

Take control of your energy bills

There are simple steps you can take to ensure you are on the best energy deal. You are not alone if you are struggling to pay your energy bills. Help is available; you only need to ask. ***You're not alone.***



Get a better energy deal

Contact your energy company to make sure you are on the best deal.

You could save hundreds of dollars a year.

Before you call it would help to find your latest bill and check:

- Energy used in the last quarter (check the daily kWh figure for electricity usage and GJ figure for gas consumption). Also check if the cost per kWh/GJ has increased.
- See how the bill compares with the same time last year so you know if your costs are going up.



Questions to ask your energy company:

- Can you give me a better deal?
- How do I know that my energy plan suits my household usage?
- Am I being charged different rates for using energy at different times of the day? (ask them to explain the times and where this is shown on the bill)
- How can I lower my energy bills?
- Can I make regular, but lower, payments more frequently?
- Am I eligible for any government concessions?
- Am I paying any extra fees for late payments or special meter readings? And what would my exit fee be?



Shop around

If you aren't happy with your energy plan and you live in the ACT, NSW, QLD, SA and TAS you can compare electricity and gas offers at energymadeeasy.gov.au or call **1300 585 165**. In VIC use compare.energy.vic.gov.au or call **136 186**. In NSW you can also use energyswitch.service.nsw.gov.au or call **137 788**.

It's OK to ask for help

If you are struggling to pay your bills, you should ring your energy company for help with payment. Don't wait until you are paying late fees or are at risk of being disconnected.

Energy companies are required to help if you are having trouble paying, usually by offering you an affordable payment plan. If you are concerned that you cannot afford that payment plan, ask your energy company for a more affordable one. If the company refuses, you can contact your state or territory Energy Ombudsman's office and ask them to help.

When speaking to your energy company say:

- 💡 "I'm having trouble paying my bill. What can you do to help?"
- 💡 "I can't pay what you're asking me to. Are you able to put me on your hardship program?"

NOTE: Energy companies cannot make you see a financial counsellor before you can access their hardship program.

CentrePay

If you receive a Centrelink payment, you can arrange for your bill to be paid directly to your energy company through CentrePay. This is a great way to manage your bills and can be set up by Centrelink or your energy company.



National Debt Helpline

If you need more help to manage bill stress and/or other debts, call the National Debt Hotline on **1800 007 007**, 9:30am to 4pm, Monday to Friday to speak to a financial counsellor. This is a free, independent and confidential service used by thousands of Australians every year.

Concessions and rebates

State and territory governments offer a range of energy concessions and rebates to help low-income households with energy costs. Ask your energy company what financial help is available for you.