5 May 2020

**Implementation principles - ENA COVID-19 Relief Package by NSW networks**

**Small Retailers**

The three network providers in NSW have agreed a set of high-level principles to guide and streamline the implementation of the Energy Networks Australia (ENA) COVID-19 Relief Package in NSW, and to maximise the benefit to customers facing hardship.

**What relief is available to customers?**

**Small business customers - Network charges rebate:** network charges will be rebated for small business customers experiencing financial stress due to COVID-19.

**Residential rebates - Network charges rebate:** network charges will be rebated for residential customers that go into default due to COVID-19.

**Defer payment of the small retailer's residential invoice by 20%:** 20% of the residential customer's network charges for each of the April, May and June months; will be deferred, with the deferred payments made by the end of September.

**Waive disconnection and/or reconnection fees for small businesses** that have temporarily ceased operation and have been disconnected.

**Proposed implementation principles**

**1. Customer eligibility**

- For customers to be eligible for the COVID-19 network charges relief:

  a) The customer must either be on a residential customer tariff or be on a business tariff and consume less than 40MWh per annum based on 2019 consumption. NMIs which meet the 40MWh consumption threshold will be provided in a list to the retailers by the distributors; and

  b) Customers must meet the retailer's residential or small business financial support assessment requirements, including being a current or potential hardship program customer or unable to pay their bills in the current environment; and

  c) Retailers will not recover any amount of the customer's bill related to the billing period where the network business has rebated the NUOS charge under the residential customer rebate.

- It is the expectation of the NSW Network businesses that any relief provided by rebated charges to the Retailers are passed directly to customers. Retailers will be required to provide networks with a signed assurance that relevant evidence of eligibility has been obtained and that the relief initiatives have been passed through to eligible customers.

- Networks will operate in good faith with retailers however retain the right to ask for further eligibility evidence at any time.

- The relief package does not apply to new customers of a retailer after 1 April 2020 but does include any pending transfer customers as at 1 April 2020.

## 2. Process

- **Small business consumption-based rebates** will vary in process based on their read cycle. Retailers are required to pay when the invoice is first received and raise a dispute monthly in arrears, via the following process:
    - **Monthly cycle (Smart meter/remotely read):** Retailers to utilise the existing B2B dispute process (using the dispute code INTP with a comment of "*COVID Small Business Rebate*") to identify April, May and/or June NMI-level invoices relating to customers who are eligible for rebate.

    - **Quarterly cycle (manually read meters):** Retailers to utilise the existing B2B dispute process (using the dispute code INTP with a comment of "*COVID Small Business Rebate*") to identify NMI-level invoices relating to customers who are eligible for rebate. Retailers to choose an invoice where the billing end date is within 3 months from 15 May 2020 and is a quarterly routine read-based invoice (so as to overlap the 1 April 2020 to 30 June 2020 period as much as is practicable).

- **Residential customer rebates** will vary in process based on their read cycle. Retailers are required to pay when invoice is first received, and raise a dispute monthly in arrears for eligible customers for, via the following process:
    - **Monthly cycle (Smart meter/remotely read):** Retailers to utilise the existing B2B dispute process (using the dispute code INTP with a comment of "*COVID Residential Rebate*") to identify April, May and/or June NMI-level invoices relating to customers who are eligible for rebate.

    - **Quarterly cycle (manually read meters):** Retailers to utilise the existing B2B dispute process (using the dispute code INTP with a comment of "*COVID Residential Rebate*") to identify NMI-level invoices relating to customers who are eligible for rebate. Retailers to choose an invoice where the billing end date is within 3 months from 15 May 2020 and is a quarterly routine read-based invoice (so as to overlap the 1 April 2020 to 30 June 2020 period as much as is practicable).

- Rebates will be processed as soon as practically possible by the networks and applied in the next applicable scheduled billing period. The rebate will be provided in the form of a credited NUOS invoice in response to a dispute received and after payment of the initial invoice has been made by the retailer.

- **Residential customer network charges will have 20% of the charges deferred** until September, via the following process:
    - Retailers are asked to select a quantity of residential invoices that represent 20% of the total residential $ value, excluding those invoices disputed for residential customer rebate within the NUOS charge files received that relate to charges for April, May and June months.
    - Retailers should not pay the invoices selected within this process and send a dispute for each invoice using the dispute Reason Code INTP with a dispute comment "*COVID 20% Residential Deferred*".

- Payment for the deferred amounts of residential customer network charges are payable by 30 September 2020.

- **Disconnection and/or reconnection fees for small businesses** that have temporarily ceased operation and have been disconnected during April, May, June and July will be waived, via the following process:

    - Retailers should send a dispute for each applicable fee using the dispute Reason Code INTP with a dispute comment "*COVID Small Business Disco/Reco*".

- Retailers should ensure that remittance files reflect invoices paid and the value of the associated bank payment.

- Each network will work with retailers and develop processes for managing any exceptions to the above processes.

- Payments deferred by retailers for eligible customers will not incur interest charges.

- Each network will provide a single point of contact within their business to whom retailers can refer questions or issues regarding the package.

**Letter of Assurance**

In signing this document, you are providing assurance personally and on behalf of _____ to the following:

1. A customer eligibility testing process is used that is consistent with the principles of the ENA relief package;

2. All customers for whom you seek network charge relief will have been put through your eligibility testing process;

3. All reasonable efforts are taken to ensure the integrity of the eligibility testing process for each customer; and

4. You will notify your relevant network business and seek written approval to alter in any way from the agreed approach as outlined in this letter.

_____

Signature

_____

Name and Title

Date: _____