

MEDIA RELEASE

Origin Energy to reimburse customers for late payment charges

15 May 2019

The Queensland Competition Authority (QCA) has directed Origin Energy to reimburse all affected customers after the QCA identified late payment charges in standing offers that breached Queensland energy retail pricing rules.

Origin has undertaken to the QCA that it will immediately seek to contact more than 450 affected electricity customers in order to refund late payment fees recovered by Origin between 2011 and 2018.

The charging of late payment fees by Origin in the circumstances was inconsistent with restrictions on the types of fees that can be levied by a retailer on its standing offer customers under section 22A of the National Energy Retail Law (NERL). Section 22A of the NERL applies only in Queensland.

The QCA monitors retailers' compliance with section 22A by analysing retailers' standing offers on the Australian Energy Regulator's electricity price comparison website, [Energy Made Easy](#). In January 2019, the QCA identified six Origin standing offers that included \$12 late payment fees.

In March 2019, Origin informed the QCA that it had unintentionally charged late payment fees to some of its standing offer customers between December 2011 and August 2018. Origin indicated that it will issue bill credits to affected customers who are still Origin customers, and will seek to notify affected customers who are no longer Origin customers.

Following contact from the QCA, Origin has further confirmed that it will:

- (1) seek to contact all affected customers and will make a full refund available to them
- (2) report monthly to the QCA over the next 6 months on the number of customers who have been contacted and the number and amount of refunds paid
- (3) report to the QCA on the steps which it has taken to ensure all future pricing is compliant with section 22A.

The QCA welcomes the cooperation of Origin in providing this response.

QCA Chair, Professor Flavio Menezes, said "it is important that electricity retailers meet their obligations regarding customer protections such as the restriction on fees that can be charged to standing offer customers. The QCA encourages any former Origin standing offer customers who have been charged late payment fees to contact Origin to find out whether they are entitled to a refund.

"The QCA also notes that the Queensland Government is currently reviewing the operation of the NERL in Queensland, and customer protections such as the fee types restriction for standing offer customers are part of that review," said Professor Menezes.

Media enquiries should be directed to Cole Lawson Communications: (07) 3221 2220 or 0411 135 005.

More information on section 22A of the NERL is available in chapter 9 of the QCA's SEQ retail electricity market monitoring report for 2016–17, available on the [QCA website](#).