

# Public engagement summary: Electricity Distribution Code customer service standards review

## Project background

In developing this package of reforms, we sought to enhance and improve customers' experiences with both their retailer and distributor. We have done this by focusing on:

- ensuring customer preferences are embedded in the new customer protections framework
- implementing reforms that promote the long-term interests of customers, including those who might be experiencing vulnerability such as life support customers.

The reforms in our final decision will also address key issues raised by stakeholders including:

- ensuring electricity retailers provide customer contact details, including electronic details, to distributors in a timely way
- modernising the communication channels distributors can use to notify customers about planned outages by focusing on customer preferences, while protecting life support customers
- giving distributors and customers flexibility to interrupt supply at short notice, subject to explicit informed consent and record keeping obligations
- ensuring customers are notified when planned outages are cancelled in many circumstances
- modernising and updating our guaranteed service level scheme in line with community expectations.

## How we engaged



### Key dates

- 13 August 2019: issues paper released and first phase of consultation opened
- 13 September 2019: consultation on the issues paper closed
- 7 May 2020: draft decision released and second phase of consultation opened
- May and June 2020: one-on-one meetings with stakeholders

- 29 June 2020: public webinar to discuss our proposals and get stakeholder feedback
- 3 July 2020: consultation on the draft decision closed
- July to October 2020: meetings with stakeholders to discuss submissions.



### **Methodology**

- feedback and submissions via Engage Victoria for both the issues paper and draft decision
- one-on-one meetings with key stakeholders
- regional public forums in Traralgon and Ballarat
- public webinar
- customer survey about planned outage communication preferences.



### **Number of participants**

- 1,103 views of our Engage Victoria consultation page by 615 visitors
- meetings with key stakeholders included:
  - all five electricity distributors
  - eight retailers
  - two consumer groups, and
  - the Energy and Water Ombudsman (Victoria).
- four participants at the public regional forums
- 36 participants at the webinar including one member of the public and representatives from:
  - all five electricity distributors
  - 10 retailers
  - four consumer groups
  - Energy Safe Victoria
  - the Energy and Water Ombudsman (Victoria)
  - the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning.



### **Number of submissions received (written, verbal)**

- issues paper: 21 written submissions
- draft decision: 21 written submissions
- verbal submissions were provided throughout the consultation process in meetings and events.

## Summary of key feedback

We asked	What stakeholders said	What we did
We proposed to require retailers to provide distributors with customer information including electronic contact details.	<p>One retailer suggested the language in the code drafting should align with the existing procedures.</p> <p>One retailer said that the requirement for phone numbers should be limited to two numbers only as this is all that can be accommodated in the Australian Energy Market Operator's existing business-to-business procedures.</p> <p>Some retailers did not consider that the monthly reconciliation process was needed when customer details are provided on a transaction by transaction basis.</p> <p>Some retailers queried what safeguards were in place for the use of customer information.</p>	<p>We aligned the information sharing requirements with the Australian Energy Market Operator's existing business-to-business procedures.</p> <p>We removed the monthly reconciliation requirement.</p> <p>We have included protections for customer information so that distributors do not misuse customer details.</p>
We proposed to adjust the guaranteed service level scheme payment thresholds based on outage data from the regulatory information notices submitted to the Australian Energy Regulator.	Distributors did not support our approach and provided modelling which showed that our proposed scheme would significantly increase the cost of the scheme.	We analysed 36 million rows of smart meter data covering five years. This data was much more detailed than that used for our original analysis. This work showed that the scheme's payment thresholds should largely stay at their current levels.
We proposed to require distributors and retailers to make timely guaranteed service level payments to customers.	Some concerns were raised about the time frames to make payments.	We adjusted payment time frames to account for the practicalities of implementing the new rules while ensuring customers still receive timely payments.
We proposed to allow notifications for planned outages via electronic channels if a customer provided explicit informed consent.	Distributors said that the explicit informed consent requirement would be a barrier to uptake. Other stakeholders said we should focus more on customer preferences.	We have removed the explicit informed consent requirement and instead enabled customers to nominate their preferred contact methods.

## Our engagement events

### Our public forum in Traralgon in October 2019



### Our public webinar in June 2020



## Online engagement

### LinkedIn



Essential Services Commission

3,610 followers

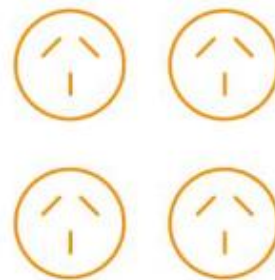
6mo •



Our electricity distribution code draft decision proposes better notification for planned outages, bringing forward payments under the guaranteed service level scheme so that Victorians are paid sooner, and increasing payment levels. Find out more and have your say: [https://lnkd.in/dn\\_284C](https://lnkd.in/dn_284C)

Kate Symons Simon Corden Rebecca Billings John Hamill Sarah McDowell  
Michelle Bryne Christopher Stuart-Walker Aaron Yuen

#energy



More notice on planned outages to keep Victorians better informed

esc.vic.gov.au • 2 min read

15

Like Comment Share Send

## Engage Victoria

A snapshot of our Engage Victoria consultation page after consultation on the draft decision closed.

The screenshot shows the Engage Victoria website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the logo on the left and links for Home, About Us, Consultations, Contact, Sign in, Register, and Search. Below the navigation bar, a breadcrumb trail reads 'Home > Electricity Distribution Code review'. The main heading is 'Electricity Distribution Code review' in a large teal font, with a sub-heading 'Have your say on how the Essential Services Commission ensures distribution of electricity in Victoria continues to be done in a safe efficient and reliable manner.' Below this, the page is divided into two columns. The left column contains an 'Overview' section with three paragraphs of text, followed by a section titled 'How does this affect you?' with a bulleted list of customer protections, and a section titled 'What have we done so far?' with a paragraph. The right column features a 'Timeline' section with a vertical line and circular markers, listing six key events from April 2019 to December 2019.

**ENGAGE VICTORIA** Home About Us Consultations Contact Sign in Register Search

Home > Electricity Distribution Code review

Essential Services Commission

## Electricity Distribution Code review

Have your say on how the Essential Services Commission ensures distribution of electricity in Victoria continues to be done in a safe efficient and reliable manner.

### Overview

The Essential Services Commission is reviewing the [Electricity Distribution Code](#), which sets out the requirements for the distribution of electricity in Victoria.

The commission is consulting on proposed changes to the Electricity Distribution Code to strengthen the protections for customers relating to planned outages and the guaranteed service level scheme for customers who receive poor service from their distributor.

The review will update the state's electricity rules on how distribution businesses manage the network and ensure the Electricity Distribution Code reflects the changing energy landscape and evolving industry.

**Consultation on the Electricity Distribution Code review customer service standards draft decision closed on 2 July 2020.**

### How does this affect you?

The code covers protections for customers such as:

- when customers can be compensated for low reliability, supply restoration, missed appointments and delayed new connections, and
- when customers must be notified about planned supply outages, including cancelled outages.

### What have we done so far?

The commission released its draft decision on the changes to the technical standards in the Electricity Distribution Code on 3 December 2019 and consulted on them until 20 January 2019.

### Timeline

- ✓ **Approach paper released**  
April 2019
- ✓ **Issues paper released**  
August 2019
- ✓ **Issues paper consultation opens**  
13 August 2019
- ✓ **Issues paper consultation closes**  
13 September 2019
- ✓ **Draft decision - technical standards released**  
3 December 2019
- ✓ **Consultation on draft decision - technical standards opens**  
3 December 2019
- ✓ **Consultation on draft decision - technical**