

Energy retailers must rebuild community trust

The state's energy regulator says electricity and gas companies must take responsibility for rebuilding the community's trust in retail energy markets.

The Essential Services Commission has outlined proposed changes to the energy rules, to put into effect a number of key recommendations of the 2017 [independent review of the Victorian retail energy market](#) as supported by the Victorian Government.

Chairperson Ron Ben-David says the commission is proposing a fundamental shift in how energy retailers will be required to engage with their customers.

"There is now overwhelming evidence that the retail energy market is not delivering good outcomes for customers," said Dr Ben-David.

Dr Ben-David says energy retailers must be held responsible for restoring consumer confidence and trust in the market.

"Our draft decision isn't just about providing more information to customers, in reality we're making retailers take responsibility for what happens to their customers," he said.

"Today, we're moving beyond simple tick-the-box regulation and implementing a new responsibility based model. It will now be up to retailers to show they can earn the community's confidence and trust," he said.

The proposed changes would require retailers to:

- communicate a 'best offer' to each customers at least twice a year – to ensure customers know if they're on the right deal for them
- provide advance notice of any changes to prices, discounts or benefits so customers get 'no more surprises'
- honour a new customer entitlement to provide customers with clear advice to help them find the contract that best suit them.

The commission is looking for feedback on the [proposed changes to the energy rules](#).

Submissions should be sent to retailenergyreview@esc.vic.gov.au by Friday, 5 October 2018.

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