



19 October 2018

Alex Kroon
Manager Projects
Economic Regulation Authority
PO Box 8469
Perth BC WA 6849

Online: www.erawa.com.au/consultation

Dear Alex

Amended Financial Hardship Policy Guidelines for electricity and gas licences

Alinta Sales Pty Ltd (**Alinta Energy**) is pleased to provide comment to the Economic Regulation Authority (**ERA**) on the proposed amended *Financial Hardship Policy Guidelines – Electricity & Gas Licences (Guidelines)*.

Alinta Energy notes that whilst it is the retailer's responsibility to develop and maintain a Hardship Policy and Hardship Procedure to assist customers experiencing financial hardship, it is ultimately a customer's responsibility to meet their financial obligations; we can only assist where the customer is experiencing genuine hardship and makes significant effort to clear their debt.

We have one comment on the clause noted below.

Clause 4.2 Identifying customers who are experiencing financial hardship

Clause 4.2 has been amended to include that the retailer's call centre staff could refer customers who may be in financial hardship to the retailer's specialist hardship team. Alinta Energy has specially trained customer service representatives who are able to make an immediate assessment as to whether a customer is experiencing payment difficulties or is in financial hardship. If a customer is assessed as being in financial hardship they are then referred to our specialist Hardship Team.

To refer all customers who may be in financial hardship directly to our specialist Hardship Team in the first instance would put undue pressure on our Hardship Team. We propose this paragraph be amended to ensure there is not a requirement to refer customers who may be in hardship directly to the retailer's hardship team before an initial assessment is conducted by trained staff who may operate outside the hardship team.

If you have any questions concerning this submission please contact me on 9486 3191 or catherine.rousch@alintaenergy.com.au.

Yours sincerely

Catherine Rousch
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Alinta Energy

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