

**SUBMISSION TO CHAIR OF ELECTRICITY PRIVATISATION  
IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE REGARDING CONSUMER  
PROTECTION ISSUES, PARTICULARLY FOR LOW INCOME PERSONS.**

**Disconnections.**

Implementation of a 'no disconnections' policy. Retailers to be required to maintain hardship policies as at present, including their support of the No Interest Loan Schemes, but in cases where a consumer is to be disconnected as a last resort, transfer of the consumer to a "Safety Net Provider" to be established by the NSW Government in consultation with welfare organisations. Such consumers to be provided with financial counselling and energy audits [along the lines provided by the Kildonan organisation in Victoria] and financial assistance to retrofit properties for energy efficiency and to provide efficient electrical appliances.

The NSW Government to establish a fund [Electricity Consumers Fund] from the sale of electricity assets which will provide the funding for the above.

**Concessions**

The current pensioner concession (\$112 p.a.) to be increased to \$130 as argued in the submission from Combined Pensioners and indexed according to CPI thereafter.

The concession to be extended to holders of Health Care Cards as is currently the case in Victoria and South Australia.

**EAPA Scheme**

The current EAPA scheme to be expanded from \$7 million p.a. to \$20 million p.a. as put forward in the submission by the Utility Consumers Advocacy Program, part of the Public Interest Advocacy Program.

**Marketing.**

Strengthened rules to ensure that electricity retailers comply with ethical rules in regard to the door-to-door marketing of their products. Penalties to be applied where this is not the case. Energy and Water Ombudsman to have powers to order compensation payments to consumers where unfair practices have occurred.

**Regulation.**

IPART should approve a regulated price and this should be a legislative requirement. The committee should recommend that this continue regardless of assessments of the amount of competition in the market place.

**Retailer of Last Resort.**

The current charges to consumers to be transferred to the Retailer of Last Resort should be removed. [It is acknowledged that they have not been charged in the Energy One instance and are therefore unnecessary]

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