

New Protections for Victorians in Embedded Electricity Networks

The Victorian Government has made changes to better protect consumers in private electricity networks, known as embedded networks.

These arrangements, typically found in apartment buildings, shopping centres, caravan parks and retirement villages, are growing in number.

The Victorian Government has acted to ensure that these customers are treated fairly.

New arrangements will give consumers more protections around the supply and sale of electricity. This includes access to free and independent dispute resolution, via the Energy and Water Ombudsman (Victoria).

This fact sheet provides information for customers living in embedded networks.

Am I in an embedded network?

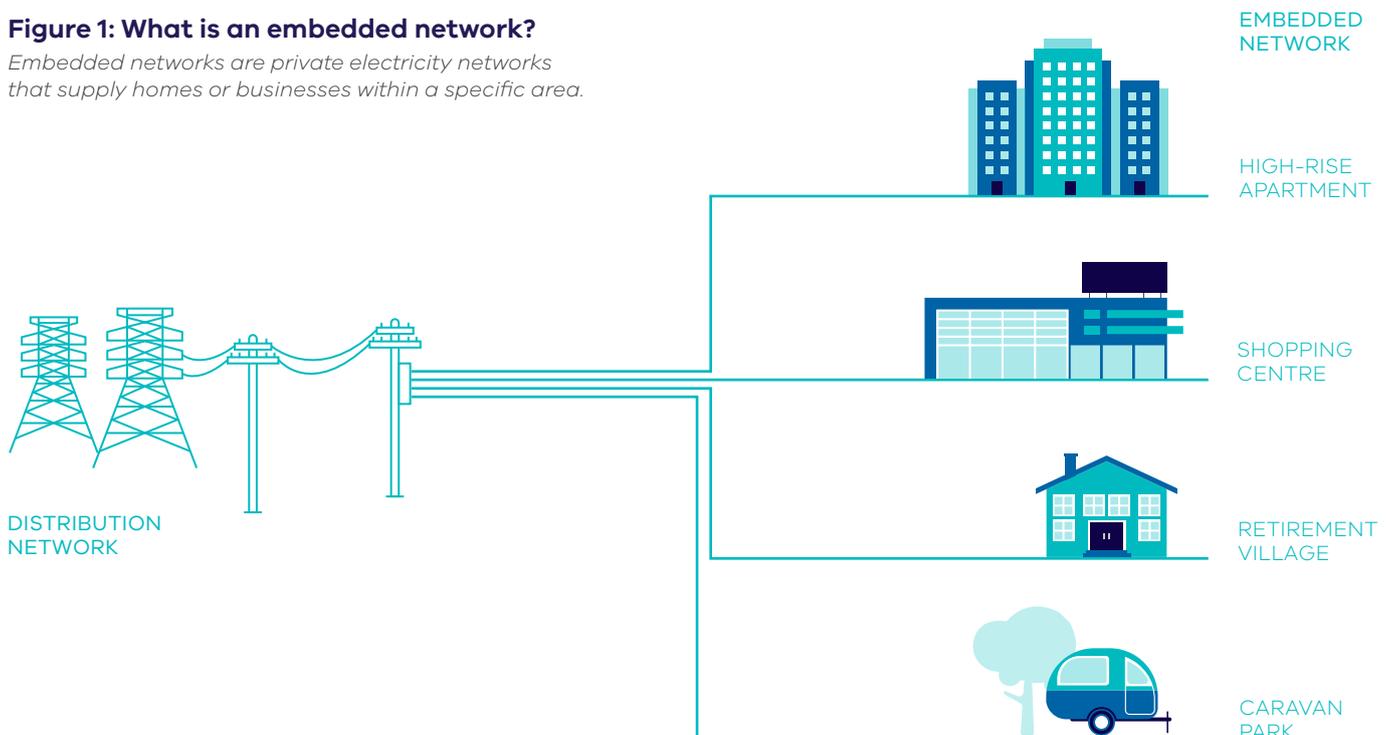
If you live in an apartment, shopping centre, caravan park or retirement village you may be living in an embedded network. If you are not sure if you are in an embedded network, call your body corporate, the operator of your caravan park or retirement village, or the company named on your electricity bill for further information.

If you are living within an embedded network, your energy provider may be registered with the Essential Services Commission, Victoria's independent regulator for the energy sector. You can access the Commission's register at www.esc.vic.gov.au/energy-licence-exemptions.

If you cannot find the details of your energy provider on the register, you can contact the Commission via email on exemptionregister@esc.vic.gov.au or telephone 1300 664 969. If you report a potential non-registration, the Commission will not reveal your identity or provide any details when they contact the embedded network operator.

Figure 1: What is an embedded network?

Embedded networks are private electricity networks that supply homes or businesses within a specific area.



Your rights and protections

Changes made by the Victorian Government will bring new protections for you. These include:

- The person who sells electricity to you must get your explicit and informed consent before creating an agreement for the sale of electricity. This means that they must clearly tell you how much you will be paying for electricity, any terms or conditions that the sale is subject to, and they need to make sure you agree to these terms.
- Clearer guidance from the Essential Services Commission on what consumer protections apply in embedded networks. The Commission is now deciding which customer protection rules from the Energy Retail Code should apply to embedded networks. This will include matters such as what needs to be included in your electricity bill, how you can make payments, and protections regarding disconnection. In the meantime, you are entitled to a similar level of consumer protections as other customers.

- You cannot be charged more than your local area retailer's standing offer – this means that the cost of your daily supply charge and the price you pay per unit of electricity is capped at a comparable price for your location.
- You will be able to access the Energy and Water Ombudsman (Victoria) for disputes for the first time.

Where to get help

Further information and resources is available from the Essential Services Commission at www.esc.vic.gov.au/energy-licence-exemptions.

If you are living within an embedded network and have a problem with the sale and supply of your electricity that you are unable to directly resolve with your provider, you will be able to seek the assistance from the Energy and Water Ombudsman (Victoria). You can contact the Ombudsman on 1800 500 509 or www.ewov.com.au.

Figure 2: Resolving complaints

