



# Media Statement

23 August 2023

## New protections proposed for WA gas customers

The Economic Regulation Authority has proposed amendments to the Compendium of Gas Customer Licence Obligations (Compendium), which will greatly expand the protections offered to residential gas customers in Western Australia.

The Compendium regulates the conduct of retailers and distributors that supply gas to residential and small business customers, and sets service standards in areas such as billing, payments, financial hardship, disconnections, reconnections and complaints handling.

The proposed amendments include:

- New protections for residential customers experiencing family and domestic violence, including privacy protections, a nine-month moratorium on disconnections and retailer staff training.
- Setting a minimum bill debt of \$300 before a residential customer can be disconnected for non-payment.
- Extending the assistance measures offered to customers experiencing payment difficulties to all customers who request them. This assistance includes payment extensions and instalment plans.

The proposed amendments will align the customer protections offered in the Compendium, to the extent possible, with the Electricity Code, which was extensively reviewed and updated in February 2023. This will ensure that gas customers receive the same standards and level of protection as electricity customers.

Chair Steve Edwell said, “It is imperative that suppliers of energy to end use customers offer appropriate customer protections when they supply these essential services. This is especially so for vulnerable customers experiencing financial hardship, and family and domestic violence.

“Earlier this year the ERA amended the Electricity Code of Conduct to significantly enhance protections for residential and small business electricity customers across Western Australia. We are now proposing to extend these protections to gas customers.

“The proposed protections include a requirement that all gas retailers have a family and domestic violence policy, which will ensure that the retailer’s staff are suitably trained to deal efficiently and sensitively with customers experiencing violence at home.”

The ERA is inviting stakeholders, including gas customers, to comment on the proposed amendments to align the Compendium with the Electricity Code and other potential amendments raised by stakeholders, which are detailed in the draft decision. Consultation is open until **4:00pm WST, Wednesday, 20 September 2023.**

The ERA anticipates that the amended Compendium will commence in January 2024.

## **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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