

HELP TO STAY ON TOP OF YOUR ENERGY BILL

COVID-19 SUPPORT



Are you, or someone you know, worried about energy bills because your employment or financial situation has changed? Your electricity and gas retailer is prepared and ready to 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 stay on track, keep up with a payment plan, and provide advice if you need some extra help.

Worried about upcoming bill payments? There's help.

If you're worried about upcoming bills because your circumstances have changed, contact your electricity and gas retailer so they can understand your situation and put the right support plan in place. There's help available even if you haven't missed a payment.

What you discuss with your retailer remains confidential.

Your retailer's contact number is located at the top of your electricity and gas bill.

SUPPORTING CUSTOMERS

Need some extra help to stay on top of your bills? Retailers offer a range of customer support measures.



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.

Centrepay

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

Government assistance

If you have Health Care or Pension Card, your retailer can advise if you're eligible for government concessions. 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 predominately 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.

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 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.



Remember, there's help available even if you haven't missed a bill payment – and what you discuss with your retailer remains confidential.

For more information, including translated resources, visit:

energycouncil.com.au/coronavirus