

## **Media Release: Consumer Care Guidelines**

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**Come on electricity retailers - do the right thing, agree mandatory minimum protections for all electricity consumers**

### **Consultation opens on strengthening Consumer Care Guidelines**

The voice for small electricity consumers, the Consumer Advocacy Council, is calling on retailers to agree to a full set of mandatory protections for their customers with consultation by the Electricity Authority on the Consumer Care Guidelines, opening today.

The Electricity Authority is inviting submissions on 4 options for the Consumer Care Guidelines.

[Electricity Authority Consultation: Improving the Consumer Care Guidelines\(external link\)](#)

“We will be making it clear in our submission that the best way forward is for all parts of the guidelines becoming mandatory code,” said Deborah Hart, Chair of the Consumer Advocacy Council.

The Guidelines encourage retailers to provide a basic set of protections for consumers such as informing them whether they are on the best electricity plan and what they could save if they switched to another plan, and outlining how they must treat those facing hardship and consumers dependent on medical devices.

“These guidelines are well intended, but after being in place for more than 2 years, the problems are clear. They have no teeth to ensure all retailers follow them. The result is they are applied unevenly as the Electricity Authority found in their own survey this year - so there is no guarantee for consumers that whichever company they buy their power from will treat them consistently well.

[Electricity Authority Survey: Review of retailers' alignment with Consumer Care Guidelines\(external link\)](#)

“And there’s an uneven playing field for retailers with some going beyond the Guidelines and some not complying with them.

“Electricity is an essential service. There should be a set of basic protections across the industry to safeguard all consumers - residential and small business consumers in particular.

“We know some retailers, like Flick Electric, Mercury and Contact are backing a set of mandatory minimum protections and we hope all retailers agree.

“A set of basic mandatory protections, with proper oversight by the regulator and penalties for non-compliance will be good for consumers and good for competition as well.

“It’s time,” said Deborah Hart.