

Our Ref: D14/125867
Your Ref:
Contact Officer: Susan Faulbaum
Contact Phone: (08) 8213 3643

29 October 2014

Mr Ian Hillman
Unit 1, 87 President Street
Welshpool, Western Australia 6106

Dear Mr Hillman

Solarmine application for an individual exemption from the requirement to hold an electricity retailer authorisation

I refer to your application from 29 July 2014, for an individual exemption under the National Energy Retail Law (Retail Law) for Solarmine Pty Ltd (ABN 69 167 419 418) (Solarmine).

I am writing to inform you that the Australian Energy Regulator (AER) has considered Solarmine's application for an individual exemption and that it decided, on 29 October 2014, to grant an individual exemption in accordance with s.110 of the Retail Law.

In accordance with the National Electricity Retail Rules (Retail Rules), the AER has published the application on its website, and sought submissions from interested parties.¹ The AER did not receive any submissions in response to Solarmine's application.

The AER has considered the policy principles relating to exempt selling in s. 114 of the Retail Law, being:

- a) regulatory arrangements for exempt sellers should not unnecessarily diverge from those applying to retailers,
- b) exempt customers, should, as far as practicable, be afforded the right to a choice of retailer in the same way comparable retail customers in the same jurisdiction have that right,
- c) exempt customers, should, as far as practicable, not be denied customer protections afforded to retail customers under this Law and Rules.

¹ r. 155(3) and 156, National Energy Retail Rules.

In making its decision the AER is also guided by the objective of the Retail Law², the exempt seller factors,³ and the customer related factors.⁴

The AER is satisfied that Solarmine should be exempt from the requirement to hold a national retailer authorisation, having regard to the above considerations. If Solarmine wishes to change the way it sells electricity it should contact the AER as it may need to apply for an authorisation or another exemption. If these activities are not covered by this exemption Solarmine may be in breach of s. 88 of the Retail Law and we may take enforcement action or otherwise seek to ensure compliance.

This individual exemption is subject to acceptance of the conditions⁵ set out at Schedule 1 to this letter. One of these conditions relates to information disclosure. Specifically, this condition is intended to ensure that your customers understand the nature of the service that you are providing and the protections they are entitled to (as opposed to the service and protections your customers would receive from their energy retailer).

Solarmine must advise the AER in writing, by **26 November 2014**, whether it accepts the attached conditions. Please be aware that the AER may vary conditions attached to an individual exemption at any time in accordance with rule 158 of the Retail Rules.

If you have any further queries, or would like to discuss this further, please contact Susan Faulbaum on (08) 8213 3463.

Yours sincerely



Sarah Proudfoot
General Manager
Retail Markets
Australian Energy Regulator

² The National Energy Retail Law objective is 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 of energy". (s. 13, Retail Law)

³ s. 115, Retail Law.

⁴ s. 116, Retail Law.

⁵ r. 158 (1), Retail Rules.

Schedule 1: Instrument of exemption

INDIVIDUAL EXEMPTION FROM THE REQUIREMENT TO HOLD A RETAILER AUTHORISATION

The Australian Energy Regulator on 29 October 2014, decided pursuant to section 110 of the National Energy Retail Law, to grant Solarmine Pty Ltd (ABN 69 167 419 418) (the exempt person) an exemption from the requirement to hold a retailer authorisation under section 88 of the National Energy Retail Law, subject to the following conditions.

Condition 1 - Information provision

The exempt seller must provide the customer in writing a plain English notice explaining that the contract is covered by Australian consumer protection laws and is separate to the customer's contract with their retailer and distributor which are covered under the National Energy Retail Law.

Condition 2 – Exemption limited to the sale of electricity through solar power purchase agreements

This exemption is conditional upon the exempt seller:

- refraining from registering in the wholesale market for the purposes of purchasing energy, and
- not being the financially responsible retailer for the premises (rather, this must be an authorised retailer).