



Don Harwin MLC

Minister for Resources, Minister for Energy and Utilities,
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V17/8144#1

Dr Peter Boxall AO
Chair
Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal
PO Box K35
HAYMARKET POST SHOP NSW 1240

22 AUG 2017

Dear Dr Boxall

I am writing to engage the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) to undertake further work under the Retail Energy Market Monitoring 2017 review.

This additional work is to focus on retailer customer service as major transformations take place. As you would be aware, the electricity market transition to clean energy, along with the opening of the east coast gas market to exports, has driven wholesale electricity and gas prices sharply higher over the last 12 months. This has resulted in higher retail electricity and gas prices from July 2017. Concurrently, many customers are voluntarily transitioning to digital meters to help them manage their energy bills and make the best use of their solar systems.

In this context, affordability and customer service become critical components of ensuring customer engagement with the competitive energy market is a positive experience. I am keen to ensure that retailers are helping hardship customers in particular secure the best outcome possible. I held a retailer roundtable in May this year to set out Government expectations about good customer service practices including communications with customers. Therefore, I ask IPART to report on retailers' strategies to deliver lower prices to hardship customers, through consultation with retailers, and review of their publicly available customer policies.

A second key issue consumers are raising with me is around the installation of digital meters. Therefore I am also asking IPART to consult with retailers and report on their processes for managing the timely roll-out of digital meters and how the roll-out is being communicated to their customers.

I would appreciate if IPART would report on both these matters as part of the ongoing 2017 review, and no later than 30 November 2017.

Yours sincerely

Don Harwin MLC

Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council
Minister for Resources
Minister for Energy and Utilities
Minister for the Arts
Vice-President of the Executive Council