



Energy & Water  
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8 May 2003

Ms Deborah Walker  
**Gas** Pricing  
Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal

**Fax: 9290 2061**

Dear **Ms** Walker

### **ActewAGL's miscellaneous charges for the Shoalhaven**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment briefly on ActewAGL's proposal to **vary** its natural gas miscellaneous charges in the Shoalhaven from 1 July 2003, under IPART's Voluntary Pricing Principles (VPPs).

We note that the proposed fees, consistent with ActewAGL's current fees in Queanbeyan and Yarrowluma, **are generally** similar to or higher than the fees applied by **other** natural **gas** providers in **NSW**, **though** in some cases they represent a significant decrease for customers in the Shoalhaven ie account establishment **fee** reduced by **around** 45%, and around **66%** for pensioners.

We acknowledge efforts **by** providers to increase consistency in pricing for consumers in NSW. **Our** primary comments or queries are in relation to **the** following aspects of ActewAGL's proposal:

#### **1. New fees for consumers in the Shoalhaven**

The proposal includes four fees that appear to be new for the Shoalhaven **area**: collector call fee, **high** bill field visit fee, late fee and dishonoured payment fee.

These new fees might cause difficulties for some customers, particularly those on low incomes.

We suggest that ActewAGL considers adequate resources for **a** potential increase in customer contacts, and a range of options for customers **who** might experience **difficulties** in paying the new fees.

**2. Disconnection / reconnection fee**

The 'Description of services and charges' supplied by ActewAGL suggests that separate fees of \$77.00 (including **GST**) will apply for both disconnection and reconnection, ~~representing~~ a total increase of **around 250%** for these services for customers in the Shoalhaven. We understand that in practice ActewAGL charges a single fee **of \$77.00** on **reconnection** for customers in Queanbeyan.

We **suggest** that **this** position should be clarified.

**3. Advice to customers about pricing changes**

**There** is **no** information about **how** ActewAGL proposes to **notify** affected customers **of** the changes. Information to **consumers** about **any** significant pricing **changes** is important, **and** it **would** be helpful for **this** to be clarified,

If you would **like** to **discuss this** response please contact me on **8218 522 1** or at [melissar@ewon.com.au](mailto:melissar@ewon.com.au).

Yours sincerely



Melissa Russell  
Manager, Public Relations & Policy