Attn Mr Sebastian Robert, GM/Network Regulation

I have been alerted by my industry association of a proposed massive price rise by SA Power Networks in their distribution network charges.

I am a farmer who is also a member of a private irrigation trust.  As Large Market customers, our Trust's electricity invoices differentiate between charges made by our energy supplier and those attributable to SA Power Networks.  It has been shocking over recent years to see energy charges reduce as a result of competitive pressures within the production arena, only to be overshadowed by our distributor (operating as a monopoly) already charging more per kWh than the energy producers and still expecting annual percentage increases in the double digits.

I certainly cannot raise prices willy-nilly for my agricultural products and expect to keep a loyal customer base.  But in the case of SA Power Networks, I am a captive audience to their 'business case' for increases greatly beyond CPI.

The average man depends upon you, the Network Regulator, for protection in a closed market situation.  All the more so for residential customers who are experiencing regular increases in electricity charges without the benefit of transparency -- they can't see a separation of charges on their accounts and are unlikely to feel informed enough to make submissions in these matters.

I ask you not to judge purely on a head count when assessing opposition to price rises sought by SA Power Networks. You will not hear from most consumers.  While no one is likely to want increases whether large or small, there is a 'reasonable person' perspective that can be brought to bear in this case -- and the consumer needs your agency to do just that.

Thank you for acting on my behalf.

Fran Newby

SA