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Negotiate the best deal with your energy provider



Are you paying too much for your energy?

If you haven't reviewed your energy plan recently, chances are you are not getting the best deal from your energy provider.

The deregulation of electricity prices in NSW has created a competitive energy market where you can easily switch your plan and negotiate a better deal with your energy retailer.

But first, you need to identify the energy plan that you already have. This should be on your bill, under your electricity supply details.

Are you still on the old tariff?

If you can't find a plan, you might still be on a transitional tariff introduced on 1 July 2014 following the deregulation of the electricity market. If you are still on this transitional tariff, you can switch to a more competitive offer that could save you up to \$460 per year, depending on your network area.

To understand more about the benefits of deregulation visit:
www.yourenergy.nsw.gov.au.

Check exit fees before you switch

Before you switch energy plans or change your provider, first check that you will not have to pay an exit fee.

The NSW Government is currently working with energy retailers to remove exit fees, paper bill fees or fees for paying through Australia Post.

However, while the new rules are being developed, current arrangements apply.

If you do think you have been unfairly charged a fee, contact the Energy and Water Ombudsman (EWON).



Go To Websites

Help with your bills

www.resourcesandenergy.nsw.gov.au/energy-consumers

Energy saving advice

www.yourenergysavings.gov.au

Compare energy deals

www.yourenergy.nsw.gov.au
www.energymadeeasy.gov.au

Star ratings

www.energyrating.gov.au

Government appliance offer

www.environment.nsw.gov.au/applianceoffer

Consumer rights

www.energyconsumersaustralia.com.au/powercall/

www.ewon.com.au

or Freecall 1800 246 545.

Energy made easy

Read the energy price fact sheet

Electricity retailers have to publish a 'fact sheet' for every retail plan they offer. These are available on the energymadeeasy website and outline the rates and conditions of each offer, and any additional fees they may charge.

The fact sheet includes:

- + Name of the contract and the retailer selling the contract.
- + Tariff rates - including the unit price you pay in cents per kWh for electricity, cents per MJ for gas and any fixed or standing charge in cents per day.
- + All fees - including any account establishment fees, exit fees, late payment fees, disconnection fees, reconnection fees and payment processing fees.

Energy contracts

There are two types of energy contracts available in NSW:

- + Standard retail contract
- + Market retail contract

If you are unsure what energy contract you are on, check with your energy retailer.

Fixed term contract

Standard retail contracts are offered by all electricity and gas retailers, and have model terms and conditions set by law.

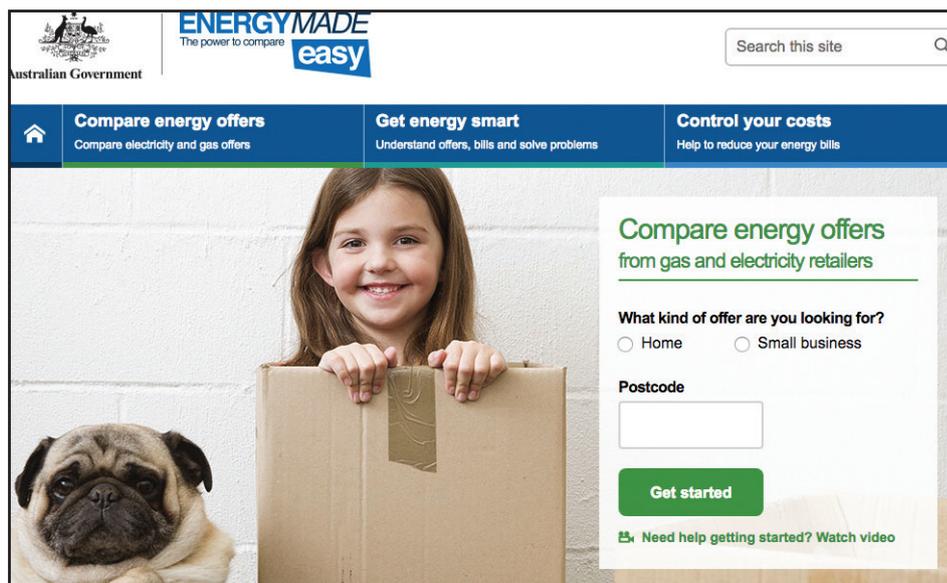
If you have not signed up to a market or unilateral contract, your energy will be supplied under a standard retail contract. This contract has no exit fees and you can change to a different contract at any time.

The prices under standard retail contracts are set by the retailers themselves, but can only be changed once every six months.

Market price contract

These contracts are set by retailers and can change any time after you sign up.

Consumer rights groups are trying to stop price variations in these contracts, which enable retailers to increase the price of energy during a fixed term contract period.



Before you sign

Energy contracts are legally enforceable, so make sure you understand the terms and conditions. If you don't understand something, ask your energy retailer or get independent advice.

Be aware that fees may be imposed if you move or end your contract early.

Know your rights

If you are switching electricity plans, you have a 10 day cooling off period in NSW where you can change your mind and cancel the contract.

Financial difficulty

Sometimes you may run into difficulties paying your bill, especially if you have received an unexpected price increase.

Besides the government's short-term assistance program, EAPA, energy retailers have programs to assist customers in financial difficulty to manage their bills more effectively.

Speak to your retailer for information on financial assistance programs, or visit Energy Consumers Australia's website, 'PowerCall', to help you prepare your questions before you make the call.

Find your best deal

The Australian Energy Regulator compares energy deals for NSW consumers on its website, www.energymadeeasy.gov.au.

Make sure you have your bill handy when you visit this site as you will need to answer a few simple questions about your energy usage. The site provides a list of options for you to compare energy deals and find the one that best suits you.

Be aware that when using commercial switching sites, they might not consider every plan on the market, and could commercially benefit from promoting a specific retailer's offer.

Scrutinise deals from telemarketers

Don't be pressurised by a door-knocker or telemarketer to make an on-the-spot decision about an energy plan.

Take the time to compare plans and make an informed decision.

Complaints

If you want to make a complaint about an electricity or gas retailer, or their marketing agent (including door-to-door sales people), contact the retailer or the energy ombudsman.