



**Energy Industry
Ombudsman SA**

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Manager, MCE Secretariat
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11 July 2008

Dear Sir/Madam

**Ministerial Council on Energy Standing Committee of Officials
A National Framework for Regulating Electricity and Gas (Energy)
Distribution and Retail Services to Customers
Policy Response Paper**

The Energy Industry Ombudsman (SA) Limited ("EIO") welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Policy Response Paper. In this submission we address matters that are specifically of interest to the EIO Scheme. In relation to other matters, no comment is made

EIO is an independent Energy Industry Ombudsman Scheme in South Australia. We receive, investigate and facilitate the resolution of complaints by customers with regard to (*inter alia*) the connection, supply or sale of electricity or gas.

We note that a comprehensive transitional regime to manage matters including joint jurisdictional and national customer framework matters is to be developed to manage a smooth transition to the national regime. This includes access to the State-based Ombudsman schemes for customers in each State or Territory for the new national customer framework.

In South Australia, it is currently a licence condition for retailers (if they sell electricity to one or more customers with an annual electricity consumption less than 750 MWh or 10 terajoules in the case of gas) and distributors to participate in an approved dispute resolution scheme, being the Energy Industry Ombudsman Scheme.

The Policy Response Paper anticipates retailers holding existing jurisdictional licence to be transitioned to a new national retailer authorisation scheme without further process, but is silent on any requirement to become or to remain a member of a State-based Ombudsman scheme.

We submit it should remain an obligation on all retailers to be a member of the Ombudsman scheme of the state that they operate in, and that the obligation needs to be either in the new national retailer authorisation or in the new Laws and Rules.

Should you require further information or have any enquiries in relation to this submission, please contact me on (08) 8216 1888 or on sandy.canale@eiossa.com.au.

Yours faithfully

Sandy Canale
Energy Industry Ombudsman SA