



Media Statement

20 February 2023

New protections for electricity customers come into effect today

New protections for electricity customers in the *Code of Conduct for the Supply of Electricity to Small Use Customers 2023* come into effect today.

The Code regulates the conduct of retailers and distributors that supply electricity to residential and small business customers. The new protections require electricity retailers to:

- extend assistance in managing payments to all customers who request it, including payment extensions and instalment plans.
- set a minimum bill debt of \$300 before a residential customer can be disconnected for non-payment.
- provide targeted support and additional flexibility for customers on pre-payment meters, who are usually located in remote areas.

The new protections are particularly important given data [recently published by the ERA](#), which shows increasing levels of bill debt for Western Australian residential customers. For example, up to 30 June 2022, Synergy customers' average debt reached \$766, its highest level in six years, and Horizon Power customers' average debt reached \$974. Average bill debt for customers in hardship programs also remained higher than pre-pandemic levels.

Dedicated support for electricity customers who are experiencing family and domestic violence

The amendments include specific protections for residential customers who are vulnerable because they are experiencing family and domestic violence. Under the new Code, electricity retailers, including Synergy and Horizon Power, must:

- publish a family violence policy and implement measures to protect the privacy of customers experiencing family and domestic violence.
- train staff on how to identify customers who may be affected by family and domestic violence and provide assistance to those customers.
- not disconnect customers who are affected by family and domestic violence for a period of nine months.

About the ERA

The ERA is Western Australia's independent economic regulator. We aim to ensure the delivery of water, electricity, gas and rail services in Western Australia is in the long-term interest of consumers.

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