



Improving the accuracy of customer transfers

Stakeholder submissions invited on new rule change request

The AEMC has commenced consultation on a rule change request from COAG Energy Council which seeks to improve the experience of customers when transferring to new electricity or gas retailers.

Summary and background

The rule change request aims to help customers in two ways:

- reduce errors and delays in transfers to new retailers by introducing an address standard for address data used when customers switch retailers; and
- require retailers to promptly resolve erroneous customer transfers (where a transfer is requested but the wrong customer is transferred).

These proposals are based on two recommendations from the AEMC's Review of Electricity Customer Switching (published in 2014). This review found issues with the accuracy and timeliness of customer transfers. The review made six recommendations to improve specific aspects of the customer transfer process, including the two recommendations in this rule change request.

The review focused on transfers of electricity customers, but the COAG Energy Council asked the AEMC to consider whether the proposed changes should be implemented for customers in the gas markets as well.

The AEMC has published a consultation paper that seeks stakeholder feedback on a number of issues relating to the address standard and the process for resolving erroneous transfers.

Consultation has also started on a separate rule change request on another of the review's recommendations, which is to allow customers to transfer to new retailers more quickly by using an estimated meter read rather than waiting for an actual meter read.

Proposal to introduce an address standard

When a customer requests a transfer to a new retailer, the new retailer has to match the address given by the customer with the address on file for the customer's meter. The review found that the forms of these addresses may differ, and that inaccurate address matching can cause delays or errors in transfers.

The COAG Energy Council proposes to introduce an address standard in order to reduce transfer errors and delays caused by address mismatches. Several types of address standards which include unique locational identifiers are currently available in Australia.

The consultation paper requests feedback on specific issues relating to the proposal for an address standard, including the extent to which such a standard would reduce transfer errors and delays, what information should be included in the standard, and how the standard should be implemented for new and existing address data.

Proposal to improve resolution of erroneous transfers

The COAG Energy Council proposes that whichever retailer the wrongly transferred customer first contacts (whether it is the customer's original retailer or the new one) must promptly resolve the erroneous transfer.

This is intended to reduce the burden currently borne by erroneously transferred customers, who commonly have to spend considerable time contacting both old and new retailers to resolve the issue.

The consultation paper requests feedback on specific issues relating to the proposal for resolving erroneous transfers, including whether different requirements should apply to the outgoing retailer and the new retailer (as they have different roles in the customer transfer process), and if so, what requirements would be appropriate.

Consultation process

The consultation paper and the rule change request are available on the AEMC's website. Stakeholders are invited to make written submissions in response to issues raised in the consultation paper and the rule change request by no later than **9 June 2016**.

The consultation period, usually four weeks, has been extended to six weeks as this rule change request and the rule change request on estimated meter reads are open for submissions at the same time.

For information contact:

AEMC Director, **Ed Chan** (02) 8296 7839

AEMC Senior Adviser, **Lily Mitchell** (02) 8296 7809

Media: Communication Manager, Prudence Anderson 0404 821 935 or (02) 8296 7817

28 April 2016