

Support for vulnerable Tasmanians

The Government's electricity reforms aim to deliver choice to Tasmanian consumers and ensuring that Tasmanians pay the lowest sustainable electricity bills.

The Government has decided that the current retail price determination will be rolled forward for the period 1 July 2013 to 1 January 2014 when FRC begins in Tasmania.

While it will be up to the Regulator to determine the price increase that is allowed, it is looking at this stage as though the increase on 1 July 2013 will be no more than the rate of increase in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) – this will be the lowest price increase for Tasmanian consumers in five years.

To ensure the continuation of support structures for vulnerable Tasmanians the following initiatives will be implemented under the reform package.

Initiatives up to 1 January 2014:

- Approval to roll forward current retail price determination for the period 1 July 2013 – 1 January 2014 resulting in an expected price increase of no more than the rate of CPI
- Tasmanian health care card and pensioner concessions, which are already the most generous in Australia at \$450 per customer per year, will continue to be indexed to the price increase – this means that customers who are eligible for a concession are further protected from price increases for the period. There will be no changes to eligibility for concessions.
- Aurora has indicated it will extend the current agreement with the Salvation Army for emergency relief funding - this funding is used by the Salvation Army to assist those most in need to pay their bills

Initiatives post 1 January 2014:

- While details are still being worked through, the Government will seek to ensure that at least the current levels of emergency relief funding continue to be made available from 1 January 2014
- The reform team will look at options for how this support will continue to be delivered into the future and to develop legislation and policy that ensures this commitment is met
- Existing health care card and pensioner concessions will be continued under full retail competition. The Government will announce the details on implementation well before the 1 January 2014 when full retail competition commences. The Government will seek to ensure that customers do not have to reapply to receive the concessions from their new retailer and that eligibility details are seamlessly transferred, without breaching confidentiality requirements.
- All customers will be able to obtain a regulated contract with a retailer under full retail competition, regardless of their payment history