



PO Box K 1343
Haymarket NSW 1240

Admin (02) 8218 5250
Fax (02) 8218 5233
Freecall **1800 246 545**
Email omb@ewon.com.au
Web www.ewon.com.au

ABN 21079 718 915

14 November 2005

Ms Marie Taylor
Manager, MCE Secretariat
Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources
GPO Box 9839
Canberra ACT 2601

Dear Ms Taylor

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the “Proposed Framework Schedule for Transfer of Distribution and Retail Functions”.

We propose to make a submission to the public consultation document on the National Framework for Distribution and Retail Regulation, but at this stage our brief comments are confined to the Proposed Framework Schedule.

The Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW (EWON) is an independent body which investigates and resolves complaints from customers of electricity and gas providers in New South Wales, and some water providers.

We note the proposals in Clauses 25 and 26 that dispute resolution for small-end customers should be within the jurisdiction of the States and Territories:

25. Distributor – Small end-consumers dispute resolution – *distributors’ requirement to have internal dispute resolution schemes for the small end-customers and participate in independent alternative dispute resolution schemes.*

26. Retailer – Small end-customer dispute resolution – *obligation of retailers to have internal dispute resolution/record keeping*

This essentially maintains the status quo, where there are now specialised energy dispute resolution agencies in most States and Territories. EWON and a number of the other schemes work closely together through the Australia & New Zealand Energy and Water Ombudsman Network (ANZEWON).

We support the proposal that dispute resolution for small end distribution and retail customers should stay within the State and Territory jurisdictions.

As the dispute resolution agency for energy consumers in New South Wales, EWON works very closely with a range of stakeholders, in particular community welfare organisations which assist energy consumers with a range of services to ensure that they stay connected to essential electricity and gas supply. We also work closely with local government, tenancy advice services, migrant resources centres, community information services and the like. We believe that this work benefits from EWON being visible and accessible to stakeholders and to the wider community within the local jurisdiction.

Thank you for the opportunity to express our support for the proposed framework for dispute resolution for small end-customers.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Clare Petre". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Clare Petre
Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW