



EMBEDDED NETWORKS

From July 2018, EWOV will start taking complaints from customers in embedded networks. This fact sheet explains what embedded networks are, the rights of embedded network customers and how EWOV can help.

What are embedded networks?

Embedded networks are private electricity networks that supply homes or businesses within a specific area. They are common in apartment buildings, shopping centres, caravan parks and retirement villages.

The companies that sell electricity to customers in embedded networks are often called **exempt sellers**. This is because they are **exempt** from the normal requirement to have a licence to sell electricity. In the past, this meant that customers in embedded networks didn't have clear rights and could **not** come to EWOV if they had a complaint.

What's changed for embedded network customers?

In 2017, the Victorian government changed the law about embedded networks. It decided that customers in embedded networks needed clear rights, and that they should be able to complain to EWOV if they couldn't resolve a problem. These changes are now underway.

(i) Am I in an embedded network?

There are hundreds of embedded networks in Victoria, some of them quite small. Sometimes customers don't know that they are in an embedded network.

Many embedded networks use an agent to send bills and provide customer service. Some of the larger agents are WinConnect, Energy On, Active Utilities, ENSA, Energy Intelligence, Benergy, iGENO, Network Energy Services and OC Energy. If you receive bills from any of these companies, you are in an embedded network.

If you are still not sure if you are in an embedded network, call your body corporate, the operator of your caravan park or retirement village, or the company named on your electricity bill. You can also check the Essential Services Commission's new [register](#) of embedded networks to see if yours is listed (however, some embedded networks are not included on this list).

What are my rights?

Electricity customers in Victoria have rights to do with how they **buy** electricity and how that electricity is **supplied** to them.

The *Energy Retail Code* sets out customers' rights to do with **buying** electricity. Victoria's electricity regulator, the Essential Services Commission, is now deciding which customer protection rules from the *Energy Retail Code* should apply to embedded networks. It is expected that customers buying electricity in embedded networks will have **most** of the same rights, protections and responsibilities as other customers.

The *Electricity Distribution Code* sets out customers' rights to do with how their electricity is **supplied**. Most parts of the *Electricity Distribution Code* also apply to embedded networks. The parts that don't apply are listed in *Electricity Distribution Code* clause 1.3.5.

Can I switch to a different company?

Every electricity customer's bill covers the costs of both the electricity they consume **and** use of the electricity network (the poles and wires). Customers in embedded networks have the right to buy their **electricity** from a different company. However, because of the way embedded networks are set up, you will still need to pay your embedded network for the **network-related costs**.

The process for switching to a different company for your electricity costs is new, and changing can be complicated. If you are in an embedded network and would like to change company, call your embedded network and ask them to explain the process and any costs involved. If you have a problem you can't resolve, you can contact EWOV for help.



What should I do if I have a problem with an embedded network?

If you have a problem as a customer in an embedded network, first, contact them and ask to make a complaint. All embedded networks must have a process for handling complaints from customers. If you can't resolve the problem with your embedded network, contact EWOV.

How can EWOV help?

From July 2018, EWOV will begin taking complaints about embedded networks. We can help with complaints about **electricity issues** such as billing, payments, disconnection, supply, debt collection and changing company. We will normally only take complaints about things that happened after **30 June 2018**.

We can only handle complaints about embedded networks that are **members of EWOV**. All embedded networks in Victoria must join EWOV, but some have not yet joined.

(i) Is my embedded network a member of EWOV?

You can check whether or not your embedded network is a member on the embedded networks page on the EWOV website. Even if your embedded network isn't listed as a member, you should still contact us so we can make a record of your complaint and remind your embedded network to join.

If you make a complaint to us but your embedded network has not joined EWOV yet, we will:

- record your contact details and your complaint
- give you some general advice and refer you Consumer Affairs Victoria for more assistance
- write to your embedded network reminding them that they must join EWOV.

Once the embedded network has joined EWOV – which may take some time – we will recontact you to discuss your complaint. If it hasn't been resolved, and if it's about an issue we can deal with, we will open a complaint for you.