do you have any views on Telstra Energy's ability to comply with its regulatory obligations?

They cut corners at every chance they have. I've got many contacts in the Industry that can confirm this.

Is there anything else you think we should consider as we assess Telstra Energy’s licence application?

Don’t do it or have your regulations with not one inch of grey area for them to exploit. Consumers are more vulnerable than ever. Contact me any time for any further information. I dealt with Powercor and their dealing with us farmers after **[Redacted for confidentiality]** so I’m across a lot of issues in the Industry.

[Redacted for confidentiality]

7. Date submitted: 17 June 2021

Submission written by: Anonymous (Victorian consumer)

What are your views on Telstra Energy entering the retail energy market?

Think it will enable them to provide better service levels within their organisation and introducing competitor into the marketplace.

Do you think Telstra Energy’s entry will benefit the long-term interest of Victorian consumers?

Yes

Comments

Greater competition is always good.

Do you think having Telstra Energy as a new retailer in the market will create greater competition?

Yes

Comments

Definitely and would be interesting to see their differentiator in potentially bundling up packages of service offerings.

What effect on energy pricing do you think Telstra Energy’s entry will have on the market?

No change

Do you have any views on Telstra Energy’s ability to comply with its regulatory obligations?

No

Is there anything else you think we should consider as we assess Telstra Energy's licence application?

No

8. Date submitted: 18 June 2021

Submission written by: Anonymous (Victorian consumer)

[Redacted for confidentiality]

What are your views on Telstra Energy entering the retail energy market?

I strongly object.

Given Telstra long history of mis-selling products, poor customer service this is too much of a risk to consumers, myself included.

Do you think Telstra Energy's entry will benefit the long-term interest of Victorian consumers?

No

Do you think having Telstra Energy as a new retailer in the market will create greater competition?

No

What effect on energy pricing do you think Telstra Energy's entry will have on the market?

No change

Do you have any views on Telstra Energy's ability to comply with its regulatory obligations?

I believe that Telstra has a long history of mis selling products and having many complaints to the ombudsman. They do not have a strong enough record to allow growth of the corporation.

9. Date submitted: 25 June 2021

Submission written by: John Cutler (Victorian consumer)

What are your views on Telstra Energy entering the retail energy market?

Thank you for the opportunity. I have mixed views about this application.

1. We live in a free enterprise state so why should Telstra not participate
2. Is it fair that they will use the marketing clout they have in the comms industry to offer discounts for bundled accounts. Which they will as do others
3. Is it fair that they will using the pre existing billing service for comms to on sell at no real cost. Whilst this would be perfectly legal due to the size of Telstra is that an example of unfair trading
4. Due to the size of Telstra and the effective fixed number of customers you would think that smaller energy retailers may fail. Is that in the best interests of the broader community.
5. We have at present the three big boys in the retail sector Origin, AGL and EA. Telstra may become the next. I could write a book about the lack of professional conduct of the three big boys is another big boy going to compound the situation. As suggested it may be to the demise of some smaller retailers?
6. My big issue and I repeat it is the question in regards to the marketing advantage available to Telstra. They have immediate free access into tens of thousands of homes at effectively no cost to them. Is this in the best interests of the general public when we are dealing with an essential service????
7. The service level of Telstra to the broader community in regards to the comms business you would have to describe as appalling.
8. My counter argument is that the public endorse the principle of a free market so let the market sort it out (I don't agree with this principle but it is valid)

Do you think Telstra Energy's entry will benefit the long-term interest of Victorian consumers?

No

Comments

As per my above commentary

Do you think having Telstra Energy as a new retailer in the market will create greater competition?

No

Comments

It will be to the demise of smaller retailers only who provide the competition. Do not tell me that the 3 current big boys do not set pricing.

What effect on energy pricing do you think Telstra Energy's entry will have on the market?

Prices will be more expensive

Do you have any views on Telstra Energy's ability to comply with its regulatory obligations?

Have a look at the performance in the comms sector that will tell you

Is there anything else you think we should consider as we assess Telstra Energy's licence application?

I suspect that you cannot stop them as we do leave in a free enterprise state. Can you limit branding and market penetration ??

10. Date submitted: 29 June 2021

Submission written by: Anonymous (Victorian consumer)

What are your views on Telstra Energy entering the retail energy market?

I think Gas & Electricity are essential services for every Australian and therefore every Australian should have the right to have Gas & Electricity services at a cost equivalent to cost of the generation and supply of these services. I believe these services should be wholly "State" owned and not privatised, like they once were. When governments privatize [sic] state assets, people don't realise that they then have to pay corporations profit margins or purchase shares in a corporation that owns these services when they already previously owned them. Governments are merely bodies representative of the people so government assets are the people's assets. I believe there shouldn't be a retail energy market [sic] as since its inception, energy costs in Australia have sky rocketed. It also reduces the ability, if & when needed, for these costs to be subsidied [sic] by government when they are no longer government owned. Telstra Energy entering the retail energy market is another opportunity for a profit/share holder driven corporation that already has monopolies in markets which it has traditionally manipulated to maximize [sic] profits to further profit from the Australian consumer.

Do you think Telstra Energy's entry will benefit the long-term interest of Victorian consumers?

No

Comments

See above.

Do you think having Telstra Energy as a new retailer in the market will create greater competition?

No

Comments

I think in Australia, where we pay more than every other country for everything, a corporate culture exists where increasing costs to consumers is welcomed by all competitors as they all increase their profits, rather than competition making it cheaper for consumers. Having the means to do so, once entering the market, Telstra Energy will be able to start taking over other retailers until they once again have another monopoly in the market. Then they will dictate the costs to consumers to maximise their profits.

What effect on energy pricing do you think Telstra Energy's entry will have on the market?

Prices will be more expensive

Do you have any views on Telstra Energy's ability to comply with its regulatory obligations?

I think Telstra has a history of whenever the opportunity arises & even demanding these opportunities themselves, to dictate what these regulatory obligations are going to be. So sure, Telstra may well comply, but only once Telstra determine what they are complying with.

Is there anything else you think we should consider as we assess Telstra Energy's licence application?

As Telstra Energy have already entered the Energy Generation market, to also enter the Energy Retail market will give them the opportunity to make as much profit as they determine, rather than competing for it. They'll wholesale to other retailers but always manipulate them to secure their own profits like they always have in the telecommunications market.