

# Help for consumers to minimise energy bills

We know that many people who are connected to the National Electricity Market in the eastern states and South Australia are worried about rising energy prices and stability of energy supply.

The Australian Energy Regulator (AER) is closely monitoring the market to ensure all energy businesses comply with the rules.

**There are lots of factors that are driving prices and supply. This includes the increased wholesale cost of electricity due to:**

- › Increased coal and gas prices driven by international demand and the war in Ukraine
- › Planned and unplanned generator outages
- › Onset of colder weather driving up energy usage
- › Extreme weather events affecting supply
- › Here are some steps you can take to minimise the impact of your energy bills.

## The AER's role

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- › We monitor electricity and gas retail and wholesale markets
- › We help protect consumers by enforcing energy laws and setting the cap retailers can charge electricity customers on the [Default Market Offer](#)
- › We can take action against energy companies that breach the laws

## Know your energy plan

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Energy bills will increase for many Australians. It's important to know what you can do to avoid paying more than necessary.

Make sure you understand your energy plan, as everyone's circumstances are different.

The best way to find this information is to start by looking at your bill. This has basic information about your energy retailer and your plan. You should then contact your energy retailer directly to discuss your plan in detail.

You should also carefully read any letters or emails from your energy retailer, as they must notify you if they raise your prices.

## Ask your energy retailer these questions

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It's important to ask when you'll be affected, as your current contract may protect you from rising prices for some time.

**Asking your retailer these questions will help you gather the information you need to make a decision:**

1. What kind of contract am I on and when does it expire?
2. Are my prices going up? And if so, when and by how much?
3. Do you have a better deal for me?

## Consider looking for a better energy plan

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You should consider looking for a better energy plan than the ones offered by your retailer. Finding a new plan may take longer than usual because some retailers are not currently accepting new customers.

## How to find a better energy plan

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The market is changing rapidly so keep up to date about your plan and the prices you're paying.

If you're in New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania or the Australian Capital Territory we recommend that you go to Energy Made Easy to find the best energy plan for your circumstances. If you live in Victoria we recommend that you go to Victorian Energy Compare.

Have a copy of your energy bill handy when looking for a better deal, as this will make the process easier. Alternatively, you can enter basic information about your home or small business to search for a plan.

Energy Made Easy is a free and independent government energy price comparison site.

## Reduce energy consumption and save money

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You can save money by reducing your energy use where possible. Here are some useful tips for reducing your energy use on the Energy Made Easy website.

## Help paying your energy bill

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If you're having trouble paying your bill, contact your energy retailer and let them know. They are required to have a financial hardship policy in place.

We have detailed information for customers experiencing financial hardship, including your rights and options.

## If your retailer suggested you change energy suppliers

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Some retailers have recently contacted customers advising that their prices will go up and suggesting that they switch provider.

If your retailer tells you that your prices will go up, make sure you ask them when they will go up and by how much. This will help you make the best decision for your circumstances. Ask your energy retailer these questions to get the best information.

## If your retailer goes out of business

Changes in the energy market can result in some retailers going out of business. There are protections in place for consumers when this happens. If your retailer goes out of business:

- › You won't be disconnected. You will automatically be transferred to a new retailer who must ensure that your power stays connected.
- › There are maximum prices that your new retailer is allowed to charge you for energy use when you are transferred to them to protect you from unreasonably high fees. This is the [Default Marker Offer](#) set by the AER. However, you may not be on the cheapest plan available to you.
- › You will be contacted by your new retailer within 5 days of being transferred to them. You should ask them for details about your current plan and whether they can offer you a better deal.
- › You can also switch retailers if another company can offer you a cheaper plan. Visit Energy Made Easy to compare offers from all other retailers in your area.
- › Issues between you and your retailer
- › If you need help resolving a complaint between you and your energy retailer, contact your local Energy and Water Ombudsman:

**New South Wales**  
**[Energy and Water Ombudsman NSW](#)**  
**1800 246 545**

**South Australia**  
**[Energy & Water Ombudsman SA](#)**  
**1800 665 565**

**Victoria**  
**[Energy and Water Ombudsman Victoria](#)**  
**1800 500 509**

**Tasmania**  
**[Energy Ombudsman Tasmania](#)**  
**1800 001 170**

**Queensland**  
**[Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland](#)**  
**1800 662 837**

**Australian Capital Territory**  
**[ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal](#)**  
**02 6207 1740**

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