

Paying for your energy

Your energy bill is the main way your retailer communicates with you about your service. You are entitled to receive a bill that is clear. Contact your retailer if there is something you don't understand.

Energy Made Easy has information to help you understand how electricity and gas bills are calculated. There is also information on what is on your bill and how to read it.

Problems paying?

- If you're having problems paying a bill for any reason, contact your retailer and ask if they can help. Retailers are required to assist customers experiencing financial hardship. Early assistance can help you avoid extra fees or disconnection.
- The Australian Energy Regulator's Sustainable Payment Plans Framework is a set of principles to guide how retailers should handle payment plan discussions.
- Retailers can provide a range of options such as payment extensions, setting up payment plans, concession information, and financial counselling service referrals.
- Contact your state or territory energy ombudsman if you can't resolve the issue.

Resolving problems

If you have a dispute about your energy service, contact your retailer as soon as possible.

Explain the problem and the outcome you want.

If you can't sort out the problem straight away, ask to speak with a manager.

Keep a record of the date and time of the call, who you spoke to and what you discussed.

If you still can't resolve the problem, contact your state or territory energy ombudsman.

Energy ombudsmen schemes provide a free and independent dispute resolution service for energy customers.

You can find contact details for ombudsmen services on Energy Made Easy or by contacting the Australian Energy Regulator.

Get guidance from Energy Made Easy

The Energy Made Easy website is a free and independent price comparison service that helps you compare plans from all providers. It has:

- energy saving tips to save you money
- information about your rights as an energy customer
- information to help you understand your bills.

www.energymadeeasy.gov.au

AERinquiry@aer.gov.au

1300 585 165



Australian Government



Australian Competition and Consumer Commission
23 Marcus Clarke Street, Canberra, Australian Capital Territory 2601

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Important notice

The information in this publication is for general guidance only. It does not constitute legal or other professional advice, and should not be relied on as a statement of the law in any jurisdiction. Because it is intended only as a general guide, it may contain generalisations. You should obtain professional advice if you have any specific concern.

The ACCC has made every reasonable effort to provide current and accurate information, but it does not make any guarantees regarding the accuracy, currency or completeness of that information.

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Australian Government



POWER TO YOU

Important information to put you in control of your energy service



The power is in your hands

Energy is a big cost for many people and recent price rises have added to these costs. Energy Made Easy can help put the power back in your hands to compare and find the best energy plan for you.

Energy Made Easy (www.energymadeeasy.gov.au) is a free online comparison tool operated by the Australian Energy Regulator.

- ▶ Compare plans from all providers in your area.
- ▶ Simply answer a few quick questions about how you use energy.
- ▶ No personal or contact details are needed, so you won't be hassled by marketers.



Tips for finding a great energy deal

Switching to a different plan can save money, especially if you have been on the same plan for a while.

Make the most of your search

It helps to have a recent bill to get a better estimate based on your usage. Information you will need:

- the rate (tariff) you are on
- how much energy you use (kWh for electricity, MJ for gas)
- the start and end date of the bill.

Energy Made Easy can estimate how much electricity or gas you use if you don't have this information or your retailer can tell you.

Set yourself a reminder to compare energy plans once a year. It could save you hundreds of dollars! You may not even need to switch to a different provider—your current provider may be able to offer you something better.



Tips to switch

- ▶ Don't be dazzled by discounts! A bigger discount doesn't always mean a bigger saving—check the rates the discount applies to. Also, check what conditions you need to meet to get the discount—some discounts only apply if you pay on time, or pay by direct debit.
- ▶ It's not all about price—look at whether there are other features that suit your needs such as flexible billing arrangements, low fees, or different rates that apply to the time of use.
- ▶ Check what fees apply to the plan you're considering as retailer fees can vary widely.

Energy contracts

Before signing up with a new retailer:

- Check to make sure you understand the terms of the plan—the plan information on Energy Made Easy can help you with this.
- Check if you have to pay an exit fee to your old retailer.
- Remember you have a 10 day cooling off period if you change your mind when you sign up to a market contract. You can change your mind and end the contract at no cost during the cooling off period.
- Ask the new retailer if they have any price changes planned.

An energy contract can be agreed over the telephone, online, or you can sign-up in person with a sales representative. Regardless of how you agree to the contract, the retailer must provide you written confirmation of the price, terms and conditions and other relevant information.

Door-to-door selling

There are rules to make sure you get a fair go from salespeople who visit you at home. Salespeople must:

- not contact you at certain times, including early in the morning, evenings and Sundays
- show identification and explain the purpose of their visit
- leave when asked.

Remember, there is no pressure to sign up on the spot. If you want time to consider the plan or compare it with other retailers' plans, ask the salesperson to come back another day.

Don't want to be contacted?

- Energy salespeople must observe any signs such as 'do not knock' or 'no marketing' that you display.
- You can request an energy retailer or its salesperson place you on its 'no contact' list.
- If you do not want to be contacted by phone, you can sign up to the Australian Government's Do Not Call Register (www.donotcall.gov.au) or phone 1300 792 958.