

PREPAYMENT METERING CODE: CONSULTATION DRAFT



In May 2004, the Essential Services Commission of South Australia invited stakeholder comment on the *Consumer Issues with Prepayment Meters Report* prepared by KPMG for the Consumer Advisory Committee.

In order to progress consideration of a possible regulatory framework for prepayment meters, a Consultation Draft of a Prepayment Metering Code has been developed taking into account:

- ▲ submissions and comments received on the KPMG paper,
- ▲ the need for any regulatory framework proposed by the Commission to fit with already established South Australian consumer protections and Commission Codes and
- ▲ work undertaken in NSW on the preparation of Guidelines for the Implementation of Prepayment Metering in NSW and in WA on a Draft Code of Conduct for the Supply of Electricity to Small Use Customers.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

It is a condition of licence that any electricity or gas retailer can apply to the Commission for approval of a prepayment metering system. While the Commission does not currently have any applications for approval before it, the Commission considers it is desirable to prepare a regulatory framework so it will have a basis against which it can assess any application received.

COMMENTS AND SUBMISSIONS

Stakeholder comments and submissions on the Consultation Draft Prepayment Metering Code should be forwarded to the Commission by Monday 20 December 2004.

AREAS OF FOCUS

Stakeholders are invited to comment on any matter in the draft Code. The Commission is particularly keen to receive comment on:

- ▲ the information to be provided to the customer (the written disclosure statement: clause 2.3 and operating information: clause 2.4),
- ▲ the proposal for a mandatory trial period (clause 2.5.1(a)),
- ▲ the proposal for limitations on the recovery of debt and charging for other goods and services (clause 2.5.1(d)&(e),
- ▲ the level of emergency credit (clause 2.7.1(f)), and
- ▲ the proposed provisions dealing with payment difficulties and hardship (clause 2.8).

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

The Commission will be reviewing the Electricity Metering Code in the context of the Electricity Distribution Price Review and the Joint Jurisdictional Review of the Metrology Procedures.

The Commission is keen to hear stakeholder views regarding possible changes to the Electricity Metering Code that could be considered, in order to ensure an appropriate technical regulatory environment for prepayment meters; noting the Commission's own regulatory documents must be consistent with national rules and obligations.