

Regulator considering rule change to address estimated bill shock

Victoria's energy regulator is considering changing the rules to address community concerns about estimated bills after 5,000 complaints were made to retailers about the practice in 2017.

The Essential Services Commission latest energy market report shows despite making up less than 10 per cent of all billing complaints, more than 5,000 households and 500 small businesses had complained about estimated billing to their retailer.

Director of energy Sarah McDowell says most complaints were about estimated bills being much higher than expected.

"There were also complaints about high 'catch up' bills being issued after earlier estimates were too low," she said.

Ms McDowell says the commission is considering changing the rules so customers can provide their own meter reads, reducing the need for estimating.

"This is already allowed by some retailers but it's discretionary so we'll be talking to customers and retailers over coming months about changing this rule," she said.

The commission's latest energy market report - a snapshot of activity over the last three months – also provides a summary on:

- our enforcement action against energy companies who have not complied with the rules
- the latest information on customer disconnections
- an update on the latest feed-in tariff rates offered by retailers for exported electricity
- new licences issued to energy businesses
- our actions to improve outcomes for Victorian energy consumers
- reports and decisions we have released in and since the June quarter.

Unfortunately, some of the data reported in this update, such as the number of customer disconnections, is incomplete due to the failure of AGL to provide data to the commission in time. We have highlighted the sections that exclude AGL data.

Go to www.esc.vic.gov.au/victorian-energy-market-report for all the commission's energy market reports.

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