



## ELECTRICITY AND GAS CHARGES SET TO SOAR IN 2017

# Bill shock ahead

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VICTORIAN households face a combined electricity and gas bill blowout of up to \$310 next year as retailers raise prices.

The looming closure of the Hazelwood power plant is being blamed for electricity cost spikes in January, while gas price rises are also far outstripping inflation.

Vinnies energy expert Gavin Dufty said some households using electricity and gas would cop an annual increase of up to \$310, depending on their retailer and location.

All-electric customers without solar power would be stung as much as \$210 a year more.

"This will impact people when kids are going back to school and after the post-Christmas credit squeeze," Mr Dufty said.

"Shop around after January when the prices change, and make sure you are getting a concession if you are entitled."

The huge hit comes in the same week the Essential Services Commission revealed 70,000 people are now in energy retailer hardship programs — an increase of 30 per cent on last year — and 61,000 households were disconnected last year.

Average price rises for default residential electricity tariffs, known as standing offers, will range from 6.5 to 11.5 per cent in January. While most customers are on discounted offers, many will face similar price increases.

Opposition energy spokes-

man David Southwick said Premier Daniel Andrews had underplayed the impact of Hazelwood's closure on electricity prices.

He said families would be "forced to tighten the belt further with Christmas right around the corner".

Energy Minister Lily D'Ambrosio urged families to shop around, and said a government-ordered review of the retail market would check if "price gouging" was occurring.

Tariff changes mean small businesses are facing 7.9 to 16.6 per cent electricity increases and 8.3 to 11.2 per cent gas rises.

EnergyAustralia said its residential price rises of between 8.3 and 9.8 per cent would mean an extra \$127 to \$145 a

year on power bills, depending on whether customers have market contracts or standing offers. "The changes ... reflect higher generation, general business and government green-scheme costs," it said.

EnergyAustralia's gas bills will rise between 6.1 and 8.4 per cent, or about \$70-\$92 a year.

AGL's 9.9 per cent electricity change across default tariffs would bump up household bills an average \$135 a year. Its 8.6 per cent gas rise would lift bills by \$97.

Origin Energy said its average standing offer electricity increase of 6.5 per cent would add \$94 to average annual residential bills, plus GST. Its 7.8 per cent gas hike equated to an extra \$89.

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### ELECTRICITY INCREASES

% RISE FROM JANUARY

AGL	9.9
EnergyAustralia	9.8
Origin Energy	6.5
Red Energy	6.7
Momentum Energy	8
Alinta	6.9-11.5
Powerdirect	9.9
Globird	38.5

### GAS INCREASES

AGL	8.6
EnergyAustralia	6.1
Origin Energy	7.8
Red Energy	8.3
Momentum Energy	33
Alinta	5.2-9.2

\*For standing offer tariffs only



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Narelle Rutherford is one of tens of thousands of Victorians stressed by the forthcoming power bill rises.  
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