

# Media Release

**Gabrielle Williams MP**

Minister for Prevention of Family Violence  
Minister for Women  
Minister for Youth



**DELIVERING  
FOR ALL VICTORIANS**

Tuesday, 19 March 2019

## **NEW ENERGY RETAIL PROTECTIONS FOR VICTIMS OF FAMILY VIOLENCE**

Energy retailers will be required to recognise family violence as a form of financial difficulty and consider this before pursuing debt, with an updated retail code planned to protect the rights of affected customers.

Minister for Prevention of Family Violence Gabrielle Williams welcomed the proposed new Energy Retail Code, which was a recommendation of the Andrews Labor Government's Royal Commission into Family Violence.

The Essential Services Commission has released the draft code after the Royal Commission found that essential services could be used to coerce other people – by putting a service into a victim's name without their knowledge or consent, or obtaining contact details of a joint account holder from a provider.

The proposed Code would require retailers to have a family violence policy and new standards of conduct to boost protections, with better training for staff and improved account security and debt management practices.

Feedback from energy retailers and family violence specialists during the Royal Commission agreed that the energy industry could create meaningful and long-term change with these new measures.

Family violence can have a significant financial toll on victim-survivors, especially where the perpetrator has used access to money and debts to exert control. These changes will offer greater protection and awareness.

The updated code is set to take effect from 1 January 2020 and will reflect similar changes to the water service code made in 2018, to protect customers experiencing family violence.

The Andrews Labor Government commissioned a world-first Royal Commission into Family Violence and then accepted all 227 of its recommendations.

Stakeholders can comment on the draft energy code at [esc.vic.gov.au/electricity-and-gas](http://esc.vic.gov.au/electricity-and-gas), until 16 April.

### **Quotes attributable to Minister for Prevention of Family Violence Gabrielle Williams**

*"Family violence is a scourge on society and our number one law and order issue. This move is one of many underway to ensure women and children are protected."*

*"Implementing all 227 recommendations of the Royal Commission into Family Violence is the first step in driving generational change and stopping family violence before it starts."*

### **Quote attributable to Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change Lily D'Ambrosio**

*"Energy supply and bills should never be used as tools to threaten or hurt people – these new consumer protections mean energy retailers will play their part in combating the scourge of family violence."*