

Latest Legal Update: Energy businesses offer financial relief as wholesale electricity and gas prices fall

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Abstract:

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) has provided interim authorisation to electricity and gas companies to co-operate on a relief package for businesses and residential customers.

The Australian Energy Council and wholesale and retail energy businesses have been granted conditional interim authorisation to co-operate in relation to providing financial relief to residential and business companies affected by COVID-19. The authorisation allows companies to share information, enter into arrangements and discuss issues relating to providing financial relief to businesses and support residential customers. The ACCC media release can be found [here](#).

During the pandemic, the ACCC has observed wholesale electricity and gas prices falling, which it hopes will be passed on to businesses that rely on energy. ACCC Chairman, Rod Sims, spoke of this positive outcome from the COVID-19 pandemic when he addressed the Australian Chamber of Commerce on 5 May 2020. The ACCC media release can be found [here](#).

The ACCC may grant authorisation if it is satisfied that the public benefit from the proposed conduct outweighs any likely public detriment. Further information can be found in the Exemptions sub-topic on [Authorisation](#).

For more information on authorisations that have already been granted in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, see our [COVID-19 Toolkit for Competition Law](#), which includes a table of all authorisations granted during COVID-19. See also our Latest Legal Updates:

- [Latest industry-specific authorisations granted by ACCC in response to COVID-19 \(30 April 2020\)](#).
- [Latest industry-specific authorisations granted by ACCC in response to COVID-19 \(22 April 2020\)](#);
- [ACCC issues new industry-specific authorisations during COVID-19 \(7 April 2020\)](#);
- [ACCC authorises further industry cooperation](#) (1 April 2020);
- [Airline coordination and COVID-19 \(27 March 2020\)](#); and
- [Co-ordination between competitors and COVID-19 \(3 March 2020\)](#).