

# Appendices

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## Appendix 1: Response from Agency



Planning &  
Environment

Office of the Secretary

V17/8657  
OUT17/34869

Ms Margaret Crawford  
Auditor- General of NSW  
Audit Office of New South Wales  
GPO Box 12  
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Dear Ms Crawford

Thank you for your letter of 22 August 2017 and the final report of the *Performance Audit – Energy Rebates for Low Income Households* conducted by your office.

I welcome the opportunity to provide a formal response to the final report from the Department of Planning and Environment. I note that officers of both our organisations have worked closely to ensure a robust and detailed examination of the energy rebate programs.

Accordingly, I welcome the key outcome of the performance audit that the Audit Office has not expressed any concerns with the Department's administration of the energy rebate programs.

In response to the major findings and recommendations of this report, I provide the following comments:

Ensure effective strategies are in place to make information about rebates available to all eligible low-income households - recommendation 1

The Department routinely promotes the availability of energy rebates and will continue to monitor and review opportunities to enhance this promotional activity.

Evaluate alternative models and develop advice for Government to reduce complexity and improve equity of rebates - recommendation 2

The Department will continue to provide advice to Government on opportunities to enhance the design and implementation of the rebates scheme.

Establish measurable objectives for schemes that provide ongoing support, and monitor and measure performance - recommendation 3

The objective of the rebates scheme is to help customers manage the financial impact of their energy bills. The Department will continue with its data development agenda to inform the design and implementation of the rebates scheme.

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Assess the impacts of the forecast increase in embedded networks and develop strategies to manage any risk - recommendation 4

The Department welcomes the focus on these issues and is currently working on matters about embedded networks and other 'off-grid' supply with stakeholders, including the industry Ombudsman and other jurisdictions. The Department will provide advice to the Government as any proposals are developed.

Strengthen assurance that EAPA is being provided in accordance with its objectives and guidelines - recommendation 5

The new Digital EAPA system for the emergency voucher scheme provides much improved monitoring of the community-based EAPA providers. The Department will continue with its data development agenda to strengthen compliance by the EAPA providers.

Ensure that those eligible for EAPA financial support are not disadvantaged by inflexible payments, inconsistent provider practices or inability to access an EAPA provider in a timely manner - recommendation 6

The introduction of the new Digital EAPA system has enhanced the flexibility of the program. For example, the new system allows customers to be issued vouchers without physically attending the office of a local EAPA provider. The Department will consider further enhancements to the EAPA program to ensure those eligible are not disadvantaged.

Should you have any further questions in relation to this matter, please contact Dr Liz Develin, Deputy Secretary, Division of Energy, Water and Portfolio Strategy. Dr Develin can be contacted on telephone (02) 9373 2851 or by email at [liz.develin@planning.nsw.gov.au](mailto:liz.develin@planning.nsw.gov.au).

Yours sincerely



**Carolyn McNally**  
**Secretary**

8.9.17