



# Getting electricity, gas and water *connected*

## USE THIS FACT SHEET IF YOU:

- need to open an electricity or gas account
- want to know about setting up a water account
- move into a property
- move out of a property



This fact sheet will help you get electricity, gas and (if you live in south east Queensland) water connected without the hassles.

## OPENING AN ELECTRICITY AND GAS ACCOUNT

### Choose a retailer

In most cases, you can open an account over the telephone by contacting an energy retailer of your choice. *For a full list of energy retailers, visit [www.ewoq.com.au](http://www.ewoq.com.au), but not all retailers may sell energy in your area.*

In some circumstances, you may live or run a business in a complex that has signed a contract with a particular energy retailer to supply all residences/tenancies. If this is the case, you may not be able to choose another energy retailer. Check with your body corporate.

### Choose a standard contract or market contract

A standard retail contract has the regulated energy price and is available to all Queensland energy customers. All customers have a right to be supplied energy on a standard retail contract and are under no obligation to sign a market contract.

Market contracts are a negotiated legal contract between you and your energy retailer. These contracts vary but must outline all the terms and conditions you have negotiated, including things like price, service standards, fees and charges, billing and payment arrangements and penalties for early termination/cancellation.

A contract is a legally binding agreement so it makes sense to take the time to read it carefully and ensure you understand what you're

signing up to. If you are unsure, do not sign anything.

### Establish your identity

**Driver's licence** – You may be asked for a driver's licence or other form of photo identification.

**Pensioner/concession** – If you are eligible for a Queensland Government electricity or gas rebate, make sure your energy retailer has your pension, concession or senior's card details.

**Password** – You can put a password on your account so next time you contact your energy retailer you can save time by not having to provide your personal details again.

**Establish authorised people** – Under the *Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth)*, energy suppliers are only allowed to assist the actual energy account holder with an enquiry, request or complaint about an energy account. So if you have a partner, spouse or flatmate who will also be responsible for the energy account, you may want to include them as an 'authorised person' on your account.

### Security deposits

In some circumstances energy retailers require new customers to pay a security deposit (e.g. if you have outstanding debts). Your retailer will usually refund your security deposit once you have established a satisfactory payment history. Contact your energy retailer for more information.

## OPENING A WATER ACCOUNT

For customers in south east Queensland, your water account will be established when you purchase a property and the title is transferred. If you live outside the south east, you don't need to do anything – your local council will continue to bill you for water.

## TENANTS

Landlords are allowed to pass on the full water consumption costs to tenants provided these minimum criteria have been met:

- the premise has individual water meters
- the premise is water efficient
- the tenancy agreement states the tenant must pay for water.

You won't be billed directly, but will need to reimburse the landlord or their agent.

## MOVING IN Read the meter

Read your electricity, gas and water meters, and take a photo for proof, when you move in to check this reading against your first bill so you don't pay for the last occupant's usage.

## Pay on time

It is your responsibility to pay your bills in full and on time, or your retailer has the right to disconnect you if you don't. If you are having trouble paying your bill, contact your retailer immediately to find out what assistance they can provide.

If you're renting and electricity and gas are included as part of your rent in your lease, your landlord is responsible for paying your energy bills. If your landlord fails to pay an account on time and the premises are threatened with disconnection, contact the Residential Tenancies Authority on 1300 366 311.

## Follow contract terms and conditions

If you sign a market contract, you are bound to its terms and conditions.

## Provide access to your meter

If you don't provide clear access to your meter, your bill may be estimated based on prior usage. This means you could be sent a high 'catch up' bill when your meter is read or you are paying for more than you've used. To avoid this, contact your retailer to find out what other arrangements can be made.

## MOVING OUT

### Close/transfer your account

If you move, contact your electricity or gas retailer at least three days before to cancel/transfer your account, or you may be charged for any future energy usage on that account. You may be charged a termination/cancellation fee if you are on a market contract and end it early – check the terms and conditions.

### Read the meter

Read your electricity, gas and water meters, and take a photo for proof, when you move out to check this reading against your final bill so you don't pay for the new occupant's usage.

## TIPS FOR RESOLVING COMPLAINTS

- 1 If you have any problems with your energy or water company, contact them first and explain your situation. Keep records of letters, names, times and dates.
- 2 If the call centre staff can't help you, ask to speak to a supervisor.
- 3 If the problem is still not fixed, contact EWOQ to make a complaint.

## ABOUT EWOQ

Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland (EWOQ) is a free, fair and independent dispute resolution service for residential and small business energy customers across Queensland and water customers in south east Queensland.

