

18 November 2011

General Manager
Markets Branch
Australian Energy Regulator
GPO Box 520
Melbourne VIC 3001
AERInquiry@aer.gov.au

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the further consultation on the proposed exempt selling guideline.

The Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW investigates and resolves complaints from customers of electricity and gas providers in NSW, and some water providers.

EWON made extensive submissions on the *Draft exempt selling guidelines* in February 2011 and on the *Issues paper* in July 2010 where we outlined our views on the complexity of exempt selling and the need for consumer protection.

In August 2011 we welcomed the bulk of the proposed guideline but expressed disappointment that a requirement to offer payment plans to customers before disconnection had not been included.

EWON therefore strongly welcomes the proposal to extend the proposed customer protection regime to include:

- flexible payment plans
- information on government concessions
- referrals to financial counsellors
- energy efficiency advice

If you would like to discuss this matter further, please contact me or Chris Dodds, Senior Policy Officer on 82185262.

Yours sincerely



Clare Petre
Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW