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THE MOST REVEREND DR PHILIP FREIER  
ARCHBISHOP OF MELBOURNE

14 September 2023

**Submission to the Inquiry into price gouging and unfair pricing practices**  
**By Archbishop Philip Freier**

Energy prices remain a major concern for many Australians, especially those who are low-income or financially vulnerable. The electricity market has undergone several reforms as a result of previous reviews (e.g., ACCC 2008 and Thwaites 2017), such as the introduction of a Default Market Offer in National Electricity Market states with competitive retail markets, except for Victoria, where the Victorian Default Offer was implemented. These reforms have had a positive impact on electricity prices, however, more can be done to alleviate the price burden on energy consumers. Areas that could be addressed to ensure fairer prices for consumers include, but are not limited to: the introduction of a default market offer for residential gas customers; market power issues such as the dominant role of gentailers (firms that own both generation and retail assets); opportunities to reduce the effect of LNG export on domestic prices through gas reservations or other measures; and measures to ensure costs from the transition away from reticulated gas, do not fall inequitably onto residential consumers.

*Making the Word of God fully known*

The references in the text are as follows:

- ACCC 2008 *Retail Electricity Pricing Inquiry Final Report*:  
[https://www.accc.gov.au/system/files/Retail%20Electricity%20Pricing%20Inquiry%E2%80%94Final%20Report%20June%202018\\_0.pdf](https://www.accc.gov.au/system/files/Retail%20Electricity%20Pricing%20Inquiry%E2%80%94Final%20Report%20June%202018_0.pdf)
- *Thwaites et al. 2017 Independent and Bipartisan Review of the Electricity and Gas Retail Markets in Victoria*: <https://www.energy.vic.gov.au/about-energy/legislation/regulatory-reviews/review-of-the-electricity-and-gas-retail-markets-in-victoria-thwaites-review-and-outcomes-from-the-energy-fairness-plan>

Also, please find below some links to additional recent BSL publications that may be helpful background to the submission:

- [Enabling electrification: addressing the barriers to moving off gas faced by lower-income households | Brotherhood of St. Laurence \(bsl.org.au\)](#)
- [Submission to the Select Committee on the Cost of Living \(bsl.org.au\)](#)
- [Power pain: an investigation of energy stress in Australia | Brotherhood of St. Laurence \(bsl.org.au\)](#)

Grace and peace in Christ Jesus  
Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Philip Melbourne". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "P".

The Most Reverend Dr Philip Freier  
Archbishop of Melbourne