

# Projects on the Go March 2022

Activities of OTTER  
prepared for the  
OTTER Customer Consultative Committee

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**OTTER Customer Consultative Committee**  
**Projects on the Go**  
**Meeting 1/2022**  
**March 2022**

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## 1. Water and Sewerage


### a. 2022 Price Determination Investigation

The 2018 Water and Sewerage Price Determination expires on 30 June 2022. The Regulator is required by legislation to conduct an investigation before making a new determination in relation to the maximum prices TasWater can charge for regulated water and sewerage services for the period from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2026 (the fourth regulatory period).

The Regulator released its Draft Report and draft Determination on 28 February 2022. The Report sets out the Regulator's draft decisions with respect to the services TasWater's proposes providing and the prices TasWater proposes charging for those services for the fourth regulatory period.

The public consultation period closes on 28 March 2022.

The Regulator will release his final report and make the associated determination in May 2022 and approve TasWater's final price and service plan by late June 2022.

More information about the investigation is available at: [2022 Water and Sewerage Price Determination Investigation | Office of the Tasmanian Economic Regulator](#). Interested parties are encouraged to subscribe to the Regulator's mailing list to receive news and updates about the investigation. Select [Contact us](#)  to subscribe.

This will be the subject of a presentation at the 3 March 2022 meeting (Agenda item 5).

### b. Report on the State of the Tasmanian Water and Sewerage Industry 2020-21

Under the *Water and Sewerage Industry Act 2008* (the Act), the Regulator is required to prepare a report on the state of the water and sewerage industry (SOIR), either at the request of the responsible Ministers or in the lead up to a price determination investigation.

By way of a jointly signed letter dated 10 December 2021, the Minister for Primary Industries and Water and the Minister for Finance requested that the Regulator prepare a SOIR in respect of the 2020-21 financial year. OTTER has since commenced preparing the 2020-21 SOIR, which is expected to follow a similar structure and format to the 2019-20 SOIR, including the preparation of a fact sheet and media release.

In accordance with the Act, the Director of Public Health, the Director of the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) and the Secretary of the Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania (NRET) are being consulted in the preparation of the report.

It is anticipated that the 2020-21 SOIR will be published in mid-2022. The Act requires the SOIR to be tabled in Parliament within seven sitting days after its preparation.

## 2. Taxis

### a. 2021 Owner-Operator Taxi Licence Reserve Prices Investigation

Under the *Taxi and Hire Industry Act 2008*, the Regulator is required to determine the minimum price (reserve price) from 1 December 2021 to 31 December 2025 for which an owner-operator taxi licence (OOTL) can be purchased from the Transport Commission. There are 24 taxi areas in Tasmania and the Act specifies that, for this first price determination, the reserve price for any taxi area must not decrease for more than 10 per cent annually.

The objectives of the determination are to assist in the development of efficient pricing and competition for taxi licences and to promote a safe taxi transport system that responds adequately to consumer demand for taxi services. The Regulator released a set of draft reserve price for public consultation on 1 October 2021.

The public consultation period ended on 22 October 2021, and the Regulator received one submission from a taxi licence holder, which strongly opposed the proposed reduction in reserve prices for the Hobart taxi area based on the historically high value for taxi licence.

The Regulator released the final report and determination on 30 November 2021, which sets out the Regulator’s approach for determining the reserve price in each of the 24 taxi areas against the objectives of the determination, as well as the reserve prices for each of the calendar year until 2025.

The Final Report and Determination applied a 10 per cent reduction to 17 of the 24 taxi areas, based on the downward market trends in taxi licence trades and/or perceived lack of competition in these areas, and applied a five per cent reduction to two taxi areas based on the perceived higher level of competition and/or less downward trends in taxi licence trades. There was no change to the reserve prices in the remaining five taxi areas.

The reserve prices are presented in the table below.

	1-Dec-21	1-Jan-22	1-Jan-23	1-Jan-24	1-Jan-25
Hobart	\$57 000	\$54 200	\$51 500	\$48 900	\$46 500
Launceston	\$31 500	\$28 400	\$25 600	\$23 100	\$20 800
Devonport	\$23 000	\$23 000	\$23 000	\$23 000	\$23 000
Burnie	\$20 700	\$18 700	\$16 900	\$15 300	\$13 800
Ulverstone	\$16 400	\$15 600	\$14 800	\$14 100	\$13 400
Perth	\$12 500	\$12 500	\$12 500	\$12 500	\$12 500
George Town	\$11 300	\$10 200	\$9 200	\$8 300	\$7 500
West Tamar	\$11 300	\$10 200	\$9 200	\$8 300	\$7 500
Meander Valley	\$11 300	\$10 200	\$9 200	\$8 300	\$7 500
Circular Head	\$10 200	\$9 200	\$8 300	\$7 500	\$6 800
New Norfolk	\$9 800	\$8 900	\$8 100	\$7 300	\$6 600
Break O’Day	\$9 800	\$8 900	\$8 100	\$7 300	\$6 600
Huon Valley	\$6 800	\$6 200	\$5 600	\$5 100	\$4 600
Penguin	\$3 750	\$3 750	\$3 750	\$3 750	\$3 750
Tasman	\$3 400	\$3 100	\$2 800	\$2 600	\$2 400
Glamorgan/Spring Bay North	\$3 400	\$3 100	\$2 800	\$2 600	\$2 400
Kentish	\$3 400	\$3 100	\$2 800	\$2 600	\$2 400
Dorset	\$2 250	\$2 250	\$2 250	\$2 250	\$2 250
Glamorgan/Spring Bay South	\$1 700	\$1 550	\$1 400	\$1 300	\$1 200
West Coast	\$1 000	\$1 000	\$1 000	\$1 000	\$1 000
King Island	\$900	\$810	\$730	\$660	\$600
Bruny Island	\$900	\$810	\$730	\$660	\$600
Flinders Island	\$900	\$810	\$730	\$660	\$600
Central Highlands	\$900	\$810	\$730	\$660	\$600

## b. 2021 Taxi Fare Methodology Inquiry

The Regulator was directed by the Minister for Finance and the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport to conduct an inquiry into, and recommend appropriate methodologies for, setting taxi fares in Tasmania, on 2 July 2021. The Regulator has also engaged a consultant to assist with the inquiry.

The Regulator released a Consultation Paper and the consultant's draft report for public consultation. The Consultation Paper outlined some possible approaches for the setting and indexing of taxi fares as well as approaches to reviewing the taxi fares over time.

The Regulator received one submission from the Department of State Growth.

The Regulator has provided his final inquiry report and the consultant's final report to the Minister for Finance, the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport and the Transport Commissioner on 28 February 2022 and has sought approval from the Minister to publish the final report on the Regulator's website.

## 3. Motor Accidents Insurance Board (MAIB) premiums

The [\*Economic Regulator \(MAIB Premiums\) Order 2021\*](#) (MAIB Premium Order) was made on 15 September 2021 in accordance with section 36(3) of the Economic Regulator Act. The Order specifies the maximum premiums MAIB can charge for each of the four years covered by the Order (1 December 2021 to 30 November 2025 inclusive).

In November 2021, the MAIB sought the Regulator's approval of the premiums to apply from 1 December 2021 to 30 November 2022. The MAIB proposed to apply the maximum premiums for the first year as allowed under the Order.

There is no general increase/decrease to premiums from 1 December 2021 and the full relativity decreases (for caravans, horse floats etc, heavy trailers, plant and machinery, farm tractor and special interest vehicles) have been applied in the first year. The relativity increases have been applied incrementally (for all motorcycle classes, large public passenger vehicles, off road and recreational vehicles and ride-sourcing vehicles).

The Regulator reviewed the proposed premiums against the Order and found that they comply with relevant regulatory requirements. The Regulator approved the premiums as proposed.

The MAIB is expected to seek the Regulator's approval of premiums to apply from 1 December 2022, during November 2022.

The Regulator's Report and other information relating to the investigation can be found at <https://www.economicregulator.tas.gov.au/maib/2021-maib-pricing-policies-investigation>

## 4. Competitive neutrality complaint investigations

The Regulator's functions under the *Economic Regulator Act 2009* include conducting investigations, where appropriate, into complaints of breaches of the national competition policy (NCP) competitive neutrality principles (CNPs) against State and local government bodies.

The Regulator recently completed an investigation into the alleged contravention of the competitive neutrality principles by a council in northern Tasmania. The complaint alleged that

the council was providing seasonal worker accommodation at prices that do not reflect the full costs that a private operator would face in providing similar services.

The Regulator provided its investigation report to the Minister for Finance and the Minister for Local Government, as well as the council and the complainant, in February 2022.

A further competitive neutrality complaint was received by the Regulator, but it did not satisfy the criteria for the complaint to be investigated.

No further competitive neutrality complaints have been received by the Regulator since February 2022.

## 5. Energy

### a. Energy Security Review

On 7 December 2021, the Regulator (in his role as Monitor and Assessor for Energy Security) published the Annual Energy Security Review for 2021. The Review:

- included a review of the previous water year (from November 2020 to October 2021), including inflows to hydro generation storages, annual demand, and generation mix;
- examined forecast rainfall in Hydro Tasmania's catchments for the coming water year; and
- considered Tasmania's overall "Energy Supply Capability", which is a comparison of forecast available energy supply with forecast demand.

The Review found that Tasmania's available electricity supply is expected to be sufficient to meet demand over the coming 12 months. With the current level of energy in storage and Tasmania's on-island electricity generation capacity, Tasmania energy security rating was assessed as high over the 2021-22 water year, including in the event of a temporary loss of generation from the Tamar Valley Power Station (TVPS) or a prolonged Basslink outage.

The Monitor and Assessor did not expect that Tasmania will face energy security issues related to the level of energy in storage in the 2021-22 water year or that Tasmania will face supply issues relating to the natural gas market in Tasmania.

### b. 2022 Standing offer prices

The Regulator's Draft 2022 Standing Offer Electricity Price Investigation Report (Draft Pricing Report) and Draft Determination were released for consultation On 18 February 2022.

Written submissions are invited by 5:00 pm on 25 March 2022.

The Draft Pricing Report is available at:

<https://www.economicregulator.tas.gov.au/electricity/pricing/retail/2022-standing-offer-investigation-and-determination>.

The findings of the Draft Pricing Report will be discussed at the March 2022 OCCC meeting (Agenda item 3).

### c. Regulated feed-in tariff rate investigation

The Regulator's Draft 2022 Regulated Feed-in Tariff Pricing Investigation Report (Draft FiT Report) was released for consultation on 28 January 2022. Written submissions are invited by 5:00 pm on 15 March 2022.

The Draft FiT Report is available at:

<https://www.economicregulator.tas.gov.au/electricity/pricing/feed-in-tariffs/2022-regulated-feed-in-tariff-rate-investigation-and-determination>.

The findings of the Draft FiT Report will be discussed at the March 2022 OCCC meeting (Agenda item 5).

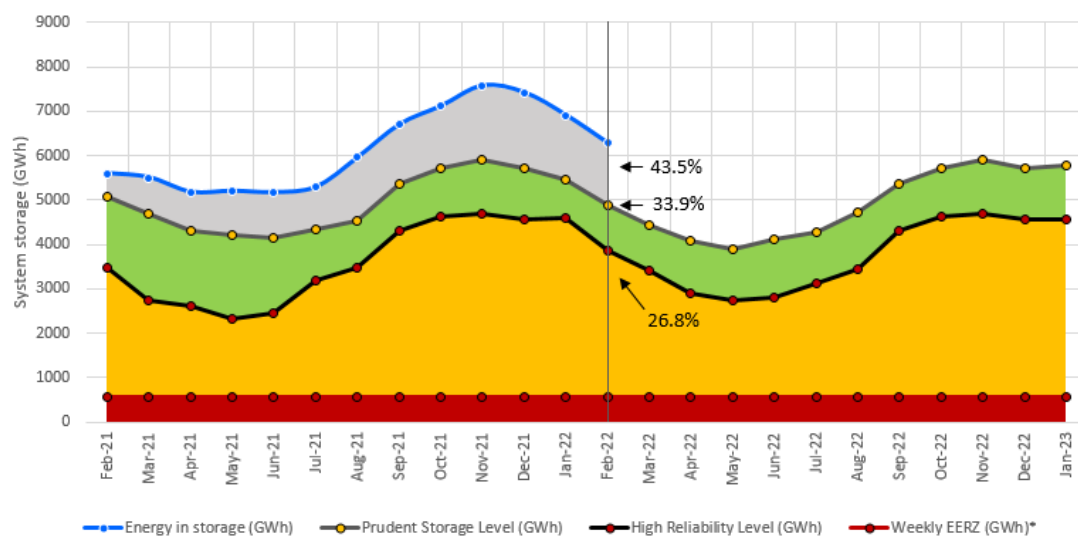
d. Energy in Tasmania

OTTER is currently preparing the annual Energy in Tasmania report. The EiT reports on the Tasmanian electricity and gas markets in 2020-21, and on the performance of market operators. OTTER anticipates that the Report will be published during March, and it must be tabled in Parliament within 7 sitting days of its publication.

e. Energy Security Monitor and Assessor status update and overview of current energy security position

Energy in storage (EIS) as at 7 February 2022, the date of the most recent monthly dashboard, was at 43.5 per cent. EIS at this level is above the Prudent Storage Level (PSL), and well above the High Reliability Level (HRL), for October and is able to supply approximately 6.7 months of demand, based on average seasonal demand. Energy on storage over the past year is shown below.

Energy in storage (mainland Tasmania) - February 2021 to February 2022\*



\* The HRL and PSL profiles were revised in August 2021, taking effect from 1 September 2021. This chart shows the revised profiles starting from September 2021.

As at 7 February 2022, Hydro Tasmania reported that storages remain above the HRL over the next 120 days in all of its simulated inflow sequences.

The monthly dashboards are available here: <https://www.economicregulator.tas.gov.au/about-us/energy-security-monitor-and-assessor>

f. Wholesale Contract Regulatory Instrument pricing investigation



The approvals made by the Regulator under the Wholesale Contract Regulatory Instrument (Instrument) expire on 30 June 2024. As market participants contract up to 8 quarters into the future, the Regulator is required to conduct and finalise an investigation by 30 June 2022.

Commencing in early March 2022, the Regulator is therefore intending to conduct a pricing investigation to review the approvals.

The Regulator will release more details about the intended approach to, and the timeframes for, the investigation in the near future.

## **6. Electricity - Retail and Distribution Quarterly Performance Reports**

### **a. Retail Performance Report**

1st Energy, Aurora Energy, and Shell Energy (previously ERM Power) have provided their performance reports for Quarters 1 and 2, 2021-22 as required under Regulation 12 of the *Electricity Supply Industry Regulations 2018*. Energy Locals had not provided its Q1 or Q2 report at the time of writing and has been contacted regarding this omission. Performance measures are reported in accordance with the AER's performance reporting procedures and guideline. Summaries for each retailer are provided in Tables 1-5 inclusive in Appendix A below.

## **7. Water and Sewerage, Electricity and Gas Licensing**

On 29 November 2021, the Regulator amended the electricity generation licence held by LMS Energy Pty Ltd to:

- include a new generation site at McRobies Road, South Hobart with a total capacity of 1.065 MW; and
- include a new generation site at Jackson Street, Glenorchy with a total capacity of 1.690 MW.

OTTER is currently preparing documentation in response to an application to renew the electricity generation licence held by Bluff Point Wind Farm Pty Ltd (part of the Woolnorth Renewables group), which is due to expire on 27 May 2022.

Licences issued to Basslink Pty Ltd and Simplot Australia are also due to expire during 2021-22.

## **8. Codes and Guidelines**

On 22 April 2021, the Regulator received a request from Tas Gas Retail Pty Ltd seeking an amendment to the Gas Customer Transfer and Reconciliation Code (the Transfer Code) to allow customers switching from one retailer to another to nominate a retrospective date on their customer transfer notice. The Regulator prepared a set of revisions, which were subsequently consulted with relevant entities. All parties supported the proposed amendments, which were incorporated into the Transfer Code effective 10 November 2021.

### **a. Regulatory Reporting Guideline**

The Regulator published a revised Regulatory Reporting Guideline on 25 January 2022. The Guideline provides the basis for regular independent reviews of gas, electricity, and water and sewerage entities' compliance and management plans. The Guideline specifies how the Regulator approves a suitably qualified person to undertake a review, and the scope and conduct of reviews.

## **9. Tasmanian Economic Regulator 2020-21 Annual Report**

The 2020-21 Annual Report of the Tasmanian Economic Regulator has been completed and is scheduled to be tabled in the Tasmanian Parliament in the week commencing 25 October 2021. Once it is tabled it will be loaded onto the Regulator's website.

## 10. Appendix A - Retailer performance



Table 1: Aurora Energy quarterly performance – residential

	2020-21	2020-21	2020-21	2021-22	2021-22
	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2
<b>Customer numbers</b>					
standing offer	244 332	244 043	243 330	243 254	241 219
APAYG customers	14	11	10	10	10
<b>Payment difficulties</b>					
customers repaying a debt	8 678	9 123	8 672	7 664	9 678
average amount \$	1 130	1 271	1 366	1 406	1 278
debt over \$500 but less than or equal to \$1 500	2 694	2 735	2 561	2 212	2 763
debt over \$1 500 but less than or equal to \$2 500	1 083	1 158	1 114	976	1 073
debt over \$2 500	1 026	1 375	1 457	1 346	1 477
<b>Payment plans</b>					
customers on a payment plan	7 069	5 535	5 018	6 336	5 964
customers who had their plan cancelled for non-payment	6 981	6 805	5 277	5 302	6 108
customers with 2 or more plans cancelled in the prev 12 months	4 211	4 083	3 373	3 382	3 583
<b>Disconnections</b>					
residential disconnections	0	0	0	153	182
concession customers disconnected	0	0	0	63	95
customers disconnected who were on a payment plan in the prev 12 months	0	0	0	27	54
customers disconnected on more than once occasion in prev 24 months	0	0	0	1	7
<b>Reconnections</b>					
reconnections within 7 days	0	0	0	60	75
customers on a payment plan in the prev 12 months reconnected within 7 days	0	0	0	11	15
concession customers reconnected within 7 days	0	0	0	28	31
<b>APAYG - Prepayment meter (PPM) customers</b>					
PPM customers with a concession	6	2	3	3	2
PPMs able to detect and report self-disconnections	0	0	0	0	0
PPM self-disconnection events	0	0	0	0	0
customers self-disconnected	0	0	0	0	0
average duration of self-disconnection events (minutes)	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Hardship program</b>					
customers on the hardship program	5 773	5 478	4 480	4 632	4 791
hardship customers with a concession	4 036	3 976	3 219	3 302	3 396
customers exiting the program	228	444	1 475	629	544
average debt upon entry to program \$	1 720	1 916	2 622	3 236	2 994
debt \$0 - \$500	66	7	40	27	33
debt over \$500 but less than or equal to \$1 500	258	45	143	198	198
debt over \$1 500 but less than or equal to \$2 500	119	184	106	161	164

debt over \$2 500	172	148	187	388	303
average debt \$	1 869	2 139	2 182	2 427	2 463
customers who successfully completed program	81	207	481	134	172
customers excluded from program for non-compliance	17	27	848	347	257
customers who transferred or left the retailer	130	210	146	148	115
<b>Complaints (residential)</b>					
billing	1 187	1 121	1 307	1 410	1 124
marketing	0	3	13	15	19
customer transfer	0	0	1	5	9
other	535	585	1515*	1179	879
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1 722</b>	<b>1 709</b>	<b>2 836</b>	<b>2 609</b>	<b>2 031</b>

\* The majority of these complaints relate to the migration of customers to a new customer management system, which resulted in a change to their original account number

Table 2: Aurora Energy quarterly performance – small business

	2020-21	2020-21	2020-21	2021-22	2021-22
	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2
<b>Customer numbers</b>					
standing offer	30 455	29 620	29 387	28 881	28 883
market contracts	3 989	4 591	4 721	5 092	5 260
<b>Total small business</b>	<b>34 444</b>	<b>34 211</b>	<b>34 108</b>	<b>33 973</b>	<b>34 143</b>
<b>Payment difficulties</b>					
customers repaying a debt	379	398	425	357	347
average customer debt \$	1 776	2 231	2 033	2 104	1 810
<b>Disconnections</b>					
small business customers	0	0	0	5	10
<b>Reconnections</b>					
reconnections within 7 days	0	0	0	2	1
<b>Complaints</b>					
billing	109	63	74	73	84
marketing	0	0	0	0	0
customer transfer	0	1	0	0	0
other	37	40	33	27	18
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>102</b>

Table 3: 1st Energy quarterly performance – residential

	2020-21	2020-21	2020-21	2021-22	2021-22
	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2
<b>Customer numbers</b>					
standing offer	50	50	59	51	37
market offer	5 036	5 742	6 809	7 767	8 752
<b>Payment difficulties</b>					
customers repaying a debt	123	142	105	92	170
average amount \$	614	593	485	569	551
debt over \$500 but less than or equal to \$1 500	26	43	26	17	31
debt over \$1 500 but less than or equal to \$2 500	10	11	5	4	10
debt over \$2 500	5	0	3	6	7
<b>Payment plans</b>					
customers on a payment plan	94	107	98	134	145
customers who had their plan cancelled for non-payment	67	77	40	69	60
customers with 2 or more plans cancelled in the prev 12 months	25	42	0	34	0
<b>Disconnections</b>					
residential disconnections	17	26	30	31	22
concession customers disconnected	4	7	8	13	10
customers disconnected who were on a payment plan in the prev 12 months	6	15	21	24	13
customers disconnected on more than one occasion in prev 24 months	1	3	5	3	2
<b>Reconnections</b>					
reconnections within 7 days	3	10	16	20	14
customers on a payment plan in the prev 12 months reconnected within 7 days	3	8	13	19	11
concession customers reconnected within 7 days	3	5	5	11	7
<b>Hardship program</b>					
customers on the hardship program	21	22	36	54	38
hardship customers with a concession	7	10	12	35	24
customers exiting the program	6	15	12	21	52
average debt upon entry to program	493	647	949	326	685
debt \$0 - \$500	8	11	10	27	23
debt over \$500 but less than or equal to \$1 500	5	2	10	11	9
debt over \$1 500 but less than or equal to \$2 500	1	1	3	1	1
debt over \$2 500	0	2	3	0	3
average debt \$	914	892	810	699	645
customers who successfully completed program	1	0	0	1	5
customers excluded from program for non-compliance	4	12	8	17	36
customers who transferred or left the retailer	1	3	4	3	11
<b>Complaints (residential)</b>					
billing	37	55	35	47	25
marketing	1	5	3	0	1
customer transfer	3	5	6	3	1
other	25	25	31	29	17
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>44</b>



Table 4: 1st Energy quarterly performance – small business

	2020-21	2020-21	2020-21	2021-22	2021-22
	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2
<b>Customer numbers</b>					
standing offer	4	6	10	8	8
market contracts	808	910	969	1 041	1 053
<b>Total small business</b>	<b>812</b>	<b>916</b>	<b>979</b>	<b>1 049</b>	<b>1 061</b>
<b>Payment difficulties</b>					
customers repaying a debt	14	14	23	30	27
average customer debt \$	1 772	1 923	1 123	1 493	1 958
<b>Disconnections</b>					
small business customers	4	2	1	6	2
<b>Reconnections</b>					
reconnections within 7 days	1	0	0	4	2
<b>Complaints</b>					
billing	3	4	7	1	2
marketing	1	1	0	1	0
customer transfer	0	0	0	0	0
other	2	4	1	2	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>

s



Table 5: Shell Energy quarterly performance – small business

	2020-21	2020-21	2020-21	2021-22	2021-22
	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2
<b>Customer numbers</b>					
standing offer	53	49	48	48	58
market contracts	68	72	70	73	69
<b>Total small business</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>127</b>
<b>Payment difficulties</b>					
customers repaying a debt	13	16	10	8	3
average customer debt \$	907	2 000	2 700	1 717	710
<b>Disconnections</b>					
small business customers	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Reconnections</b>					
reconnections within 7 days	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Complaints</b>					
billing	0	0	0	0	0
marketing	0	0	0	0	0
customer transfer	0	0	0	0	0
other	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>