



# Energy—Connecting electricity or gas to your property for the first time

This factsheet explains the processes you need to follow to get electricity or gas services physically connected to your property for the first time (for example, a newly built house) or if you need to increase the capacity of an existing connection (for example, changing from single-phase to three-phase supply). This factsheet does not deal with re-establishing electricity or gas supply after disconnection, such as moving into an established house with electricity or gas disconnected by the previous owner.

## New connections and changes to existing connections

If you need to arrange a new connection to your property, the first step is to contact your retailer (or a retailer you intend to sign up with) or the energy distributor in your area. The distributor is the company that owns and maintains the electricity poles and wires, or gas pipelines that deliver energy to a premises. You also need to contact your retailer or the distributor if you want to increase the capacity of the existing connection.

If you do not know who the local distributor is, your energy retailer (or the retailer you intend to sign up with) can provide the distributor's contact details. **Costs**

The distributor or retailer may require you to contribute to the costs of the new connection. This may be the case if the distributor needs to extend the existing electricity power line or gas pipeline to your premises (called an augmentation cost).

Where a contribution is required, the distributor must provide you with a formal connection offer that sets out the cost of the works and the terms and conditions of the offer. Most distributors request this contribution as an up-front payment.

Note: There may be other costs associated with new connections, such as a new energy meter and the use of a distributor's service truck to turn on the electricity supply. We have

previously approved most of these cost items and published them on our website. Your distributor cannot charge more than the approved amount.

### Time

The time it will take to connect your property will depend on the type and complexity of the connection. It is a good idea to begin the process as early as possible, as installing new connections can sometimes take several months to complete.

### Competitive provision for electricity connections - New South Wales customers

For electricity connections in NSW, most connections works are not undertaken by the distributor. Instead, you can seek competitive offers from accredited service providers (ASPs). The NSW Department of Trade & Investment maintains a list of ASPs, which is available on its website or by calling (02) 9895 0008. Services provided by ASPs are not regulated by us.

## Resolving connection disputes

If your distributor has made you a formal connection offer, and you feel that the connection cost is too high or that the terms and conditions are not fair and reasonable, there are steps you can take to resolve the problem.

### Step 1: Contact your distributor

It is important to contact your distributor as quickly as possible to explain the problem and the outcome

you want. If the person you speak to cannot help you, ask to speak to a supervisor or senior manager. You should discuss what options are available. Write down the name of the person you speak to and what you discussed and agreed.

If you applied through your retailer, you may need to contact your retailer in the first instance.

## Step 2: Lodge a complaint with the Australian Energy Regulator

If your complaint remains unresolved, you can lodge a complaint with the Australian Energy Regulator (AER). We are responsible for resolving retail customer connection disputes in every state and territory. Small energy users usually do not need to pay a fee to have their complaint assessed.

We can intervene in a dispute if you have:

- received a formal connection offer from a distributor—we will not investigate indicative quotes
- tried to resolve the problem with the distributor—if you have not done so, we will refer you back to your distributor.

### The complaint process

If both parties agree, we may seek to organise a mediation session between you and the distributor. During this meeting, we will facilitate discussion and will not act as an advocate for either party.

If mediation is unsuccessful, we will usually undertake a preliminary assessment of the dispute. The findings of this assessment are not binding and are intended to inform you of our initial view on the matter.

If the dispute is not resolved following the preliminary assessment, you can request a formal assessment. Following a formal assessment, we will make a determination, which is binding on all parties and not subject to appeal.

## Submitting a complaint

Complaints to the AER should be in writing and must provide specific reasons for disputing the connection offer. Complaints can be sent via:

- Email: [AERinquiry@aer.gov.au](mailto:AERinquiry@aer.gov.au)
- Post: Australian Energy Regulator, GPO BOX 520, Melbourne VIC 3001
- Fax: (03) 9290 1457 **Contacts**

AER Infocentre 1300 585 165

AER website [www.aer.gov.au](http://www.aer.gov.au)

Energy Made Easy [www.energymadeeasy.gov.au](http://www.energymadeeasy.gov.au)

Indigenous Infoline 1300 303 143

For information in languages other than English call 13 1450 and ask for 1300 585 165

Speak and Listen users phone 1300 555 727 and ask for 1300 585 165

TTY users phone 13 3677 and ask for 1300 585 165

Internet relay users connect to the National Relay Service ([www.relayservice.com.au](http://www.relayservice.com.au)) and ask for 1300 585 165

## More information

*Customer information—connecting to gas distribution networks and resolving gas connection disputes*

*Customer information—Dispute resolution process, customer connection to electricity networks*

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