

Cowell Electric Supply

New to Payment Customer Policy

About this Policy

The purpose of this Policy is to ensure that New to Payment customers - Community Prepayment Customers (CPC) - utilising the Remote Area Energy Supply (RAES) scheme Electricity Prepayment System (EPS) are supported in maintaining their electricity supply. This Policy applies to CPC in the APY Lands, Yalata and Oak Valley.

Cowell Electric Supply (CES) has developed this Policy and relevant procedures to ensure customers who are new to payment are provided additional support whilst transitioning to the new payment requirement.

This Policy is to be used in conjunction with the requirements set out in the *Cowell Electric Community Prepayment Monitoring and Reporting 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) and relevant licence provides rules around how electricity should be sold to customers using an EPS.

To support the introduction of charging for electricity for customers living in the communities and associated homelands of the APY Lands, Yalata and Oak Valley, the Electricity (General) Regulations 2012 require that new to payment customers utilise the Prepayment method only.

Additional measures have been put in place to ensure that customers that are new to payment have the support they need to stay connected when using the EPS and adapting to paying for electricity.

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 meters have self-disconnected, how frequently they are disconnecting, and for what length of time. Further detail of this can be found in the *Cowell Electric Community Prepayment Monitoring and Reporting Policy*.

Payment Difficulties and Hardship

The ESCOSA code identifies that a prepayment customer may be experiencing payment difficulties and hardship if they have self-disconnected three or more times in any three-month period for longer than 240 minutes on each occasion (240 minutes, 3 times over a 3-month period).

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

Customer Contact

CES will make contact with customers identified as being within the potential hardship criteria. Questions will be asked to determine if the reason for their disconnection is due to payment difficulty or financial hardship and action taken accordingly.

The order of contact will be:

1. phone call to lead customer; if no contact:
2. phone call to other customers registered at the address; if no contact:
3. the customer is referred to the Community Support Officer for in-person contact at the premises.

Community Support Officer

The Community Support Officer (CSO) is part of the MoneyMob Talkabout team. Their job is to provide on-ground support through house visits to ascertain the reason for self-disconnection where contact via phone has not been successful. They will provide assistance with payment difficulties, energy education, and financial counselling when needed.

Cowell may also refer a customer to the CSO as a result of a discussion with the customer if they are in need of financial support.

Upon visiting the household, an assessment of the customer's current situation is performed, and education and budgeting support provided accordingly. The CSO will refer the customer to any financial support assistance and concessions that the customer may be eligible for.

The CSO will provide new to payment customers with on-ground assistance for the first year after the introduction of charging for electricity commences. This is a transitional measure and will be reviewed six months before the end of the first year to determine what support will be needed for the following year.