

30 January 2015

NSW Fair Trading

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Parramatta NSW 2124

By email: policy@finance.nsw.gov.au

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on *Residential (Land Lease) Communities Regulation 2014*. We provide feedback only about the aspects that relate to EWON jurisdiction.

The Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW (EWON) investigates and resolves complaints from customers of electricity and gas providers in NSW, and some water providers. *The Customer Service Standards for the Supply of Electricity to Permanent Residents of Residential Parks 2006* states that:

Where the dispute relates to the supply of electricity by the park owner, a resident may, if attempts to resolve the dispute with the park owner have been unsuccessful, make application to the Energy and Water Ombudsman (NSW) Ltd (EWON) for investigation of the complaint.¹

EWON understands that the Customer Service Standards were updated in 2014 to ensure that the relevant sections of the National Energy Customer Framework (NECF) were incorporated while waiting for the proposed regulation to be published.

The key protection in the Customer Service Standards, that the NECF does not provide for, is that where the supply of electricity is less than 60 amps, a discount applies on the electricity availability charges payable by a home owner.

For this reason, EWON supports the inclusion of this protection in the proposed regulations via *Clause 14 Discounted service availability charge where less than 60 amps of electricity supplied*. This provision continues the current arrangements, and provides an added level of protection for residents who do not have the benefits of the competitive electricity market, because of the nature of their supply arrangements.

¹ Page 2 Customer Service Standards for the Supply of Electricity to Permanent Residents of Residential Parks March 2006 (Revised July 2014)



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We note that the other significant consumer protections for residents provided by the Customer Service Standards are now mostly covered by the Australian Energy Regulator's (AER) *Exempt Selling Guidelines*. Two protections not covered by this AER guideline are the ban on late payment fees and the requirement that disconnection can only occur after the operator has sought an order in the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal. EWON believes that it is imperative that these protections should remain.

If you would like to discuss this matter further, please contact me or Emma Keene, General Manager Policy and Community Engagement, on 8218 5250.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Janine Young". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Janine Young
Ombudsman
Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW