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09 March 2009

Bronwyn Christie
Electricity Commission
P O Box 10041
Wellington 6143

Submission on Guidelines on arrangements to assist low income and vulnerable customers.

Dear Bronwyn,

At Feb 28 2009, Bosco Connect had 9,100 customers. Of those, 20 have defined themselves as "vulnerable" and of those, 13 have defined themselves as requiring electricity for critical medical equipment. That amounts to 0.2% of our customer base. Of the 20 vulnerable customers, 4 are in credit and 16 have no arrears in their accounts.

Notification was sent to all customers on February 04 2009 advising of the vulnerability criteria and inviting them to tell us if they felt they fitted them. Similar notification is included with every first invoice and "welcome pack". Staff and our call-centre are instructed to record vulnerability for any reason without question. We have operated our own non-disconnection policy for vulnerable customers long before June 2008 and similarly we have sought to assist people on low incomes to pay their accounts.

With such a low number of vulnerable customers all of whom are good payers, I am commercially unqualified to make submission on your questions 1 to 16. It would appear that our vulnerable customers recognize the value of continued supply of electricity; they understand the commercial relationship they have with Bosco Connect and they pay their accounts on time. The vast majority of our low income vulnerable customers pay their accounts on time. We have a mere handful of customers who identify themselves as being vulnerable due to low income and whose accounts are in arrears.

It seems for our vulnerable customers the issue is not that they do not wish to pay their power accounts. I perceive that they have recorded their vulnerability as an insurance against error on our, the postal service's or the banks' part; a systemic or incidental failure on any of whose part could result in the commencement of a process that could lead to disconnection of electrical supply.

Yours sincerely,

Toby Warren
Managing Director
Bosco Connect Ltd