

MEDIA RELEASE

Origin Energy's reimbursement of late payment fees

29 November 2019

The Queensland Competition Authority has finished monitoring Origin Energy's reimbursement of electricity customers who were charged late payment fees on standing offers.

Between 2011 and 2018, Origin charged late payment fees to 456 standing offer customers in south east Queensland. The total amount of Origin's breach was \$7,860. Under section 22A of the National Energy Retail Law, standing offer customers in Queensland must not be charged late payment fees.

In May 2019, the QCA reported that Origin had confirmed that it would:

- (1) seek to contact all affected current and former customers and make a full refund available to them
- (2) report monthly to the QCA over the next six months on the number of customers who have been contacted and the number and amount of refunds paid
- (3) report to the QCA on the steps that it has taken to ensure all future pricing is compliant with section 22A.

The QCA published on its website six monthly reports it received from Origin showing the progress in reimbursing affected customers. Origin's final report states that by 12 November 2019 all 197 of Origin's current customers, and 39 of the 259 former customers, had been reimbursed to a total of \$4,260.

Origin has also informed the QCA that a range of additional business processes, supported by increased staff resourcing, have been implemented to avoid a future breach of section 22A.

Professor Flavio Menezes, the QCA Chair, said it is important that electricity retailers meet their obligations regarding customer protections such as complying with the restriction on fees that they can charge to standing offer customers.

"Origin has reported that all of its current customers have been refunded through a bill credit, but that only some of its former customers have been reimbursed," said Professor Menezes.

"The QCA encourages any former Origin standing offer customers who think they may be entitled to a refund to contact Origin to determine if they are owed a refund.

"The QCA understands that Origin will manage any unclaimed refunds in accordance with Queensland's *Public Trustee Act 1978*."

Media enquiries: Cole Lawson Communications, 07 3221 2220 or 0411 135 005.