



The AER Service Charter

The Australian Energy Regulator (AER) is the national energy market regulator.



Who we are

We were established as an independent entity under the *Competition and Consumer Act 2010*.

The AER Board includes two state/territory members and one Commonwealth member. The Commonwealth member is also a Commissioner of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC).

We share staff, resources and facilities with the ACCC.

The ACCC is Australia's competition and consumer regulator. It promotes competition and fair trading and regulates national infrastructure to make markets work for everyone. For more information on the role of the ACCC and its functions, please visit www.accc.gov.au.

What we do

Our functions are set out in national energy market legislation and rules and mostly relate to energy markets in eastern and southern Australia. Our functions include:

- setting the prices charged for using energy networks (electricity poles and wires and gas pipelines) that transport energy to customers
- monitoring wholesale electricity and gas markets to ensure suppliers comply with the legislation and rules, taking enforcement action where necessary
- monitoring retail energy markets and regulating energy retailers, including: enforcing compliance with

the legislation and rules; authorising retailers to sell energy; approving policies for dealing with customers in hardship; administering a national retailer of last resort scheme; reporting on retailer performance, educating consumers and small businesses about their energy rights and managing the energy price comparison website, [Energy Made Easy](#)

- publishing information on energy markets, including the annual State of the Energy Market report
- assisting the ACCC with energy-related issues arising under the Competition and Consumer Act, including enforcement, mergers and authorisations.

The AER does not have a role in setting retail energy prices. However, with our energy price comparison website, Energy Made Easy, helps customers find the best energy offers for their needs.

The AER is guided by the objectives of national energy legislation. The National Electricity Law, the National Gas Law and the National Energy Retail Law aim to promote efficient investment in, and efficient operation and use of, energy services for the long term interests of energy consumers with respect to price, quality, safety, reliability and security of supply.

More information on what we do is available on our [website](#) and in our publication: 'AER strategic priorities and work program' available from the ['Publications' page on the AER website](#).

The AER Service Charter

Purpose of our Service Charter

We engage with the public and our stakeholders on a range of energy matters including:

- complaints and enquiries about energy businesses
- complaints about the AER
- contributions to our investigations and decisions.

This Service Charter sets out the standard of service excellence you can expect to receive from the AER when you make an enquiry or complaint.

The principles we apply to our engagement with stakeholders more broadly are included in our [Stakeholder Engagement Framework](#). It provides us with a structure to meaningfully consider stakeholders' interests in our activities. Our treatment of submissions and contributions from stakeholders will be outlined in our public consultation processes.

Our Service Charter sets out:

- how to contact us
- what you should do if you want to make a complaint or enquiry about an energy business or energy market issue
- what you should do if you want to make a complaint about your dealings with us
- what we ask of you.

We will review our service charter regularly to make sure it accurately reflects our service standards.

We are not a complaints handling body. This means we do not act on behalf of individual consumers or businesses to resolve their complaints with energy businesses or organisations. It also means we do not make determinations on whether a breach of the legislation has occurred, or provide businesses or consumers with legal advice. If we are unable to help you, we may refer you to another agency to assist you to resolve your complaint or enquiry.

What should I do if I have a problem with an energy business?

If you are unhappy with your electricity or gas service, there are some simple steps included on our [Energy Made Easy website](#) to help you resolve the problem as quickly as possible.

The first step is to contact your energy provider. If your problem is still unresolved, you can then contact the energy ombudsman in your state or territory. Energy ombudsman schemes are independent bodies that provide free guidance to customers to help them resolve problems with energy providers.

An energy ombudsman can assist you with: disputed accounts, difficulty paying energy bills, disconnections, marketing and selling practices and poor customer service.

Contact details for energy retailers, distributors and the energy ombudsman scheme in your state or territory are also available on our [Energy Made Easy website](#).

How do I contact the AER?

You can contact us by:

- submitting a complaint in writing to AERInquiry@aer.gov.au
- writing to one of our offices (address details below), or
- calling our general inquiry line on 1300 585 165, open from 8:30am EST to 6pm WST.

If you speak a language other than English, call 131 450 and ask for 1300 585 165.

How do I help the AER to help me?

To allow us to provide you with a high level of service when you contact us, we ask that you:

- consider accessing information and publications before contacting us—we publish a wealth of material to help energy customers and businesses (www.aer.gov.au)
- give us accurate and complete information and supporting documentation where possible
- respond to us within agreed timeframes
- please treat our staff with courtesy and respect.

Why should I contact the AER?

We encourage you to share information with us about energy market issues or problems with energy businesses. Information helps us understand what issues cause the most harm to Australian businesses and consumers and where best to use our resources. We need to be strategic when using our resources so we focus on issues that affect a wide range of people or markets.

I would like my complaint to remain confidential

We respect your right to privacy and confidentiality in making a complaint to us. If you give us information we will use that information in accordance with the law and the 'ACCC—AER information policy' available from the '[Publications' page on the AER website](#).



Our service level goals

We will provide you with a courteous, professional and quality service. Our staff will be respectful in their interactions with you and act in a fair and transparent manner. They will also identify themselves when you contact the AER and will speak to you in plain English.

When you contact us about your rights or obligations we have two key service level goals.

1. Written complaints and enquiries

Where you contact us via letter or by email to AERInquiry@aer.gov.au and you request a response, we aim to respond to you within 15 business days from receipt of the letter or email.

We receive a lot of contact from people simply providing us with information. In those circumstances, we will record your information but we may not provide a response.

2. Telephone complaints or enquires

We aim to answer 60 per cent of telephone calls within 60 seconds.

What do I do if I am unhappy with how the AER dealt with me?

As we seek to continuously improve our service standards, we welcome your feedback, compliments or suggestions on how we dealt with you or used your information. If you are dissatisfied with our conduct or if we have not met the standards outlined in this service charter, we recommend you:

Try to resolve the issue with the staff member, their supervisor or manager in the first instance.

If you are not satisfied after taking these steps, write to the chief executive officer (CEO),

**c/- GPO Box 520
Melbourne, Victoria 3001
or via email to AER CEO
via aer inquiry@aer.gov.au**

If you are not satisfied with the response provided by the CEO, you can contact the Commonwealth Ombudsman on 1300 362 072. For more information on the role of the Commonwealth Ombudsman please visit www.ombudsman.gov.au.

What do I do if I want to make an FOI request?

Freedom of information requests to the AER should be directed to our Freedom of Information Officer. Requests should be made in writing by email at foi@aer.gov.au or addressed to the Freedom of Information Officer, c/- the Canberra office. Further information on the AER's freedom of information processes can be found at foi.accc.gov.au.

Contact us

The best way to contact the AER is via email to AERInquiry@aer.gov.au or by calling our general inquiry line 1300 585 165. Refer to the *contact us* page on the AER's website, www.aer.gov.au.

You can also contact us through our offices at:

Melbourne office (main AER Office)

Level 35, The Tower
360 Elizabeth Street
Melbourne Central
Melbourne VIC 3000

GPO Box 520
Melbourne VIC 3001

Ph: (03) 9290 1800

Adelaide office

Level 2
19 Grenfell Street
Adelaide SA 5000

GPO Box 922
Adelaide SA 5001

Ph: (08) 8213 3444

Brisbane office

Level 24
400 George Street
Brisbane QLD 4000

PO Box 12241
George Street Post Shop
Brisbane QLD 4000

Ph: (07) 3835 4666

Canberra office

23 Marcus Clarke Street
Canberra ACT 2601

GPO Box 3131
Canberra ACT 2601

Ph: (02) 6243 1111

Sydney office

Level 20
175 Pitt Street
Sydney NSW 2000

GPO Box 3648
Sydney NSW 2001

Ph: (02) 9230 9133

Callers who are deaf or have a hearing problem or speech impairment can contact the AER through the National Relay Service on 133 677 and ask for 1300 585 165. Voice-only users please phone 1300 555 727 and ask for 1300 585 165.

Important notice

The information in this publication is for general guidance only. It does not constitute legal or other professional advice, and should not be relied on as a statement of the law in any jurisdiction. Because it is intended only as a general guide, it may contain generalisations. You should obtain professional advice if you have any specific concern.

The ACCC has made every reasonable effort to provide current and accurate information, but it does not make any guarantees regarding the accuracy, currency or completeness of that information.