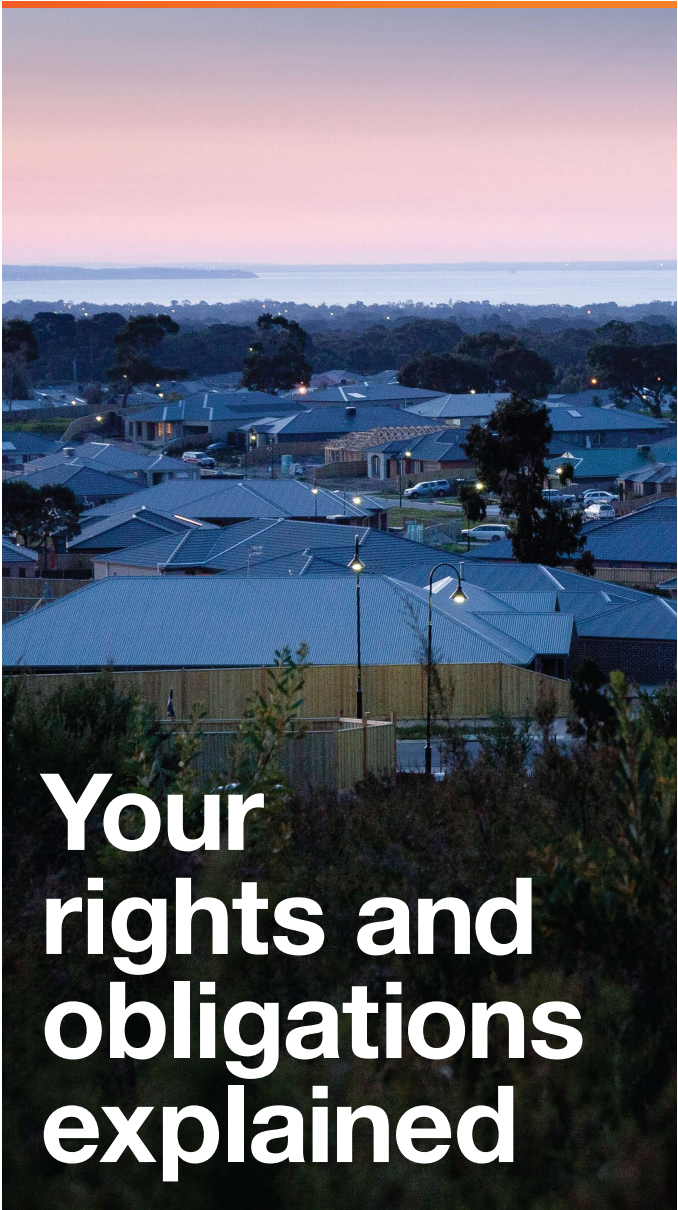




Customer Charter



**Your
rights and
obligations
explained**

Contents

United Energy – delivering a safe and reliable electricity supply	1
United Energy – your electricity distributor	2
Our role in connecting you to the network	5
Existing connection	5
New connection	6
Disconnection	7
Interruptions	8
What are your obligations?	9
Electrical safety	11
Access to your property	11
What are our obligations?	
– Guaranteed Service Levels	12
We commit to timely and accurate information	14
We acknowledge your rights to confidentiality and privacy	14
We acknowledge special requirements	14
We will offer a reliable electricity supply	15
Voltage variations and claims	16
The environment	17
Trees	17
Our responsibilities	18
Your responsibilities	18
Street lighting	19
Dispute resolution	19
Updates	20
Contact us	21
Directory	21

About United Energy

United Energy (UE) is licensed by the Victorian Government to distribute electricity across Melbourne's south-eastern suburbs and the Mornington Peninsula. We serve some 630,000 customers and own and manage more than 210,000 poles along with about 13,000 kilometres of wires.

We are proud to be your local electricity distributor.

United Energy – delivering a safe and reliable electricity supply

Dear Customer,

United Energy (UE) owns and manages the poles and wires that deliver electricity to you.

This Customer Charter provides you with an overview of our services and responsibilities. In it, you will find important information on how to obtain the best from your electricity distribution service, including details of our Guaranteed Service Levels. In addition, we have included your obligations as a customer to help you understand what is needed to ensure that the electricity supply to your property is reliable and safe.

We are committed to providing the highest level of customer service to all of our 630,000 customers throughout Melbourne's south-eastern suburbs and the Mornington Peninsula. In many cases we have engaged specialist contractors to provide services directly to our network.

We hope you will find the information provided in this Customer Charter useful. Please keep it handy for future reference or bookmark our website:
www.ue.com.au



Hugh Gleeson
Chief Executive Officer
United Energy

United Energy – your electricity distributor

We are proud to be your local electricity distributor.

There are four distinct parts of the electricity supply chain:

Electricity generators are the power stations that generate the electricity.

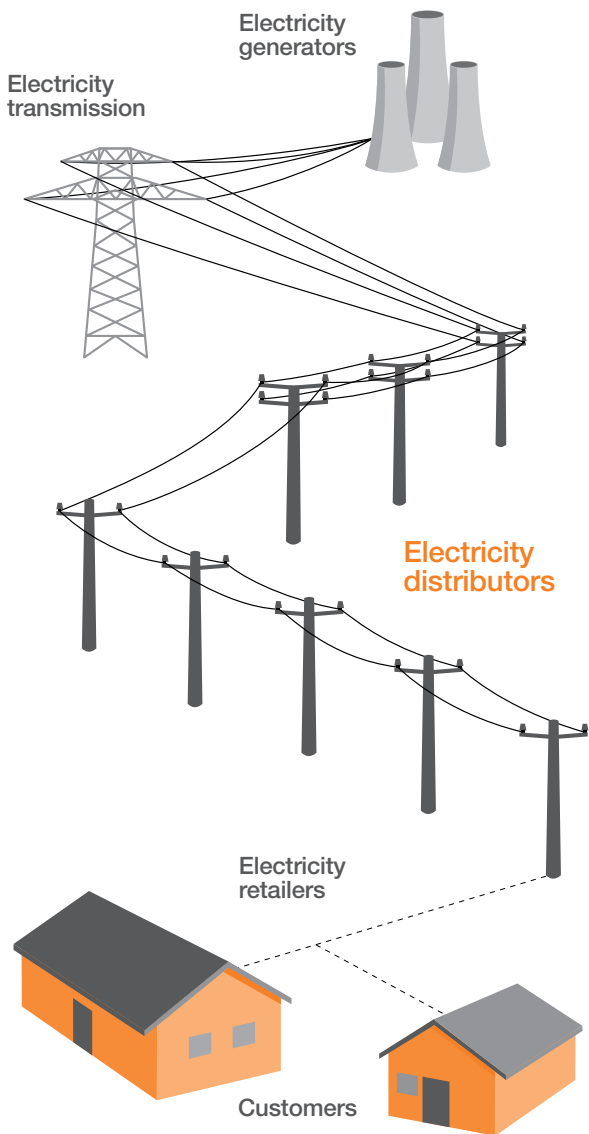
Electricity transmission is the network that transports electricity, from the power stations to the major distribution points (terminal stations) in Victoria, via large tower structures.

Electricity distributors are businesses like UE that own, operate and maintain the electricity network.

Electricity retailers are companies who buy the electricity in bulk from generators and sell it to you. They arrange with local distributors for the electricity to be delivered to your property through the wires in your street. You should contact your electricity retailer in relation to all billing enquiries and connection or disconnection. Your retailer will also supply you with key information on payment assistance and final meter readings.

All customers are able to choose their retailer, and irrespective of the choice you make, the same wires (owned by your distributor) will deliver the same safe and reliable electricity to you.

Energy supply chain



The United Energy network



Our role in connecting you to the network

For every supply point within our network, it is our role to safely provide, install and maintain our meters and associated equipment. This equipment must be placed at a suitable location within your property and be accessible to our employees and field crew for meter reading and meter maintenance.

We aim to provide you with the highest standards in metering to ensure accurate billing for all energy used. These standards are achieved by using reliable, accurate equipment which is maintained by approved testing programs.

Existing connection

Ensuring a safe and reliable electricity connection is the main priority for many of our customers.

All requests for reconnection to electricity supply at your premises are made via your selected retailer. If you make a request to your retailer for reconnection before 3pm on a business day, we will aim to reconnect you on the same day. If the request is made after 3pm but before 9pm, we will reconnect you on the same day if you agree to pay an after hours charge. Alternatively, we can simply reconnect you on the next business day for no additional charge.

We are in the process of installing advanced metering infrastructure (AMI) across our distribution network which will enable shorter times for reconnections and disconnections and remove the need for our field crew to visit your property to complete either. If your property has an AMI meter either you or your retailer will eventually be able to request a remote reconnection or disconnection. If safe to do so (as deemed by UE) and approved by your retailer, we will endeavour to connect your premises within two hours of a valid request being received.

New connection

Either you or your retailer on your behalf may request a new connection at a new supply address.

We will agree with you the date for connection and do our best to connect you on that date. Where no date is agreed, we will aim to connect you within 10 business days following your completed application request.

In Victoria, electricity safety regulations only permit suitably licensed persons to work on electrical installations. It is important to note that connections to new premises are subject to:

- an adequate supply of electricity being available at the required voltage at the boundary of the premises
- a Certificate of Electrical Safety being provided for the electrical installation
- our representatives being provided with safe, convenient and unhindered access
- compliance with the reasonable technical requirements as indicated within the Victorian Service and Installation Rules.

If you have any questions or concerns about the new connection process, please contact our new connections team on **1300 131 689** during business hours.



Disconnection

We will disconnect your electricity supply upon your request or your retailer's request. We may also disconnect or interrupt your electricity supply in the following situations:

- planned maintenance, repair or improvement of our network
- unplanned maintenance or repair
- to restore supply to another customer
- to install a new supply service to another customer
- in an emergency, without notice
- if there is danger to the health and safety of any person or the environment (including a fire risk)
- without notice due to illegal use (this is defined as supply being used other than at your premises, being taken from another person's premises or the meter being tampered with or bypassed)
- non-compliance with the Electricity Distribution Code, *Electricity Safety Act* and/or other regulations, or the requirements of an energy regulator or market operator. For non-compliance we will provide you with written notice of the problem and at least five business days to rectify the issue. A further five business days' written notice will be provided prior to disconnection unless it is an emergency or otherwise required by the relevant regulations.

Other than in an emergency, or if supply is being illegally used, we will not disconnect you after 2pm (for domestic residential customers) or 3pm (for business customers) Monday to Thursday or on Fridays, weekends, public holidays, or a day before a public holiday, unless agreed by you.

As outlined under *Existing connection* on page 5 of this Customer Charter, we will eventually be able to connect and disconnect electricity to your premises upon your or your retailer's request via an AMI meter. Following a valid request and confirmation it is safe to do so, we will endeavour to disconnect your premises remotely within two hours.

Please note, other than when we disconnect remotely, we will leave documentation at the address if a customer is vacating. The documentation will clearly outline who the occupant must address any request to connect supply to, the occupant's options for entering into a retail contract and a list of retailers.

Interruptions

There are instances where we must interrupt your electricity supply.

Planned interruptions

In order to maintain a high quality electricity distribution network, it is necessary at times to interrupt your electricity supply for planned maintenance or improvement work. We commit to providing you with a minimum of four business days notice in writing of any planned interruptions.

At all times it is our priority to restore the electricity supply as quickly as possible and to minimise the number of outages. This is managed through careful planning of maintenance, together with the use of advanced technology.

Important note: we recommend customers who require continuous supply to refer to their emergency plans or make alternative arrangements.

Unplanned interruptions

Interruptions resulting in a loss of electricity supply may occur due to causes beyond our control, such as storms, lightning strikes, animal interferences and/or motor vehicle accidents. The most common cause of an unplanned interruption is the dislodgement of supply wires by falling tree branches.

In the case of an unplanned interruption or emergency, you should contact our Faults and Emergencies helpdesk on **132 099** (24 hours). Within 30 minutes of you advising us of an interruption, or in an emergency, we will provide updated information on our website advising of the interruption and an estimate of the time to restore supply where it is available.

To gain updates on a major situation, please visit our website – www.ue.com.au – or SMS the postcode of your supply address to 0447 100 333 (you will get an automated response).

Direction by a regulatory authority

The Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) may direct us to interrupt the supply of electricity to customers where it is necessary to do so for reasons of public safety and/or the security of the electricity system (known as load shedding).

What are your obligations?

As an electricity customer, you play an important role in ensuring the network delivers efficient and safe electricity to all customers within our region. We have summarised the obligations set out in the Electricity Distribution Code below.

You must always use your best endeavours to ensure that:

- your electrical installation, and any equipment within it, is maintained in a safe condition
- the equipment in your electrical installation is at all times effectively coordinated with the electrical characteristics of the distribution system.

You are also obliged to follow these key principles:

- ensure that the distribution system and the reliability and quality of supply to other customers are not adversely affected by your actions or equipment
- do not illegally use electricity:
 - your supply of electricity may not be used anywhere other than at your premises and you may not supply electricity to any other person except in accordance with the *Electricity Industry Act 2000 (Vic)*
 - you must not take electricity supplied to another address for your own purposes
 - you must not allow electricity supplied to you to bypass the meter at your premises
- you must not tamper with or permit tampering with the meter or associated equipment
- you must keep all vegetation, structures and vehicles at your premises clear of powerlines.

It is also important that you:

- do not interfere, and use your best endeavours not to allow interference, with our distribution system including any of our equipment (such as meters) and associated equipment installed in, or on, your premises
- provide and maintain on your premises any reasonable or agreed facility required to protect our equipment
- do not exceed defined levels for reactive power or harmonic currents as set out in the Electricity Distribution Code (these requirements are usually relevant only for large commercial and industrial customers).

You must also inform us (or request that your retailer informs us) as soon as practicable, if you plan to:

- change wiring or equipment in your electrical installation which may affect the quality of the supply of electricity to any other person
- change the major purpose for which the electricity is used at your address
- change access arrangements to metering and associated equipment
- significantly increase the amount of electricity likely to be used at your supply address
- install any embedded generation associated with your connection.

If we become aware you have breached the Electricity Distribution Code, we will request that you remedy the situation within a specific timeframe. If you do not comply with this notice, we may elect to disconnect your premises.

If you are a tenant, then you must use your best endeavours to have the owner (or other persons responsible for the property) remedy the situation. On our request, you must provide evidence that you have undertaken reasonable steps to contact the relevant person and to have the non-compliance addressed.

Electrical safety

The safety of our people, customers and the general public is of the highest priority. Energy Safe Victoria (ESV) regulates electrical safety in Victoria, including the licensing of electricians.

An electric shock, a fuse blowing repeatedly, a circuit breaker operating repeatedly, or appliances sparking, spluttering or overheating are indications of faulty connections to equipment or wiring on your premises.

We recommend that you have any defects at your premises checked and rectified by a Registered Electrical Contractor.

Access to your property

Our employees and contractors are clearly marked with our logo and are more than happy to supply official identification on request.

To help our qualified crew do their job, we request that you provide safe, convenient and unhindered access to your premises to allow them to:

- read or inspect the meter
- connect or disconnect the electricity supply
- inspect and/or test the electrical installation
- prune or clear vegetation from electricity lines
- undertake repairs or maintenance, including replacing aged meters.

We also request that you take action to minimise any potentially dangerous situations for our crew, such as an unleashed dog or an uncovered hole.



What are our obligations?

– Guaranteed Service Levels

As your electricity distributor, we are committed to providing our customers with a clear set of service guarantees.

We will aim to be on time for scheduled appointments. If we are more than 15 minutes late for a scheduled appointment, you will be credited \$20. Following the confirmation of a scheduled appointment, we will specify an agreed timeframe during which we will attend. If you are required to be in attendance, this must not be more than a two hour period. If you are not required to attend, the timeframe must not be more than a 24 hour period. We will ensure the appointment time with you (or your representative) is made before 5pm on the business day prior.

If we do not connect your new electricity supply on the date we have agreed, you will be credited with \$50 for every day we are late, up to a maximum of \$250.

If you report a faulty streetlight next to your house or business that we are responsible for maintaining, you will be credited \$10 if we do not fix it within two business days.

The above outlines our obligation to Guaranteed Service Levels (GSLs). It is important to note that payments for interruptions are paid by us to your retailer. Payments may be made to your retailer after the obligation arises, and your retailer is responsible for the timing of this credit to your account. In some circumstances the payments (above) may not apply (e.g. planned interruptions, load shedding).

If you experience between 10 and 15 unplanned sustained interruptions (an interruption to your supply that lasts for longer than one minute) in a calendar year, you will be credited \$100.

- A further \$50 will be credited to you if you experience between 16 and 30 unplanned sustained interruptions in a year.
- If you experience more than 30 unplanned sustained interruptions in a year, you will be credited a further \$150.

If you experience between 24 and 36 momentary (up to one minute) interruptions in a year, you will be credited \$25.

If you experience more than 36 momentary interruptions in a year, you will be credited \$35.

If you experience between 20 and 30 hours of unplanned sustained interruptions in any calendar year, you will be credited \$100.

- If you experience between 31 and 60 hours of unplanned sustained interruptions in a year, you will be credited a further \$50.
- If you experience more than 60 hours of unplanned sustained interruptions in a year, you will be credited a further \$150.

We have tracking equipment on the high voltage network and processes in place to constantly monitor and record supply outages to most of our customers, however we do still request that you notify us of any problems with your electricity supply.

Please contact us on **13 20 99** (24 hours) if you have any interruptions or issues.

We commit to timely and accurate information

We are committed to providing you with timely and accurate information on issues related to the supply of electricity to your property, via both distribution of printed materials to your address and up to date news and information on our website: www.ue.com.au

On your request, or at the time of connection, we must provide a copy of this Customer Charter.

Before installing an AMI meter, we will advise you in writing of any changes to your tariff structure which may apply in the future.

We acknowledge your rights to confidentiality and privacy

We are committed to maintaining the confidentiality of your personal information in accordance with the National Privacy Principles under the *Privacy Act 1988*. We therefore will not use or disclose your personal information unless you have given your consent or the disclosure of use is permitted by energy regulations or otherwise required or permitted by law.

We acknowledge special requirements

If you have special requirements for electricity supply (such as life support needs), you must contact your retailer and provide the relevant documentation requested. Your retailer will then notify us of your requirements and we will endeavour to ensure your electricity supply is not disconnected. Alternatively you can advise us directly of the requirement for life support with confirmation from your doctor or medical adviser.

At times, interruptions to supply cannot be avoided. We recommend, if you have special requirements, that you have an emergency plan in place for such interruptions occurring, and activate the plan if your electricity supply is lost. If you do not have an emergency plan, we can, with the assistance of your medical adviser and your retailer, assist you in preparing a plan of action to deal with an unplanned electricity supply interruption.

We commit to providing you with at least four business days' written notice of any planned electricity interruption.

As part of our responsibility to customers with special requirements, we can provide language interpreting services on request. If you or a family member require an interpreter, simply call 131 450. This is a free service.

We will offer a reliable electricity supply

We hold in the highest regard our commitment to provide every customer in our region with an electricity supply that is safe, reliable and of a quality which meets required distribution standards.

We acknowledge that no electricity distribution system is 100% reliable and there may be interruptions from time to time. In maintaining your supply, we observe a number of industry codes and rules approved by the Australian Energy Regulator (AER). We continually monitor the performance of our distribution network and continually look to implement improvements.

We publish our annual reliability targets on our website, and in local newspapers.

At your request, we will provide you with:

- a copy of these targets
- an explanation for any interruption to your supply (including an explanation in writing within 20 business days if you require it)
- an explanation within 10 business days of your request for information about any change in the quality of your supply, or if this is not possible, of the steps we are taking to provide you with this information.



Voltage variations and claims

The voltage of your power supply can be affected by a number of factors outside our control. Interruptions and fluctuations may cause damage to your electrical equipment and in some serious cases (although uncommon) can cause fire.

If your appliances or equipment do suffer damage as a result of a voltage variation, you may be entitled to submit a claim. Claim forms are available from www.ue.com.au or by calling us on 1300 131 689 or calling your retailer.

Your claim for damages will be processed in accordance with the guidelines published by the Essential Services Commission (ESC). Details of the guidelines are located at www.ue.com.au

If you are a business customer, it is important that you are aware of your obligations to minimise the risk of loss or damage to your business in the event of fluctuations in electricity supply by taking precautions.

For more information on voltage variations, including industry guidelines, visit www.ue.com.au

Please contact us directly if you have any concerns about the quality of your electricity supply.

Following your request, we can undertake a specific test to determine the quality of current supply. There is a fee for this service, in accordance with our standard service prices (available on request). However, if the results illustrate that we are not complying with our obligations under the Electricity Distribution Code, the service will be free of charge and we will investigate the issue within 20 business days, notifying you of the steps taken to comply.

If requested, we will provide you, or your Registered Electrical Contractor, with information on our requirements in relation to any proposed new electrical installation or changes to your existing electrical installation, including advice about supply extensions.

We are more than happy to provide advice on:

- the facilities required to protect our equipment
- how you should use the electricity supply to ensure that it does not interfere with the distribution system or with supply to any other electrical installations
- where you can obtain a copy of the standards, which are in accordance with the Electricity Distribution Code.

The environment

We are committed protecting the environment, with a goal to achieve zero environmental harm as part of our day-to-day operations.

Our focus is to ensure a sustainable network for future generations. In this highly regulated industry, we recognise the importance of compliance with all applicable health, safety and environmental legislation.

Trees

Branches from trees coming in contact with powerlines are the most common cause of unplanned interruptions.

Trees that are not maintained can cause significant damage to the network, and may cause a fire.



Our responsibilities

Please never attempt to clear or trim trees within the vicinity of powerlines. The pruning or removal of trees on your property, or on road reserves in rural areas near the powerlines, is our responsibility (except in relation to the 'service line'). If you are concerned about vegetation near powerlines, please contact us on 1300 131 689 to arrange an onsite inspection.

Trees on the road reserves in urban areas are the responsibility of your local council. Please contact your council first if you have any concerns about these trees, however, if you are not given a satisfactory response, please contact us on 1300 131 689.

Your responsibilities

It is your responsibility to keep trees and branches on your property away from the powerline that runs from the pole to your residence, known as the 'service line'.

Where trees or other vegetation pose a danger we may provide you with written notice to clear the vegetation from the service line. We recommend that you engage only Registered Electrical Contractors or authorised vegetation control companies to undertake this work.

If the line remains uncleared after a reasonable period following our notice, and therefore unsafe, we may instruct our contractor to perform the work and bill you. If you are a tenant, you are responsible for contacting your property owner about clearing trees and vegetation from the service line. If your neighbours' trees are affecting your service line, please contact us on 1300 131 689.

The Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations set out the clearances required and who is responsible for carrying out the pruning. You may request a copy of these regulations from Energy Safe Victoria (ESV), or they can be located at www.esv.vic.gov.au

Street lighting

We provide public lighting services to local government and VicRoads in your area. However, on some of the major roads, VicRoads owns and maintains the street lighting assets. This can be confusing for many customers, so if you spot a faulty streetlight or have any questions, please call us on 132 099 (24 hours). If the faulty streetlight is on a pole displaying a VicRoads label, please call VicRoads on 131 171.

We have regular patrols to identify and repair faulty lights on main roads, however we encourage public support to identify any lights that may be missed.

Dispute resolution

We strive to provide you with outstanding customer service every time you contact us. However, if you should ever feel the service we provide is less than satisfactory, a complaint can be lodged by contacting either your retailer or United Energy via www.ue.com.au and we will do our best to resolve it satisfactorily.

If you are not completely satisfied with our response, you are entitled to a review of your complaint by senior management within our company. If we are still not able to resolve the issue to your satisfaction, you may contact the Energy and Water Ombudsman of Victoria (EWOV).

EWOV is an independent service which receives, investigates and resolves enquiries and complaints against electricity companies.



Updates

This Customer Charter is correct as of November 2011.

We will advise you of any material updates to your rights and responsibilities via www.ue.com.au

New laws will be coming out shortly that may impact the relationship between a distributor and its customers. New arrangements in relation to the National Energy Customer Framework will be updated via www.ue.com.au

Please keep this Customer Charter in a safe place for future reference.



Contact us

Customer Service Desk Monday to Friday 8am–6pm
1300 131 689

Emergency/Faults 24 hours
132 099

Telephone Interpreting Service
131 450

Postal Address
PO Box 449
Mt Waverley VIC 3149

Email Address
customerrelations@ue.com.au

Website
www.ue.com.au

Directory

Energy Safe Victoria (ESV)

4 Riverside Quay
Southbank VIC 3006

Postal address

PO Box 262

Collins Street West
Melbourne VIC 8007

Telephone

(03) 9203 9700

Website

www.esv.vic.gov.au

Essential Services Commission (ESC)

Level 2, 35 Spring Street
Melbourne VIC 3000

Telephone

(03) 9651 0222

Website

www.esc.vic.gov.au

Energy and Water Ombudsman of Victoria (EWOV)

GPO Box 469D
Melbourne VIC 3001

Telephone

1800 500 509

Website

www.ewov.com.au

Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO)

GPO Box 2008
Melbourne VIC 3001

Telephone

1300 858 724

Website

www.aemo.com.au

Australian Energy Regulator (AER)

GPO Box 520
Melbourne VIC 3001

Telephone

1300 302 502

Website

www.aer.gov.au

www.ue.com.au

Your National Meter Identifier (NMI) is a unique meter number that identifies your metering installation in the National Electricity Market (you can obtain this from your electricity bill). You should record this NMI here for easy reference.

NMI: