

Cowell Electric Supply Community Prepayment Monitoring and Reporting

About this Policy

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that customers utilising the Remote Area Energy Supply (RAES) scheme Electricity Prepayment System (EPS) are supported in maintaining their electricity supply and are provided assistance when needed.

This Policy applies to all customers with access to the EPS in the Communities and associated Homelands within the APY Lands, Oak Valley, and Yalata.

Special arrangements have been made for *Community Prepayment Customers*. Details of these arrangements are outlined in the *New to Payment Customer Policy*.

All generation, distribution, and retail services under the RAES scheme are regulated by the Essential Services Commission of South Australia (ESCOSA). The ESCOSA Prepayment Meter System Code (Code) provides rules around how electricity should be sold to customers using an EPS. ESCOSA is responsible for issuing the relevant licences to Retailers to specify how these rules are carried out.

This Policy details how monitoring and reporting requirements are to be carried out by Cowell Electric Supply (CES) under the RAES scheme to ensure that customers experiencing hardship are identified and supported in a timely manner.

Payment Difficulties and Hardship

The ESCOSA Code identifies a prepayment customer as potentially being in hardship (and therefore unable to pay for electricity) when the following occurs:

- the customer informs the retailer that they are experiencing payment difficulties, or
- when the retailer's prepayment management system identifies that a customer has self-disconnected three or more times in any three-month period for longer than 240 minutes on each occasion.

In addition, RAES considers extended self-disconnection (24 hours or more) is also a potential indicator of customer hardship.

Monitoring

Daily monitoring of customer self-disconnections will be undertaken by CES, utilising data from the smart meter operating system. The information will be analysed to highlight which customers have self-disconnected, how frequently they are disconnecting, and for what length of time.

Customer Contact and Support

Customers who have been identified within the potential payment difficulty and hardship criteria will be highlighted on the Daily Monitoring Report and will be to be contacted by CES to establish the reason for self-disconnection.

Per the requirements of the Code and relevant licence, CES will offer the customer:

- information about and referral to state government assistance programs; and
- information on independent financial and other relevant counselling services.

Community Prepayment Customers are required by the Electricity (General) Regulations 2012 to utilise a Prepayment system only. Special arrangements have been made to assist these customers in staying connected, outlined in the *New to Payment Customer Policy*.

Reporting

As part of the licence conditions, ESCOSA requires CES to report the below metrics on a quarterly basis, including data 'as at' the end of each month.

- number of prescribed customers
- number of prescribed customers on payment splitting arrangements
- number of times emergency credit was accessed
- number of times friendly credit was accessed
- number of self-disconnections
- average duration of self-disconnection (greater than 5 minutes and excluding instances where a house is intentionally disconnected, e.g., house is unoccupied).
- number of times the minimum requirement for follow-up of self-disconnection were met
- the reason for self-disconnection
- number of life support customers notified to the Retailer
- number of life support customers registered with the Retailer

Annual summary report

Summary report including aforementioned information, summarised for the year. This report will assist in decision making for the upcoming year, such as support mechanisms, education needs, and tariff increases. Stakeholder feedback will also be considered in decision making processes.