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Dear colleague,

Development of the AER's national energy price comparator website

Under the National Energy Retail Law (Retail Law), the Australian Energy Regulator (AER) must develop a website price comparator service for small customers.¹ This website must be developed and operational by 1 July 2012, when the Retail Law commences.²

The purpose of the website is to assist small customers in making a choice of retailer, by showing them different offers that are available to them.³

The attachment to this letter sets out the high level principles that the AER is considering as it prepares to develop the energy comparison website. The attachment sets out the AER's preliminary views on the form, content and functionality of the website. The attachment also sets out specific areas for stakeholder comment, asking a series of targeted questions about the price comparator website. General comments about the price comparator website are also welcome.

Stakeholder submissions must be received by 26 August 2011. Submissions can be emailed to AERinquiry@er.gov.au (marked 'AER price comparator – attn Dianne McGrath'). The AER will also be holding a public stakeholder forum on the price comparator, on 17 August 2011. The forum will be held in Melbourne, from 2 p.m., until 5 p.m. (AEST) and will be video linked to Hobart, Canberra, Sydney, Adelaide and Brisbane. To register your attendance, please send an email to AERinquiry@er.gov.au by Wednesday 10 August 2011, indicating the city in which you will attend. The subject of the email should state: "Registration for price comparator stakeholder forum: attention Dianne McGrath".

Yours sincerely

Tom Leuner
General Manager, Markets
Australian Energy Regulator

¹ Small electricity customers are customers consuming less than 100 MWh per annum, and gas customers consuming less than 1 TJ per annum.

² The Standing Council on Energy and Resources (SCER) has agreed that jurisdictions will work towards a common target date of 1 July 2012 for commencement of the Retail Law. The AER will have various roles under the Retail Law and Rules. In anticipation of the commencement of the Law and rules, the AER has commenced consultation on a number of guidelines and instruments it is required to develop and administer.

³ s 62(3), National Energy Retail Law.