



17 April 2014

**SUBMISSION ON QCA'S DRAFT DECISION ON PROPOSED  
AMENDMENTS TO CUSTOMER NOTIFICATION AND CONSENT  
PROVISIONS IN THE QUEENSLAND ELECTRICITY INDUSTRY CODE**

**BACKGROUND**

The Queensland Consumers' Association (the Association) is a non-profit organisation which exists to advance the interests of Queensland consumers. The Association's members work in a voluntary capacity and specialise in particular policy areas, including energy.

The Association has undertaken advocacy and research on behalf of Queensland's household energy consumers continuously for over 10 years.

The Association is a member of the Consumers' Federation of Australia, the peak body for Australian consumer groups and is represented on the Queensland Competition Authority's Consumer Consultative Committee and the Energy and Water Queensland Ombudsman's Advisory Council. The Association is also a member of the Queensland Council of Social Service's Energy Consumer Advocacy Project's Energy Reference Group and Origin Energy's National Customer Consultative Council.

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**GENERAL COMMENTS**

The Association welcomes QCA's draft decision to amend the codes to require retailers to notify customers prior to the expiry of fixed term benefits with "evergreen" market contracts.

The Association supports QCOSS's submission on the draft decision.

**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS**

The proposed amendments to the Electricity and Gas Codes should include:

- A requirement to provide prior notification of the expiry of any fixed prices offered under "evergreen" contracts, not just "benefits" which seem to be regarded only as discounts off variable prices. This would ensure that any customers on fixed prices for set periods within an "evergreen" contract would be treated the same as those on such contracts with variable benefits and as those on expiring fixed term contracts.
- A requirement similar to that in 4.4.4 (b) of the Electricity Code re fixed term contracts which would require the retailer to indicate in advance what will happen if the customer does not accept any new benefit/price offered by the existing retailer under the existing contract, or does not enter into a new contract with the existing or a new retailer. This would ensure that any customers on fixed benefits/prices for set periods within an "evergreen" contract would be treated the same as those on expiring fixed term contracts