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To Committee into Electricity Supply, Demand and Prices in NSW
Subject Response to Question on Notice
Date 5 November 2018

Question on Notice

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: That is an important context. The second issue I wanted to ask about was the consumer data right that the ACCC pointed to. It believed that in the medium term this was something that would be a significant benefit to consumers. It would have what it saw as a positive impact on price, but it saw that as happening in the medium term. It saw that there were barriers to consumers effectively having that right to have possession of their data and being able to see what offers might be available to them. I wondered if you had any observations about the practical barriers to that right being further enhanced. If the question was how could we do that more quickly, did you have any views that you wanted to put on the table today?

Ms REYNOLDS: I can comment that we agree that consumers having access to the data is a good thing. I would like to be able to give you a more considered answer with respect to what are the practical barriers to that occurring. I have not got a detailed response on that.

Mr CHAPPEL: We might take that one on notice, if that is okay.

AGL Response

AGL supports and is actively participating in the development of Customer Data Right for the energy sector. AGL's full position can be found here: <https://thehub.agl.com.au/articles/2018/09/agl-submission-on-consumer-data-right-treasury-bill>

AGL encourages governments to support this initiative as the most sustainable solution in empowering consumers to access their data to make more informed choices about their energy plan.

Energy Rules currently provide consumers with a right to access their consumption data free of charge. The introduction of Consumer Data Rights will provide a framework around this access to protect consumers' privacy in the sharing of this data by requiring data recipients (3rd party intermediaries who consumers may share the data to evaluate the best possible plan) to be appropriately accredited by the ACCC. The Accreditation will ensure 3rd party data recipients have appropriate safeguards to protect the privacy of the consumer data and obtain consent from the consumer to share their data. Consumers who access their data under the current Rules face unnecessary risks on data handling, storage, transfer and security.

The immediate barrier for consumers accessing data is based on their meter type. Most consumers in NSW have an accumulation meter that is read once every quarter. Metering competition and the roll out of digital meters in NSW commenced following the introduction of Power of Choice in December 2017 which will make consumer data more readily and regularly available.

The NSW Government currently has a moratorium whereby retailers are unable to obtain meter reads remotely for digital meters and have to wait for Distributors to undertake a manual read. AGL advocates for the removal of this moratorium to enable faster customer transfers. For example, in Victoria where digital meters have a 99% penetration rate and remote metering services are allowed, most customer transfers are completed within 5 business days post the 10 business days cooling off period as digital meters are read remotely and retailers can transfer customers remotely. In NSW, retailers may need to wait until the next scheduled read date by the Distributor. This transfer may take up to 3 months to occur. Remote meter services for customer transfers will allow customers to switch to their preferred plan as soon as possible.



As per the recent Draft IPART Report into metering practices, the NSW Government can also support the IPART recommendation that the NSW Department of Planning and Environment work with retailers to develop and publish more information for customers about the process for applying for a digital meter.