



# St Vincent de Paul Society

*good works*

## TELSTRA APPLICATION FOR LICENCED RETAILER FOR GAS AND ELECTRICITY

**Date: 14/06/2021**

To who it may concern,

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission on behalf of the St Vincent de Paul Society, Victoria to the Essential Services Commission consultation on Telstra's application to become a licenced retailer for gas and electricity.

We support Telstra's application to enter the Victorian energy market as a retailer for electricity and gas. We believe their entry into the market will increase competition directly targeting the large vertically integrated incumbents. We believe that Telstra's entry is likely to hasten the energy transition with the development of new products and services, ultimately benefitting all consumers. We also believe that the strong consumer protections afforded to energy consumers this may also result in benefits to Telstra customers who are not on energy contracts, as energy consumer protections become basic protections particularly across bundled product offerings.

St Vincent de Paul Society undertakes research and provide comment on policy and associated issues in energy that have the potential to impact the lives of those people and families in our community who are faced with housing stress, social injustice or are otherwise in need.

We also regularly produce National and State-specific energy reports focusing on tariff tracking, access, pricing and details of energy offers. The absence of "big" competitor with significant resources to compete with the incumbent energy retailers is one of the biggest barriers to all customers getting a better (and fairer) deal in energy.

We are concerned that while the large number of smaller competitors in the market has improved the value and fairness of offers for customers who regularly switch (30% of the market), they have had very little impact on those customers who remain with the incumbents (70% of the market). The lack of effective competition for the latter group adversely affected the majority of energy consumers.

Telstra's entry into the energy market and the associated strong consumer centric protections that exist in the Victorian energy market such as compliance, reporting and enforcement frameworks, will have additional benefits of improved outcomes for consumers of non-energy Telstra products particularly if products are bundled.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide feedback. I can be contacted via email or by phone [REDACTED].

Regards

Gavin Dufty

Manager of Policy and Research

St Vincent de Paul Society, Victoria.