

New protections for energy customers take effect

Victorian energy consumers can now sign up to a new energy deal with the assurance that prices won't increase more than once every 12 months, with new rules taking effect today.

The change is one of many energy reforms to begin on 1 July and mean retailers can no longer engage in '[bait and switch](#)' offers where prices rise after three months.

Other rules in place include [a cap on pay on time discounts](#), limiting what retailers can charge for not making a payment on time.

Commission chief executive John Hamill says the rules changes provide further protections to Victorians in the challenging environment.

"With many people working from home energy usage is up and that means bills will likely be higher as people try and stay warm during winter.

"To ease the pain of bill stress we encourage consumers to shop around for a better offer, with the security of knowing any deal they sign up to won't change in the near future," he said.

Retailers can only increase prices once a year, and must maintain any discounts, credits or rebates for the entire length of a customer's contract.

The state energy regulator also put a cap of 3.62 per cent on any new contracts entered into from 1 July 2020.

Dr Hamill says this could cut the average cost of missing a bill by \$40 to \$50.

The new rule changes are the latest energy reforms arising from the Victorian Government's 2017 [independent review of electricity and gas retail markets](#).

Other protections for consumers include the [Payment Difficulty Framework](#) as well as reforms such as the [Victorian Default Offer](#) and [energy best offer](#).

Victorians wanting to know their energy rights can visit www.esc.vic.gov.au/itsyourenergy

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