

THE COALITION GOVERNMENT



Assisting Australians to Lower Their Electricity Bills

This advice applies to consumers in New South Wales, Victoria, South East Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania and the ACT.

Some advice differs for consumers in Victoria as the Victorian State Government regulates the retail electricity market differently from other Eastern states.

Western Australia, Tasmania and the rest of Queensland only have one retailer for households, with the price set either by Government or a regulator.

Why you may be paying too much

Too many families are not on the best power deal. Nearly 50 per cent of households have not changed retailers or plans for the last five years.

Many electricity retailers offer consumers discounts for a set period – e.g. for one year – with prices then reverting to higher rates if customers don't update their deal.

What steps can Australian families take?

Visit Government run comparison websites to ensure you are getting the best deal:

- In NSW, South East QLD, SA, Tasmania and the ACT go to the Energy Made Easy website: energymadeeasy.gov.au
- In Victoria go to the Victorian Energy Compare website: compare.switchon.vic.gov.au

Energy retailers have to publish their plans on Energy Made Easy, so you can compare all plans available in the one place. It helps to have your recent electricity bills available.

You never have to enter any personal information.

Otherwise, call your current electricity company and ask them if they have a better deal available.

What about small businesses?

Small businesses are generally on the same power plans as households and should also take these steps.

Medium-sized businesses are not covered. They typically choose electricity offers through brokers.

If consumers are having trouble paying their power bills

Retailers have an obligation to help their customers. Contact them as soon as possible. Retailers might offer:

- Payment plans; or
- Hardship help

Talk to a financial counsellor:

- National Debt Helpline 1800 007 007 (free service); or
- Australian Energy Regulator Indigenous Infoline - 1300 303 143

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Energy Ombudsman

All states and territories offer free access to an energy ombudsman which can help households with complaints on a range of issues including: bills, payment difficulties, sales tactics and changing retailers.

Energy Efficiency

In addition to getting a better deal, households can bring down their bills by buying more energy efficient appliances.

More efficient appliances may cost more to purchase, but can save the households hundreds of dollars over the life of the appliance, leaving the household better off.

The Australian Government has a calculator to help households work out how much it costs to run different appliances - energyrating.gov.au/calculator.

Energy Concessions

State and territory governments provide a number of concessions to reduce the cost of energy for low income households or purchase more efficient appliances.



What is the Coalition Government doing?

Getting a fairer deal for families and small businesses on their power bill:

The Coalition has secured agreement from the energy retailers on immediate measures and ongoing changes, to be backed by law, to put families and small business first. Commitments from the retailers include:

- Contacting all the customers now who are on expired discounts and telling them how much they can save on a better deal;
- Requiring companies report to the Government and ACCC what they are doing to get families on to a better deal and how many families remain on expired deals;
- Developing simple, plain English fact sheets with understandable comparison rates;
- Support a change to the electricity rules requiring companies to inform customers when their discount benefits end setting out the dollar impact of doing nothing; and
- Ensuring families and individuals on hardship programs will not lose any benefit or discount for late payment.

Securing more gas supplies to put downward pressure on electricity prices:

The Coalition has implemented tough new regulations in the gas sector to give Australian customers priority access to gas supply before it is exported.

- The shortage of domestic gas supplies has resulted in dramatically higher prices in Australia - higher than prices paid in the markets to which Australian gas is being exported.
- By ending the shortage, and ensuring the domestic market has adequate supplies, we will ensure gas prices in Australia are lower and fairly reflect international export prices as they should.
- That is why the Coalition Government has introduced the Australian Domestic Gas Security Mechanism which will give the government the power to impose export controls on companies when there is a shortfall of gas supply in the domestic market.

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Stopping the networks gaming the system:

We will legislate to remove the ability of networks to appeal the merits of decisions of the Australian Energy Regulator (AER). An appeals mechanism which has seen networks add \$6.5 billion onto consumers power bills.

- This reform is critical as network costs make up around 40 to 50 per cent of the household bill.
- By abolishing what is known as the Limited Merits Review appeal mechanism network companies will no longer be able to game the system at the expense of consumers.
- This brings the electricity sector into line with the telecommunications, water and postage sectors which don't have this appeals mechanism.

Making our electricity supply reliable:

We are building the southern hemisphere's largest storage project in the form of Snowy 2.0.

- The Coalition Government has started work on an electricity game-changer which will increase the generation of the Snowy Hydro scheme by 50%, adding 2000 megawatts of renewable energy to the National Electricity Market - enough to power 500,000 thousand homes.

- In one hour it could produce 20 times the 100Mwh expected from the battery proposed by the South Australian Government, but would deliver it constantly for almost a week (or 350,000 Mwh over seven days).
- The unprecedented expansion will help make renewables reliable, filling in holes caused by intermittent supply and generator outages.

Giving the ACCC the power to keep eye on electricity prices:

The Coalition Government has directed the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) to review retail electricity prices.

- The review will scrutinise electricity retailer behaviour to ensure consumers benefit from competition in the National Electricity Market.
- Competition in retail electricity markets should mean lower prices for residential and business consumers. A better deal in electricity is vital to keeping the lights on, delivering cheaper prices to families and businesses and sustaining jobs, particularly the thousands of jobs in our energy intensive industries.
- The ACCC's inquiry will include examining whether electricity retailers' margins are excessive.



Ombudsman Contact Information

Energy and Water Ombudsman NSW

ewon.com.au
1800 246 545

Energy Ombudsman Tasmania

energyombudsman.tas.gov.au
1800 001 170

Energy and Water Ombudsman WA

ombudsman.wa.gov.au/energyandwater
1800 754 004

Energy and Water Ombudsman Victoria

ewov.com.au
1800 500 509

Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland

ewoq.com.au
1800 662 837

OmbudsmanSA

ombudsman.sa.gov.au
1800 182 150

ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal

acat.act.gov.au/application-type/energy_water
02 6207 7740

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State and Territory Government Information

New South Wales

Concessions:

resourcesandenergy.nsw.gov.au/energy-consumers/financial-assistance/rebates

Appliances:

environment.nsw.gov.au/households/appliance-replacement-offer.htm

goodshepherdmicrofinance.org.au/services/no-interest-loan-scheme-nils/

Victoria

Concessions:

dhs.vic.gov.au/for-individuals/financial-support/concessions/energy

Appliances:

goodshepherdmicrofinance.org.au/services/no-interest-loan-scheme-nils/

Queensland

Concessions:

qld.gov.au/community/cost-of-living-support/energy-concessions

Appliances:

goodshepherdmicrofinance.org.au/services/no-interest-loan-scheme-nils/

energex.com.au/home/control-your-energy/positive-payback-program/positive-payback-for-households/air-conditioning-rewards

energex.com.au/home/control-your-energy/positive-payback-program/positive-payback-for-households/hot-water-rewards

energex.com.au/home/control-your-energy/positive-payback-program/positive-payback-for-households/pool-rewards

South Australia

Concessions:

sa.gov.au/topics/care-and-support/financial-support/concessions/energy-bill-concessions

Appliances:

goodshepherdmicrofinance.org.au/services/no-interest-loan-scheme-nils/

Tasmania

Concessions:

concessions.tas.gov.au/concessions/electricity_and_heating

Appliances:

auroraenergy.com.au/teels

goodshepherdmicrofinance.org.au/services/no-interest-loan-scheme-nils/

Western Australia

Concessions:

synergy.net.au/Your-home/Manage-your-account/Rebates-and-concessions

horizonpower.com.au/manage-my-account/concessions-rebates-and-subsidies/

Appliances:

goodshepherdmicrofinance.org.au/services/no-interest-loan-scheme-nils/

Northern Territory

Concessions:

nt.gov.au/community/seniors/nt-pensioner-and-carer-concession-scheme/introduction

Appliances:

goodshepherdmicrofinance.org.au/services/no-interest-loan-scheme-nils/