

From: Lauren Clemett [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, 27 January 2020 10:56 AM
To: Energy Reform
Subject: Regulatory Impact Statement – Embedded Networks

Categories: Green Category

In response to your proposed review.

1. What type of energy disputes are likely to arise between ‘exempt sellers’ and their customers?

At [REDACTED] there are 159 apartments and a dispute between the Body Corporate Committee and the reseller, with a number of owners requesting the Ombudsmen's assistance to review contractual arrangements and help settle the dispute where two resellers have been appointed to do the same job, leading to the overcharging of energy to a number of lots.

The Ombudsman was also asked for advice and assistance when owners had utilities cut off by the Body Corporate Committee during this dispute.

As an embedded Network, owners and residents were unable to source information, assistance, advice or help from anyone, and were pushed from one department or organisation to the next with no positive outcome.

2. What dispute resolution mechanisms do embedded network customers currently use in order to have their energy disputes settled? Are customers aware of and successfully using existing mechanisms? Are there any issues with the current mechanisms?

There is no mechanism complaints by for owners and residents at resorts like [REDACTED], with an Embedded Network. In our case, the BCCM Commissioner sent us to the Ombudsman, the Ombudsman sent us to the energy reseller, who sent us to the Body Corporate Committee, who sent us to the BCCM...Qcat were not interested as it is Body Corporate.

We currently have no avenue for complaints and have been charged twice for our energy, and have had energy cut off (gas hot water heating), forcing us to pay twice. We have tried with every avenue and been told that because we have an embedded network, we are unable to be advised or helped in this matter. There is no mechanism for us.

We currently have a request with our Body Corporate Committee to be refunded the double-billed amounts but have not heard from them.

3. Are there any other stakeholder groups that the department should consider, and consult with, when assessing potential options for embedded network customers?

The Body Corporate Committees, and Body Corporate Management Companies who need to clearly understand the rules and legislation around supply and billing of energy.

4. Is the predicted number of complaints reasonable based on the information available?

Given there is currently no avenue for complaints with an Embedded Network, even one issue makes it reasonable for changing the current system.

5. Do you agree with the proposal for all residential ‘exempt sellers’ to be automatically deemed to be Energy Ombudsman scheme participants?

Yes, anyone involved in the supply and billing of energy should have an avenue for complaints to be heard and managed via the Ombudsman.

6. Do you agree with the proposal not to require ‘exempt sellers’ to pay an annual participation (membership) fee? If not, please explain why.

Yes, as part of their service level agreement, costs to include participation in the regulations for their industry should be part of their business. This occurs in the telecommunications industry, so it should be the same with energy (gas and electricity).

7. Do you agree that the proposed fees for ‘exempt sellers’ under Option 3 are fair and reasonable, and proportionate to the seriousness of the issue or complaint that an ‘exempt seller’s’ customer may have? If not, please explain why.

Yes, we believe the proportionate fees are reasonable. It helps energy resellers and suppliers to act on complaints and mediate to ensure the costs do not escalate.

8. Are there any other user-pays fee options the department should consider?

Perhaps a fee for vexatious complaints by occupiers so the Ombudsman is not overwhelmed with the usual Body Corporate disputes which can be based on private disputes that have escalated. It might put off a few if they know they may be charged for this type of action if they simply seek to threaten their energy reseller by "going to the ombudsman" and do not have grounds for a valid complaint.

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