



## HELPING YOU STAY ON TRACK

Are you, or someone you know, worried about upcoming electricity or gas bills? Your energy retailer can help.

We understand you may need some extra help during this difficult time and retailers are working to assist those who need additional support. Your retailer can help you to stay on track, keep up with a payment plan, and provide advice if you need some extra help.

### **Worried about your bill? Contact your energy retailer for help.**

We know more households are facing financial and employment difficulties right now. Your energy retailer is prepared and ready to help.

If you need additional support **contact your electricity and gas retailer for a confidential discussion. Your retailer's contact number is located at the top of your electricity and gas bill.**

## SUPPORTING CUSTOMERS

Are you, or someone you know, worried about upcoming bills? Talk to your energy retailer so they can understand your situation and work with you to put the right support plan in place.



### NEED SOME EXTRA HELP TO STAY ON TRACK?

#### Monthly Billing

Customers with a smart meter can ask to receive monthly bills. A shorter bill cycle means smaller, more frequent payments, so you don't have to wait three months to get one big bill.

#### Pay in advance or bill smoothing

Customers can pay a set amount to their energy retailer more frequently to avoid receiving big bills. Many customers like to pay a small amount every time they get paid which gives you a head start on your bills. You can even make a payment to your energy retailer before your bill is issued. The money you pay in advance will be taken off your bill when it's sent.

#### Centrelink

Customers receiving Centrelink payments can request an automatic payment to their energy retailer at the same time as receiving a payment. This can help with budgeting.

#### Government assistance

Receiving JobSeeker or other government assistance? You should be eligible for government concessions, all you need is a Health Care Card or a Pension Card. These concessions can save you hundreds of dollars on your energy bills.

#### Energy efficiency advice

Retailers can provide practical advice on how to reduce your energy consumption and lower your bills. A few simple changes can save a lot of money. High bills are predominantly driven by heating and cooling costs. Most customers worry more about leaving the lights on – in fact, they only make up about 5 per cent of the bill, you can learn more at [www.energycouncil.com.au/coronavirus](http://www.energycouncil.com.au/coronavirus)

## CAN'T PAY YOUR BILL?

Retailers offer a broad range of assistance to help customers who are unable to pay their bill. You can work together to set up a payment plan that works for you.

### Payment extensions

An extension may be suitable for customers who have a cash flow issue. Customers will get an extension of an agreed period, usually up to a month, but the length will differ based on the retailer.

### Short term payment plans

If you have an outstanding bill you can't pay in full, talk to your energy retailer about splitting the amount so you can pay it over a number of equal repayments. A short-term payment plan is usually paid off before the next bill is sent.

### Long term payment plans

Retailers can offer long term arrangements where a customer can make a single payment that covers both the amount owing, and an estimate for how much energy they will use each week. This type of payment plan usually covers multiple billing periods.

### Individualised support

You can work closely with your retailer to develop a tailored payment plan that suits your needs. These intensive support programs usually involve a long-term payment plan (often more than a year) and can involve other support measures to reduce energy costs, incentivise payment, or help with replacing costly appliances.

### Emergency relief

All state governments offer emergency relief for customers in hardship. This usually means a one-off payment that can reduce your bills. For example, in Victoria, the Utility Relief Grant is a \$650 payment for each utility.

