

NSW Social Programs for Energy Code

Low Income Household Rebate
Life Support Rebate
Medical Energy Rebate
Family Energy Rebate
Energy Accounts Payment Assistance (EAPA) Scheme

Effective Date: 1 July 2014
Version: 2.0

Contents

PART A	4
A1. DICTIONARY	4
A2. PURPOSE	5
A3. OVERVIEW OF SOCIAL PROGRAMS FOR ENERGY	5
A4. RETAILER OBLIGATIONS.....	6
A5. GENERAL INFORMATION – LOW INCOME HOUSEHOLD REBATE, LIFE SUPPORT REBATE AND MEDICAL ENERGY REBATE ONLY.....	6
A5.1 <i>Application of this section</i>	6
A5.2 <i>Information to customers</i>	6
A5.3 <i>Verification of new customers with the Commonwealth Department of Human Services (DHS)/Department of Veterans’ Affairs (DVA)</i>	7
A5.4 <i>Notifying ineligible customers</i>	7
A5.5 <i>Date of commencement</i>	7
A5.6 <i>Ensuring eligible customers continue to receive the Rebate</i>	7
A5.7 <i>Arrangements for retailer payment</i>	8
A5.8 <i>Credit balance</i>	8
A5.9 <i>Customers required to notify their retailer</i>	9
A5.10 <i>Compliance</i>	9
A5.11 <i>Calculation of the rebate</i>	9
A5.12 <i>Confidentiality</i>	9
PART B	10
B1. LOW INCOME HOUSEHOLD REBATE.....	10
B1.1 <i>Eligibility criteria</i>	10
B1.2 <i>Application process</i>	10
B1.3 <i>Ongoing verification to ascertain continued eligibility of customers</i>	11
B1.4 <i>Rebate indexation</i>	11
B2. LIFE SUPPORT REBATE.....	12
B2.1 <i>Eligibility criteria</i>	12
B2.2 <i>Application process</i>	12
Appendix B2.1 – <i>Approved Equipment List</i>	14
B3. MEDICAL ENERGY REBATE.....	15
B3.1 <i>Eligibility criteria</i>	15
B3.2 <i>Application process</i>	16
B3.3 <i>Ongoing verification to ascertain continued eligibility of customers</i>	16
B3.4 <i>Rebate indexation</i>	17
PART C	18
C1. FAMILY ENERGY REBATE (FER)	18
C1.1 18	
C1.1 <i>Eligibility criteria</i>	18
C1.2 <i>Application process</i>	18
C1.3 <i>Ongoing eligibility</i>	18
C1.4 <i>Application of the rebate</i>	18
C1.5 <i>Retailer obligations</i>	19
C1.6 <i>Information to customers</i>	19
C1.7 <i>Arrangements for retailer payment</i>	19
C1.8 <i>Credit balance</i>	20
C1.9 <i>Compliance</i>	20
C1.10 <i>Residential Community Residents</i>	20
C1.11 <i>Confidentiality</i>	21
PART D	22
D1. ENERGY ACCOUNTS PAYMENT ASSISTANCE (EAPA).....	22
D1.1 <i>Overview</i>	22
D1.2 <i>Delivery of EAPA by CWOs</i>	22
D1.3 <i>Acceptance of EAPA by retailers</i>	23
D1.4 <i>Circumstances where EAPA is not to be used</i>	23
D1.5 <i>Retailers assisting CWOs</i>	23

<i>D1.6</i>	<i>Prohibition on disconnection during EAPA assessment.....</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>D1.7</i>	<i>Financial year expiry.....</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>D1.8</i>	<i>Residential electricity and gas consumption only.....</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>D1.9</i>	<i>Voucher validity.....</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>D1.10</i>	<i>EAPA vouchers issued by two or more CWOs.....</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>D1.11</i>	<i>Fraud or misrepresentation.....</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>D1.12</i>	<i>Voucher storage.....</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>D1.13</i>	<i>Loss or theft.....</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>D1.14</i>	<i>Invalid or rejected vouchers.....</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>D1.15</i>	<i>Recording EAPA usage.....</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>D1.16</i>	<i>Acquittal statement and electronic reporting.....</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>D1.17</i>	<i>Compliance.....</i>	<i>27</i>

NSW Social Programs for Energy Code

Electricity Supply Act 1995

Gas Supply Act 1996

PART A

A1. Dictionary

- A1.1 **administration fee** means:
- (a) for **rebates** (other than the Family Energy Rebate) \$0.80/365 multiplied by the total number of **eligible customers** as at the end of the month and multiplied by the number of days in the month; or
 - (b) for the Family Energy Rebate, \$0.80 multiplied by the total number of **eligible customers** paid by the **retailer** as at the end of the month.
- A1.2 **account holder** is a **residential customer**.
- A1.3 **acquittal statement** means the relevant statement for each **rebate** and **EAPA** published by the Department.
- A1.4 **approved life support equipment** are the items listed at Appendix B2.1.
- A1.5 **department** means NSW Trade & Investment.
- A1.6 **EAPA** means the Energy Accounts Payment Assistance Scheme.
- A1.7 **eligible customer(s)** is as defined for each **rebate** at clauses B1.1, B2.1, B3.1 and C1.1.
- A1.8 **residential customer** means a customer who purchases energy principally for personal, household or domestic use at premises from an authorised energy retailer.
- A1.9 **rebate(s)** refers to any or all of the Low Income Household Rebate, Life Support Rebate, Medical Energy Rebate and Family Energy Rebate, as relevant.
- A1.10 **retailer(s)** means the holder of a retailer authorisation and includes Ergon Energy Queensland Pty Ltd (CAN 121 177 802) for the purposes of the Code.
- A1.11 **retailer payment** means the sum of the **administration fee** and the total value of rebates paid each month.
- A1.12 **social program for energy** means a NSW Government program to ensure that energy services (including connection services and electricity supply) are available to those who are in need, including those who suffer financial hardship and those who live in remote areas, and includes:
- (a) any program for electricity and gas bills payment assistance, and
 - (b) any program for rebates to eligible pensioners, and
 - (c) any program for rebates with respect to electricity used for life support systems.
- A1.13 **supporting documentation template** means the template provided by the **department** to **retailers** for **retailer** compliance with A5.7.

A2. Purpose

- A2.1 This social programs for energy code (the Code) has been adopted in accordance with clause 73 of the *Electricity Supply (General) Regulation 2001* and clause 15 of the *Gas Supply (Natural Gas Retail) Regulation 2001* for the purpose of facilitating the delivery of the following **social programs for energy**:
- A2.1.1 Low Income Household Rebate;
 - A2.1.2 Life Support Rebate;
 - A2.1.3 Medical Energy Rebate;
 - A2.1.4 Family Energy Rebate; and
 - A2.1.5 **EAPA**.
- A2.2 The Code takes effect from the date of gazettal and replaces the previous version 1.0.
- A2.3 The Code consists of four parts:
- A2.3.1 Part A outlines the requirements applicable to the Low Income Household Rebate, Life Support Rebate and Medical Energy Rebate;
 - A2.3.2 Part B outlines additional requirements that are specific to the Low Income Household Rebate, Life Support Rebate and Medical Energy Rebate;
 - A2.3.3 Part C outlines the requirements for the Family Energy Rebate; and
 - A2.3.4 Part D outlines the requirements for the EAPA Scheme.
- A2.4 Parts A, B, C and D apply to all electricity **retailers**.
- A2.5 Parts A, B, C and D apply to Ergon Energy Queensland Pty Ltd (CAN 121 177 802), as an exempt person under clause 73(2) of the *Electricity Supply (General) Regulation 2001*, in relation to **eligible customers** connected to the distribution system of Ergon Energy Corporation Limited (CAN 087 646 062).
- A2.6 Part D applies to gas **retailers**.

A3. Overview of social programs for energy

- A3.1 The Low Income Household Rebate is designed to provide assistance in relation to a **residential customer's** energy expenses.
- A3.2 The Life Support Rebate is designed to provide assistance where **approved life support equipment** that is essential to support life is used by the **residential customer** or another person who lives at the same address as the **residential customer**. This rebate is not means tested and depends on the type of machine in use, and in some cases, the frequency of such use.
- A3.3 The Medical Energy Rebate is designed to provide assistance where a **residential customer** or a person who lives at the same address as the **residential customer** has an inability to self-regulate body temperature and the **residential customer** holds one of the required concession cards. An inability to self-regulate body temperature may be associated with certain medical conditions.
- A3.4 The Family Energy Rebate is designed to assist families to manage their energy costs. It is only available to **residential customers** who receive the Commonwealth Government's Family Tax Benefit A or B.
- A3.5 Each of the **rebates** set out in A3.1-A3.4 are applied to a **residential customer's** electricity bill.

A3.6 The EAPA Scheme is designed to assist **residential customers** who are experiencing difficulty in paying their gas and/or electricity bill owing to a crisis or emergency situation.

A4. Retailer obligations

A4.1 A **retailer** must:

- A4.1.1 as soon as practicable after an election is made by any person who is or may be a **residential customer**, for the provision of energy supply, inform that person of the availability of the **social programs for energy** and provide an application form, if requested;
- A4.1.2 include information on the availability of **social programs for energy** in all bills issued to **residential customers**;
- A4.1.3 include information relating to the availability of **social programs for energy** on its website;
- A4.1.4 acknowledge that the relevant **social program for energy** is funded by the NSW Government in any promotional material that refers to the **social program for energy**; and
- A4.1.5 inform on-supplied residential community (formerly residential park) residents and on-supplied residents of retirement villages of the availability of the **rebate(s)** if contacted by these customers and direct them to the **department's** website for information on how to apply.

Note: Not all residential community and retirement village residents are on-supplied electricity. Some residential community and retirement village residents are supplied electricity directly by a **retailer** and are considered eligible for all **rebates** subject to meeting all eligibility criteria outlined in Parts B, C and D. **Retailers** must meet the obligations outlined in the Code for these customers.

A4.2 **Retailers** may promote the **social programs for energy** together with their own products as part of their overall marketing strategy but must, at all times, comply with clause A4.1.

A5. General Information – Low Income Household Rebate, Life Support Rebate and Medical Energy Rebate only

A5.1 Application of this section

- A5.1.1 This section applies to the Low Income Household Rebate, Life Support Rebate and Medical Energy Rebate (**rebate** or **rebates**, depending on the context).
- A5.1.2 **Retailers** must have systems in place to enable them to deliver all **rebates** in line with the requirements contained in the Code.

A5.2 Information to customers

- A5.2.1 A **residential customer** may receive one or more **rebates** concurrently or more than one payment under the Life Support Rebate, subject to meeting the eligibility requirements for each particular **rebate**.
- A5.2.2 Where one or more **rebates** are payable, **retailers** must identify each **rebate** as a separate credit amount on the **eligible customer's** bill.

A5.2.3 A **retailer** must use the following descriptions (as relevant) for each separate credit amount on the bill:

A5.2.3.1 “NSW Low Income Household Rebate”; and

A5.2.3.2 “NSW Government Life Support Rebate” or “NSW Government Rebate for the [insert specific machine type]”; and

A5.2.3.3 “NSW Medical Energy Rebate”; and

A5.2.3.4 “NSW Family Energy Rebate”.

A5.3 Verification of new customers with the Commonwealth Department of Human Services (DHS)/Department of Veterans’ Affairs (DVA)

A5.3.1 Where required under the eligibility criteria for each **rebate**, a **retailer** must verify the Pensioner Concession Card, DHS Health Care Card or DVA Gold Card status of each new customer with DHS before a **rebate** is applied to that customer’s bill.

A5.3.2 Despite clause A5.3.1, if a **retailer** verifies the eligibility of new customers with DHS in weekly or monthly batches, rather than using a single enquiry to verify a customer individually, reasonable attempts must be made by that **retailer** to ensure eligibility is verified before the **rebate** is applied to a customer’s bill.

Note: To avoid errors in entering the Pensioner Concession Card, DHS Health Care Card or DVA Gold Card number in the system, **retailers** are encouraged to use the DHS algorithm which verifies whether the DHS customer reference number/DVA file number is genuine and prevents the system accepting incorrect numbers. To gain access to the DHS algorithm, **retailers** must apply directly to DHS.

A5.4 Notifying ineligible customers

A5.4.1 A **retailer** must notify a customer who applies, but is found to be ineligible to receive the **rebate** applied for, of their ineligibility as soon as practicable.

A5.4.2 The notification given by the **retailer** must include the reason(s) for declining the application.

A5.5 Date of commencement

A5.5.1 Once a customer is assessed as eligible to receive a **rebate**, the **retailer** must pay the **rebate** from the date on which the application was made by the customer.

A5.5.2 Subject to clause A5.6, **rebates** must not be back-dated prior to the date on which a customer’s application is made.

A5.5.3 Where a customer changes **retailer**, the date the customer’s supply commences with the new **retailer** will be deemed to be the date the customer applied for the **rebate**. This will ensure that the **rebate** is continuously paid to the customer during the transfer from one **retailer** to another.

A5.6 Ensuring eligible customers continue to receive the Rebate

A5.6.1 **Retailers** must ensure that **eligible customers** continue to receive the **rebate** without interruption (provided there is no change to their

circumstances that would render the customer ineligible) in the following circumstances:

- A5.6.1.1 after changing contracts;
 - A5.6.1.2 after changing **retailer**;
 - A5.6.1.3 after moving residence; or
 - A5.6.1.4 during the annual verification process.
- A5.6.2 If a customer's **rebate** payments cease under any of the circumstances listed in A5.6.1, or as a result of **retailer** error, the **retailer** must reimburse the customer for the period they would have otherwise been entitled to receive the rebate.

A5.7 Arrangements for retailer payment

- A5.7.1 A **retailer payment** will be provided to **retailers** each month.
- A5.7.2 The **retailer payment** for **rebates** must include:
- A5.7.2.1 the total value of the **rebates** paid to **eligible customers** during the month; and
 - A5.7.2.2 the **administration fee**.
- A5.7.3 The **retailer** must record the total value of the **rebates** paid by the **retailer**, the **administration fee** claimed by the **retailer** and the number of **eligible customers** based on the figures contained in the **retailer's** system records.
- A5.7.4 Each **retailer** must submit the following documents to the **department** by the 10th business day of each subsequent month:
- A5.7.4.1 a completed and certified monthly **acquittal statement** in the form published by the **department** on the **department's** website; and
 - A5.7.4.2 a tax invoice for the **retailer payment**; and
 - A5.7.4.3 a completed **supporting documentation template** (published by the **department**) to substantiate the **retailer's** claims in the tax invoice and **acquittal statement**. The data used to complete the **supporting documentation template** must be sourced from the system records referred to in clause A5.7.3.
- A5.7.5 the **acquittal statement** must be certified and signed by an appropriately responsible person nominated by the **retailer**. Each **retailer** must communicate the name of the nominated person/s to the **department** for verification purposes.
- A5.7.6 any changes to the **acquittal statement** and/or **supporting documentation template** will be made by the **department** only after appropriate consultation with **retailers**.

A5.8 Credit balance

- A5.8.1 If the total of a customer's bill is less than the **rebate** amount, the difference is to be applied as a credit to the customer's account and is to be carried forward to the next billing cycle.
- A5.8.2 Where a customer with a **rebate** credit elects to change his or her **retailer** or close their electricity account with a **retailer**, that **retailer** must refund to the customer the credit amount at the date of transfer to the

new **retailer** or the date that the customer closed the account with that **retailer**.

A5.9 Customers required to notify their retailer

- A5.9.1 A **retailer** must advise **residential customers** that they are required to notify their **retailer**, as soon as possible, of any changes in their circumstances that would affect their pending application or continued eligibility for a **rebate**.

A5.10 Compliance

- A5.10.1 **Retailers** must establish and maintain accounting procedures and records to enable periodic reports to be prepared to substantiate compliance with the Code.
- A5.10.2 **Retailers** must, upon request, provide such reports to the Minister, the **department** or any auditor appointed by the **department**.
- A5.10.3 **Retailers** must maintain records to substantiate compliance with the Code for a period of seven years.

A5.11 Calculation of the rebate

- A5.11.1 The Low Income Household Rebate and the Medical Energy Rebate must be calculated on the applicable daily rate basis (e.g. \$215/365 days) which is multiplied by the number of days in each billing cycle (e.g. for quarterly bills, 92 days) and offset against the gross amount of the bill before GST is applied.
- A5.11.2 The Life Support Rebate must be calculated on the applicable daily rate (24 hour or less than 24 hour) which is multiplied by the number of days in each billing cycle and offset against the gross amount of the bill before GST is applied.

A5.12 Confidentiality

- A5.12.1 **Retailers** are required to protect the confidentiality of **eligible customers** to ensure that their records are not used for any purpose other than the delivery of the **rebate** or as stipulated in this Code for audit purposes.

PART B

B1. Low Income Household Rebate

B1.1 Eligibility criteria

- B1.1.1 To be eligible for the Low Income Household Rebate a person must:
 - B1.1.1.1 be resident in New South Wales; and
 - B1.1.1.2 be a customer of the **retailer**, or a long term resident of an on-supplied residential community (formerly known as residential park), or a resident of an on-supplied retirement village; and whose name appears on the electricity account for supply to his or her principal place of residence; and
 - B1.1.1.3 hold either a:
 - B1.1.1.3.1 Pensioner Concession Card issued by the DHS/DVA; or
 - B1.1.1.3.2 DHS Health Care Card; or
 - B1.1.1.3.3 DVA Gold Card marked with either:
 - B1.1.1.3.3.1 War Widow or War Widower Pension; or
 - B1.1.1.3.3.2 Totally and Permanently Incapacitated (TPI); or
 - B1.1.1.3.3.3 Disability Pension (EDA).

B1.2 Application process

- B1.2.1 A person may apply for the Low Income Household Rebate in person, in writing or by telephone.
- B1.2.2 A **retailer** must establish a standard pro-forma application that requires an applicant to provide the following information:
 - B1.2.2.1 the full name of the applicant;
 - B1.2.2.2 the applicant's address;
 - B1.2.2.3 the name and number of the concession card that makes the customer eligible for the Low Income Household Rebate;
 - B1.2.2.4 the date of grant or expiry of the concession card; and
 - B1.2.2.5 the date of application for the Low Income Household Rebate.
- B1.2.3 The pro-forma application must include a statement to the following effect:
 - B1.2.3.1 the eligibility details provided by the customer in their application will be used to check their Pensioner Concession Card/Health Care Card/Gold Card status with the DHS/DVA;
 - B1.2.3.2 the customer has the right to revoke their consent to the eligibility check at any time in writing; and
 - B1.2.3.3 if the customer refuses to give consent, they will no longer receive the Low Income Household Rebate unless they can provide written verification of their continuing eligibility from the DHS/DVA.
- B1.2.4 When an application is made in writing or in person, the customer must sign the application form.
- B1.2.5 When an application is made by telephone, the officer receiving the application must:
 - B1.2.5.1 inform the applicant of the statements set out in clause B1.2.3;

- B1.2.5.2 request the applicant's consent to check their Pensioner Concession Card/Health Care Card/Gold Card status with the DHS /DVA; and
- B1.2.5.3 record the applicant's consent/refusal.

B1.3 Ongoing verification to ascertain continued eligibility of customers

- B1.3.1 A **retailer** must verify the details of all **rebate** recipients who hold a DHS Health Care Card for continued eligibility with the DHS at least once every three months.
- B1.3.2 A **retailer** must verify the details of all other **rebate** recipients for continued eligibility with the DHS or DVA at least once a year.
- B1.3.3 If a customer fails a verification check, the **retailer** must inform the customer as soon as practicable.
- B1.3.4 The results of the above verification checks must be provided by the **retailer** to the **department** each year. The results must include the following information:
 - B1.3.4.1 the number of eligible Pensioner Concession Card, Health Care Card and Gold Card holders in each category;
 - B1.3.4.2 the total number of initial mismatches; and
 - B1.3.4.3 the total number of customers determined as ineligible from the verification process.
- B1.3.5 All **retailers** must have a contractual arrangement with the DHS before verifying customers' details with the DHS.

B1.4 Rebate indexation

- B1.4.1 For **eligible customers**, the rebate will be:
 - B1.4.1.2 \$235 per annum between 1 July 2014 and 30 June 2015; and
 - B1.4.1.3 \$235 per annum thereafter unless advised otherwise by the **department**.

B2. Life Support Rebate

B2.1 Eligibility criteria

B2.1.1 To be eligible for the Life Support Rebate a person must:

B2.1.1.1 be resident in New South Wales; and

B2.1.1.2 be a customer of the **retailer**, or a long term resident of an on-supplied residential community (formerly known as residential park), and whose name appears on the electricity account for supply to his or her principal place of residence where **approved equipment** (see approved list in Appendix B2.1) is used by the customer or another person who lives at the same address; and

B2.1.1.3 submit a valid application form as provided by the **department** (which will be made available to customers on the **department's** website), duly signed by a registered medical practitioner (who is not the applicant) to verify that the use of the **approved life support equipment** is required at his or her principal place of residence.

B2.2 Application process

B2.2.1 Applications must be made in writing using the application form provided by the **department**. The application form will also be made available for download on the **department's** website. Relevant parts of the application form must be completed and signed by both the applicant and a medical practitioner.

B2.2.2 Applicants must send their signed application form to their **retailer**.

B2.2.3 Before applying the **rebate** to a customer's account, **retailers** must verify that the application form is properly completed and signed by both the applicant and a registered medical practitioner (who is not the applicant). Certificates from equipment manufacturers or from sleep clinics (without the signature of a registered medical practitioner) are not acceptable.

B2.2.4 In the event that an applicant lives in remote or regional NSW and is being treated by the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS), the application form may be signed by any medical practitioner under the RFDS.

B2.2.5 The customer must re-apply for the **rebate** every two years.

B2.2.6 At the time of application, in order to confirm the applicant's continued eligibility for the **rebate**, the **retailer** must bring to the attention of the applicant that an updated application form will be required every two years from the date of the initial approval for the **rebate**.

B2.2.7 Customers who are currently receiving the **rebate** are not required to submit a fresh application form until they are due for their two yearly verification.

B2.2.8 In order to ensure continuity of the **rebate** where a customer changes his or her **retailer**, the date the customer's supply commences with the new **retailer** will be deemed to be the date the customer applied for the **rebate**. However, the customer must complete and submit an application to the new **retailer** before the **rebate** can be applied by the new **retailer**. Note that this may cause some inconvenience to the customer but the

retailer requires the relevant information in order to ensure ongoing priority of supply for the customer.

- B2.2.9 **Retailers** must conduct a verification audit of the **rebate** every two years to confirm it is only being provided to **eligible customers** and provide the results of the audit to the **department**, or its auditor, on request.
- B2.2.10 The amount of the **rebate** for each item of **approved life support equipment** is set out at Appendix B2.1.

Appendix B2.1 – Approved Equipment List

List of Approved Life Support Equipment		
Equipment	Examples of brand names*	Daily rate
Positive Airways Pressure (PAP) Device	Continuous Positive Airways Pressure (CPAP), Bilevel or Variable Positive Airways Pressure (BiPAP or V-PAP) etc	\$0.16 for less than 24 hour usage \$0.32 for 24 hour usage
Enteral feeding pump	Kangaroo pump Companion-Abbott Flexiflow patrol pump	\$0.20
Phototherapy equipment	Blue light therapy	\$1.66
Home dialysis	Haemodialysis or Peritoneal automated cyclor machines – Brand names include: Fresenius, Gambro, Baxter	\$0.69
Ventilators	LTV series, Breas, PLV-100 etc, Iron Lung	\$1.66
Oxygen concentrators	Devilbiss etc	\$0.83 for less than 24 hour usage \$1.40 for 24 hour usage
Total Parenteral Nutrition (TPN) pump	Volumatic pump Flowguard pump	\$0.38
External heart pump	Left Ventricular Assist Device	\$0.05

NOTE: List of brand names against each piece of equipment has been included for information only, and is not exhaustive.

B3. Medical Energy Rebate

B3.1 Eligibility criteria

B3.1.1 To be eligible for the Medical Energy Rebate a person must:

B3.1.1.1 be resident in New South Wales; and

B3.1.1.2 be a customer of the **retailer**, or a long term resident of an on-supplied residential community (formerly known as a residential park), and whose name appears on the electricity account for supply to his or her principal place of residence; and

B3.1.1.3 submit a valid application form as provided by the **department** (which will be made available to customers on the **department's** website), duly signed by a registered medical practitioner (who is not the applicant) to verify that either the customer named on the bill or anyone residing at the residence has an inability to self-regulate body temperature as defined at B3.1.2 below; and

B3.1.1.4 hold either a:

B3.1.1.4.1 Pensioner Concession Card issued by the DHS/DVA; or

B3.1.1.4.2 DHS Health Care Card; or

B3.1.1.4.3 DVA Gold Card.

B3.1.2 For the purpose of this **rebate**, an **eligible customer** has an inability to self-regulate body temperature where the **eligible customer** (or someone living at the supply address of the **eligible customer**) has been assessed by a registered treating medical practitioner (who is not the applicant) who has been treating them for at least three months as meeting one of the following four primary qualifying conditions and one of the three secondary qualifying conditions:

B3.1.2.1 Primary qualifying conditions:

B3.1.2.1.1 autonomic system dysfunction (Medical conditions in which the autonomic system has been damaged eg severe spinal cord injury, stroke, brain injury and neurodegenerative disorders);

B3.1.2.1.2 loss of skin integrity or loss of sweating capacity (for example, significant burns greater than 20%, severe inflammatory skin conditions and some rare forms of disordered sweating);

B3.1.2.1.3 objective reduction of physiological functioning at extremes of environmental temperatures (for example, advanced multiple sclerosis); and

B3.1.2.1.4 hypersensitivity to extremes of environmental temperature leading to increased pain or other discomfort or an increased risk of complications (for example, complex regional pain syndrome and advanced peripheral vascular disease).

B3.1.2.2 Secondary qualifying conditions:

B3.1.2.2.1 severe immobility (for example, such as occurs with Quadriplegia or high level Paraplegia, particularly above mid thoracic level (T7) resulting in problems with self regulation of body temperature due to loss of sympathetic nervous system control);

B3.1.2.2.2 demonstrated significant loss of autonomic regulation of sweating, heart rate or blood pressure; and

- B3.1.2.2.3 demonstrated loss of physiological function or significant aggravation of clinical condition at extremes of environmental temperature.

B3.2 Application process

- B3.2.1 An applicant must apply in writing using the application form provided by the **department**. The application form will also be made available for download on the **department's** website. Relevant parts of the application form must be completed and signed by both the applicant and a medical practitioner (who is not the applicant) who has been treating the patient for at least three months.
- B3.2.2 An applicant must send the signed application form to their **retailer**.
- B3.2.3 Before applying the **rebate** to the customer's account, a **retailer** must verify that the application form is properly completed and signed by both the customer and a registered medical practitioner (who is not the applicant).
- B3.2.4 In the event that a customer lives in remote or regional NSW and is being treated by the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS), the application form may be signed by any medical practitioner under the RFDS if the customer has been treated by the RFDS for at least three months.
- B3.2.5 The **retailer** must verify each new customer's Pensioner Concession Card, DHS Health Care Card or DVA Gold Card status with the DHS before the **rebate** may be applied to a customer's bill.
- B3.2.6 If the customer named on the bill is claiming the **rebate** for another person who is living at the same address as the customer named on the bill, the **retailer** must check that the application form states that the address of the patient is the same as that of the customer.
- B3.2.7 In order to ensure continuity of the **rebate** where a customer changes his or her **retailer**, the date the customer's supply commences with the new **retailer** will be deemed to be the date the customer applied for the **rebate**. However, the customer must complete and submit an application to the new **retailer** before the **rebate** can be applied by the new **retailer**. Note that this may cause some inconvenience to the customer but the **retailer** requires the relevant information in order to ensure ongoing eligibility for the **rebate**.

B3.3 Ongoing verification to ascertain continued eligibility of customers

- B3.3.1 A **retailer** must verify the details of all **rebate** recipients who hold a DHS Health Care Card for continued eligibility with the DHS at least once every three months.
- B3.3.2 A **retailer** must verify the details of all other **rebate** recipients for continued eligibility with the DHS or DVA at least once a year.
- B3.3.3 The results of the above verification checks must be provided by the **retailer** to the **department** each year. The results must include the following information:
- B3.3.3.1 the number of eligible Pensioner Concession Card holders, the DHS Health Care Card and Gold Card holders in each category;
 - B3.3.3.2 the total number of initial mismatches; and

B3.3.3.3 the total number of customers determined as ineligible from the verification process.

B3.3.4 All **retailers** must have a contractual arrangement with the DHS before verifying customers' details with the DHS.

B3.4 Rebate indexation

B3.4.1 For **eligible customers**, the rebate will be:

B3.4.1.1 \$235 per annum between 1 July 2014 and 30 June 2015; and

B3.4.1.2 \$235 per annum thereafter unless advised otherwise by the **department**.

B3.4.2.1

PART C

C1. Family Energy Rebate (FER)

C1.1 Eligibility criteria

- C1.1.1 To be eligible for the Family Energy Rebate in a given financial year a person must:
- C1.1.1.1 be resident in New South Wales; and
 - C1.1.1.2 be an **account holder** of a **retailer**, or a long term resident of an on-supplied residential community (formerly known as a residential park), and whose name appears on the electricity account for supply to his or her principal place of residence; and
 - C1.1.1.3 have been assessed by the Federal DHS as being eligible for the Family Tax Benefit (FTB) A or B at any time during the financial year immediately preceding the financial year in which an application for the FER is made and have received a payment of FTB in respect of that eligibility.

C1.2 Application process

- C1.2.1 An applicant must apply in writing to the **department** for the **rebate** using either the digital application form available from the **department's** website or a paper application form also available from the **department's** website. These same application forms should also be provided by electricity **retailers**.
- C1.2.2 **Retailers** must, on request by a customer, provide access to the **department's** application forms for the customer to complete and submit to the **department**.

C1.3 Ongoing eligibility

- C1.3.1 An **eligible customer** who completes a valid application form and receives confirmation of eligibility from the **department**, will be paid the **rebate** once per financial year.
- C1.3.2 Customers must reapply for the **rebate** each year.

C1.4 Application of the rebate

- C1.4.1 **Retailers** must credit the **rebate** to customers' electricity accounts in accordance with a confidential data set provided by the **department** frequently throughout each calendar month through a dedicated, secure website. The data set will contain the following information:
- C1.4.1.1 FER Application ID (labelled "FER Reference Number");
 - C1.4.1.2 First Name (labelled "Family Tax Benefit Recipient First Name");
 - C1.4.1.3 Last Name (labelled "Family Tax Benefit Recipient Last Name");
 - C1.4.1.4 Electricity Account Number (labelled "Electricity Account Number");
 - C1.4.1.5 Meter Identifier (labelled "NMI (National Meter Identifier)");
 - C1.4.1.6 Rebate Amount (labelled "Rebate Amount (\$)"); and
 - C1.4.1.7 Rebate Applied Flag (labelled "Rebate Credit Applied to Electricity Account"). No data is supplied in this column by the **department**.

- C1.4.2 **Retailers** must download secure departmental data sets at least weekly, and import updated data sets in the same week, thereby advising the department which customers have had a rebate credited against their accounts, and which have not.
- C1.4.3 **Retailers** must verify the relevant data set against the information for each customer in the **retailer's** billing system and pay the relevant amount to each customer if the following conditions are met:
- C1.4.3.1 Family Tax Benefit Recipient Last Name, Electricity Account Number and the NMI matches a valid customer account.
- C1.4.4 **Retailers** must display the **rebate** on **eligible customers'** next available electricity bill after the date the **retailer** credits the rebate against accounts, after receiving the confidential data set from the **department**, and to offset it against the gross amount of the bill before GST is applied.
- C1.4.5 **Retailers** must supply a confidential data set to the **department** using the dedicated, secure website containing the following information:
- C1.4.5.1 FER Application ID (labelled "FER Reference Number");
- C1.4.5.2 First Name (labelled "Family Tax Benefit Recipient First Name");
- C1.4.5.3 Last Name (labelled "Family Tax Benefit Recipient Last Name");
- C1.4.5.4 Electricity Account Number (labelled "Electricity Account Number");
- C1.4.5.5 Meter Identifier (labelled "NMI (National Meter Identifier);
- C1.4.5.6 Rebate Amount (labelled "Rebate Amount (\$)"); and
- C1.4.5.7 Rebate Applied Flag (labelled "Rebate Credit Applied to Electricity Account"). **Retailer to supply only ONE of the following data options: Y or N or leave the cell blank.**

C1.5 Retailer obligations

- C1.5.1 The obligations outlined in A4 of Part A above, also apply to the FER.

C1.6 Information to customers

- C1.6.1 A **residential customer** may receive one or more **rebates** concurrently, subject to meeting the eligibility requirements for each particular **rebate**.
- C1.6.2 A **retailer** must identify each **rebate** as a separate credit amount on the **eligible customer's** bill.
- C1.6.3 A **retailer** must use the following description – "NSW Family Energy Rebate" – when crediting the **rebate** to the bill.

C1.7 Arrangements for retailer payment

- C1.7.1 A **retailer payment** will be provided to each applicable **retailer** each month.
- C1.7.2 The **retailer payment** for **rebates** must include:
- C1.7.2.1 the total value of **rebates** paid to **eligible customers** calculated on the basis of the data set provided by the **department** to the **retailer**, and
- C1.7.2.2 the **administration fee**.
- C1.7.3 Each **retailer** must submit the following documents to the **department** by the 10th business day of each subsequent month:

- C1.7.3.1 a completed and certified **monthly acquittal statement** in the form published by the **department** on the **department's** website; and
- C1.7.3.2 a tax invoice for the **retailer payment**. This invoice must be submitted to the **department** for each calendar month and is for **rebates** that have been credited to customers' accounts during that month (regardless of whether an actual bill has been issued in that month) in line with the dataset provided by the **department** to the **retailer**.
- C1.7.4 The **retailer** must record the total value of the **rebates** paid by the **retailer**, the **administration fee** claimed by the **retailer** and the number of **eligible customers** based on the figures contained in the **retailer's** system records.
- C1.7.5 The **acquittal statement** must be certified and signed by an appropriately responsible person nominated by the **retailer**. Each **retailer** must communicate the name of the nominated person/s to the **department** for verification purposes.
- C1.7.6 Any changes to the **acquittal statement** will be made by the **department** only after appropriate consultation with **retailers**.

C1.8 Credit balance

- C1.8.1 If the total of a customer's bill is less than the **rebate** amount, the difference is to be applied as a credit to the customer's account and is to be carried forward to the next billing cycle.
- C1.8.2 Where a customer with a **rebate** credit elects to change his or her **retailer** or close their electricity account with a **retailer**, that **retailer** must refund to the customer the credit amount at the date of transfer to the new **retailer** or the date that the customer closed the account with that **retailer**.

C1.9 Compliance

- C1.9.1 **Retailers** must establish and maintain accounting procedures and records to enable periodic reports to be prepared to substantiate compliance with the Code.
- C1.9.2 **Retailers** must, upon request, provide such reports to the Minister, the **department** or any auditor appointed by the **department**.
- C1.9.3 **Retailers** must maintain records to substantiate compliance with the Code for a period of seven years.

C1.10 Residential Community Residents

- C1.10.1 Long term residents of on-supplied residential communities (formerly known as residential parks) must apply directly to the **department** by submitting a completed application form available on the **department's** website. **Eligible customers** will be paid the relevant **rebate** amount by the **department**.
- C1.10.2 For eligible residential community residents, the Family Energy Rebate will be deposited via EFT into the customer's nominated bank account by the **department**.

C1.11 Confidentiality

- C1.11.1 **Retailers** are required to protect the confidentiality of **eligible customers** to ensure that their records are not used for any purpose other than the delivery of the **rebate** or as stipulated in this Code for audit purposes.

PART D

D1. Energy Accounts Payment Assistance (EAPA)

D1.1 Overview

- D1.1.1 EAPA is a NSW Government scheme designed to help residential energy customers who are financially disadvantaged and experience difficulty paying their residential gas and/or electricity bill owing to a crisis or emergency situation. The EAPA Scheme is administered by the **department** and is aimed at helping these people stay connected to essential energy services.
- D1.1.2 The EAPA Scheme is a crisis program and is not intended to offer ongoing income support, nor is EAPA intended to relieve **retailers** of their obligations to manage their customers' debts in a fair and equitable manner. A person who is experiencing genuine difficulty paying their residential gas and/or electricity bill should first contact their **retailer** to see if alternative payment arrangements can be negotiated, such as deferred payment, pay-as-you-go plans/Centrepay and budget management services.
- D1.1.3 Community Welfare Organisations (CWOs) apply the "EAPA Delivery Guidelines" when undertaking an assessment interview with an EAPA applicant.
- D1.1.4 It is important that **retailers** are aware of this Guideline and how it interacts with the **retailers'** hardship program. This is because, where a significant exception to the Guideline is made, it may indicate that the **retailer's** assistance is required to address on-going hardship with regard to access to electricity and natural gas, in accordance with their obligations under the relevant legislative and policy framework.
- D1.1.5 **Retailers** are not to use EAPA to meet their obligations to assist customers in financial hardship to manage their bills.
- D1.1.6 A **residential customer** may receive EAPA, concurrently with any **rebates**, subject to meeting the eligibility requirements for each particular **social program for energy**.

D1.2 Delivery of EAPA by CWOs

- D1.2.1 EAPA assistance is generally issued by CWOs and one particular energy **retailer's** hardship team, in the form of \$50 vouchers. These vouchers must either be attached by a customer to their original energy bill, taken or sent to the customer's **retailer** or presented via a **retailer's** authorised payment agent, as a contribution towards the customer's energy bills.
- D1.2.2 Rules and procedures for the administration of EAPA by CWOs are outlined in the EAPA Delivery Guidelines (the Guidelines) issued by the **department**. These Guidelines cover matters such as validity of vouchers (for example, whether EAPA can be used to put an account into credit and how vouchers must be completed).
- D1.2.3 To provide guidance to **retailers** as to the validity of vouchers, a copy of these Guidelines is available from the **department**.

- D1.2.4 **Retailers** must not inform customers that they will receive a certain amount of EAPA. The amount of EAPA provided to a customer is determined by the CWO.
- D1.2.5 **Retailers** must also make all attempts to assist CWOs in complying with the Guidelines (for example, by providing direct, dedicated, free call numbers to **retailer** hardship units and working cooperatively to resolve issues concerning customers).

D1.3 Acceptance of EAPA by retailers

- D1.3.1 **Retailers** must accept all valid EAPA vouchers offered in payment of an account (except in any of the circumstances in clause D1.4).
- D1.3.2 **Retailers** must take steps to ensure that customers can make payments using EAPA vouchers at Australia Post outlets and by other over-the-counter methods.
- D1.3.3 **Retailers** must also keep the **department** informed of all payment options for EAPA, including addresses for posting EAPA vouchers.
- D1.3.4 **Retailers** must have systems in place to enable them to deliver EAPA in accordance with the Code.

D1.4 Circumstances where EAPA is not to be used

- D1.4.1 EAPA vouchers must not be accepted where this will place a customer's account into credit. In these cases, a **retailer** must reject as many vouchers as required to ensure the account is not placed into credit and inform the **department each month using the electronic reporting system**. The **retailer** must notify the customer of any voucher cancellation, and the effect upon the customer's account balance.
- D1.4.2 EAPA must not be relied upon by a **retailer** to address on-going hardship for a specific customer, to manage bad debts or as an alternative to managing customer hardship in accordance with any relevant legislation or internal policies.
- D1.4.3 EAPA must not be used for non-consumption related charges (for example, late fees, disconnection and reconnection fees).

D1.5 Retailers assisting CWOs

- D1.5.1 Each **retailer** must have in place a direct dedicated, telephone enquiry number for CWOs to contact that **retailer** to confirm the details of a customer seeking EAPA assistance. Calls to this line must be answered or call backs made as soon as reasonably practicable, as an inability to contact a **retailer** may cause difficulties for the CWO in assessing the customer for EAPA.
- D1.5.2 These contact details must be provided to the **department** by each **retailer** and any changes must be notified to the **department** immediately.
- D1.5.3 Current contact listings for CWOs that are able to assess customers for EAPA assistance are on the **department's** website at www.resourcesandenergy.nsw.gov.au.
- D1.5.4 **Retailers** are required to provide to their customers information on Government funded rebates and programs, including EAPA. This means

a **retailer** can refer a customer to one or more CWOs only if the assistance provided to a customer by the **retailer** is not sufficient to help a customer resolve their difficulty paying an energy bill or where additional assistance may be appropriate. CWOs will assess customers under the Guidelines and it is at the discretion of the CWO whether or not EAPA will be granted to a customer.

- D1.5.5 **Retailers** can also assist their customers to be assessed for EAPA vouchers by implementing an appropriate payment plan or making other appropriate referrals, for instance, to a financial counsellor.
- D1.5.6 Where a **retailer** refers a customer to a CWO, the **retailer** must also inform the customer of the requirement to take their original bill when they attend an EAPA assessment interview.
- D1.5.7 The “original bill” refers to the first issued bill for the current payment period, for which the customer is seeking EAPA assistance. A copy of an original bill supplied by a **retailer** may be considered an original bill.
- D1.5.8 **Retailers** may be required to assist a CWO to establish the details of a customer seeking EAPA assistance (for example, where a customer does not have an original bill). If a customer does not have their original bill or receives their bill via email, the CWO will be required to contact the **retailer** to confirm the customer’s account details.
- D1.5.9 **Retailers** must be aware that not all customers who seek EAPA assistance will receive EAPA vouchers. Suitability for assistance is determined following an assessment conducted by the CWO, and vouchers are granted based on availability. A **retailer** must explain this to a customer when making a referral to assist in managing the customer’s expectations.
- D1.5.10 It is generally not appropriate to refer customers with large debts that have been allowed to accumulate over a long period of time to a CWO without adequate consideration of other options and attempts to assist the customer in accordance with laws and internal policy and without discussing the matter with the CWO. In many cases, a CWO will not be equipped to handle such cases and other types of referrals may be more appropriate (for example, to a financial counsellor).

D1.6 Prohibition on disconnection during EAPA assessment

- D1.6.1 If a customer is awaiting assessment for EAPA assistance, the **retailer** is required to defer electricity or natural gas disconnection until a CWO has assessed the customer.

D1.7 Financial year expiry

- D1.7.1 EAPA vouchers remain current for one financial year. They become invalid and cannot be accepted by **retailers** after 14 July in the next financial year. That is, **retailers** may accept EAPA vouchers issued on or before 30 June if they are presented as payment within 14 days of issue. Each voucher is printed with the date to which it will remain valid.
- D1.7.2 To identify vouchers from different financial years, vouchers are colour coded and have a unique prefix identifier.

D1.8 Residential electricity and gas consumption only

- D1.8.1 Vouchers may only be presented as payment towards electricity and natural gas consumption supplied under a residential tariff, and only on behalf of the person/s named on the account.
- D1.8.2 If a customer presents a voucher for non-consumption charges, the **retailer** must advise the customer that the vouchers have not been applied to their account because EAPA can only be used for electricity and/or natural gas consumed and that the vouchers have been cancelled. These vouchers must be rejected/cancelled and reported to the **department** each month using the electronic reporting system.
- D1.8.3 EAPA can only be issued to customers residing in NSW, regardless of their **retailer**.

D1.9 Voucher validity

- D1.9.1 **Retailers** are required to assess the vouchers for validity before applying them to a customer's account. Vouchers are valid if they comply with the requirements set out in the CWO EAPA Delivery Guidelines. All vouchers must be:
 - a. completed with the required information;
 - b. signed and stamped with the stamp of the issuing CWO.
- D1.9.2 Vouchers are only valid for the financial year in which they are distributed by the **department**.
- D1.9.3 Vouchers are only valid for the number of days from the date of issue as stated on the voucher.

D1.10 EAPA vouchers issued by two or more CWOs

- D1.10.1 If vouchers from two or more CWOs are presented at the same time for payment of a bill, voucher(s) from only one organisation will be accepted unless the tick boxes at the right-hand side of the voucher(s) has been ticked and signed. **Retailers** must check that this has been done to ensure the second issue of vouchers is valid.
- D1.10.2 If the tick box has not been signed, a **retailer** must phone the second issuing CWO and find out if they are aware of the first issue of vouchers. If the CWO is aware and confirms the validity of the second issue of vouchers, the **retailer** must accept all the vouchers as payment on the account.
- D1.10.3 If the second issue of vouchers cannot be validated by the CWO, **retailers** must forward the vouchers to the **department** with an explanation. The **retailer** must tell the customer that these vouchers cannot be credited to their account. The customer should be sent a written acknowledgement stating the number of vouchers retained.
- D1.10.4 The **department** will then contact the issuing CWO with an explanation of why they have been invalidated.

D1.11 Fraud or misrepresentation

- D1.11.1 If a **retailer** suspects or has evidence that either CWO or customers fraud or misrepresentation has occurred, the **retailer** must contact the **department** immediately and then confirm the suspicion in writing, either by letter or email.

D1.12 Voucher storage

- D1.12.1 **Retailers** must retain EAPA vouchers for a minimum of seven years from the date of redemption and make these available for audits by the **department**, or an agent of the **department**, upon request.

D1.13 Loss or theft

- D1.13.1 Occasionally EAPA vouchers are reported to the **department** as lost or stolen.
- D1.13.2 The **department** will track if these vouchers have been presented to a **retailer** via the **retailer's** monthly usage reports. The **department** will then notify the **retailer** of the course of action to be taken. For example, if vouchers are stolen and presented, the account to which the vouchers were applied will be reversed (to the extent of the EAPA voucher value).

D1.14 Invalid or rejected vouchers

- D1.14.1 All invalid or rejected EAPA vouchers are to be reported by the **retailer** (who received them) to the **department** each month using the electronic reporting system.

D1.15 Recording EAPA usage

- D1.15.1 For an account where EAPA has been received, the **retailer** must reference a customer's use of EAPA on their previous bill, and the amount they were presented for payment. This assists CWOs in assessing if EAPA is being used for on-going income support.
- D1.15.2 A best practice example of how EAPA voucher usage would be recorded on a customer's bill is at D1.15.3 where it would indicate that \$200 worth of EAPA vouchers were applied to the customer's account on 12 July 2013. A retailer may provide this information using an alternate method.
- D1.15.3 Payment History: "EAPA VOUCHER 12/07/2013 \$200".

D1.16 Acquittal statement and electronic reporting

- D1.16.1 Reimbursement is made by the **department** for valid EAPA vouchers presented by customers to the **retailer**, during the previous month.
- D1.16.2 **Retailers** should submit a report to the **department** each month including information such as voucher serial numbers, pre and post EAPA balances for customer accounts and customer supply addresses, for the previous month. These reports must be in a form specified by the **department**. This report must be submitted using the **Department's** electronic reporting system.
- D1.16.3 **Retailers** must separately provide the **department** with a tax invoice and an **acquittal statement** corresponding to each monthly report. The **acquittal statement** is to state the amount for which the **retailer** is

seeking reimbursement. Monthly reimbursement for administration costs must also be claimed at this time.

- D1.16.4 Administration costs are to be calculated based on \$0.80 per bill (per customer account) regardless of how many vouchers are presented in a transaction.
- D1.16.5 The **acquittal statement** must be certified and signed by an appropriately responsible person nominated by the **retailer**. Each **retailer** must communicate the name of the nominated person/s to the **department** for verification purposes.
- D1.16.6 **Retailers** must retain records of EAPA transactions including voucher serial numbers, pre and post EAPA balances for customer accounts, customer supply addresses and voucher serial numbers for those vouchers which have been cancelled or rejected by the **retailer** in accordance with this Code.

D1.17 Compliance

- D1.17.1 **Retailers** must establish and maintain accounting procedures and records to enable periodic reports to be prepared to substantiate compliance with the Code.
- D1.17.2 **Retailers** must, upon request, provide such reports to the Minister, the **department** or any auditor appointed by the **department**.
- D1.17.3 **Retailers** must maintain records to substantiate compliance with the Code for a period of seven years.