



energy+water
ombudsman
QUEENSLAND

Payment assistance and rebates

Energy and Water Ombudsman
Queensland can help.



The Energy and Water Ombudsman
Queensland is here to help resolve
complaints with your energy
supplier across Queensland or water
supplier in south east Queensland.

FREECALL 1800 662 837

INTERPRETER 131 450

TTY/VOICE 133 677

EMAIL complaints@ewoq.com.au

WEB www.ewoq.com.au

MAIL PO Box 3640
South Brisbane BC QLD 4101

LOCATIONS

Brisbane – Level 16, 53 Albert Street

Rockhampton – Level 2, 209 Bolsover Street

Cairns – Level 1, 15 Lake Street

SAVING MONEY ON YOUR BILL

Being energy and water efficient can save you money and ease the burden on our natural resources. Below are some tips to help you save money on your next bill.

- if you're not using it, turn it off
- buy energy and water efficient products
- take shorter showers
- use energy-efficient light bulbs
- set your air conditioner at 24-25 degrees in summer and 18-20 degrees in winter
- switch to off-peak electricity where possible
- insulate your home
- use appliances such as dishwashers, washing machines and dryers only when full
- check for water and gas leaks.

WHEN THINGS GO WRONG

Many customers rely on concessions to help them make their electricity, gas and water services more affordable. Although applying concessions to customer accounts is usually straightforward, things can sometimes go wrong.

Sometimes a problem within an energy or water company's billing system can result in concessions not being applied to your accounts. Additionally, it is your responsibility to provide your concession card details to energy or water companies.

The name on your concession card must exactly match the name of the account holder for verification purposes. If it doesn't, the concession may not be applied to your bills.



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PAYMENT ASSISTANCE

If you can't pay a bill, talk to your retailer as soon as you can. Get help early - this can stop your debt getting bigger and keep your supply connected. You can also authorise a friend or community worker to talk to the retailer on your behalf.

PAYMENT PLANS

By law, energy retailers have to offer payment plans to customers with open accounts who need time to pay their bill. Some water retailers also offer instalment plans to customers. If you can't agree with the retailer about how much you can afford to pay, contact EWOQ.

CUSTOMER HARDSHIP PROGRAMS

All energy retailers are required to have a hardship policy to help customers in financial difficulty. As part of the policy, most retailers have set up special hardship programs. These programs help customers stay connected and keep on top of their bills. Some water retailers also have hardship programs. Each retailer has their own eligibility criteria. Contact your retailer to see if you are eligible.

SAVING MONEY ON YOUR BILLS

Ask your retailer about ways you can reduce your usage. Some retailers offer free energy or water audits. You can also find tips on easy ways to save electricity in our Saving Electricity at Home brochure.

CENTREPAY

All energy retailers and some water retailers offer Centrepay to Centrelink customers. An amount will be deducted from your pension or benefit each fortnight (minimum of \$10) by Centrelink and transferred to your energy account. When you make a fortnightly payment, you still receive a quarterly bill, but only for any amount still owing on your account. Contact Centrelink on 132 300 or your retailer for more information.

NO INTEREST LOAN SCHEMES

The No Interest Loan Scheme (NILS) provides interest-free loans for individuals or families on low income. It's a community-based program that enables people to access fair, safe and equitable credit for the purchase of essential household items, for example a new hot water system or fridge to replace an old, inefficient one which is contributing to high energy bills. NILS is not for emergency relief, bond or rent money, living expenses or debt repayment. To find out if you qualify phone 13 64 57 or visit www.nils.com.au.

FINANCIAL COUNSELLORS

If you are in financial difficulty, a financial counsellor can help you manage a short term crisis and plan to prevent a future one. Financial counsellors can:

- help you organise your finances, design a budget and suggest changes to improve your financial situation
- assess your eligibility for government assistance
- negotiate with your creditors
- explain debt recovery procedures, bankruptcy and other alternatives
- refer you to other services, for example, gambling support, family support, personal counselling or community legal aid.

To find a counsellor visit www.moneysmart.gov.au or call 1800 007 007.

PENSIONER REBATES

If you hold a Queensland Government Seniors Card or Pensioner Concession Card, you may be eligible for an electricity or gas rebate. If you are eligible, your rebate will be credited to your energy account with each bill. Water rebates are available to eligible pensioners in south east Queensland who hold a Pensioner Concession Card or Gold Card. The annual rebate is applied to your account so ensure your retailer has your concession card details.

MEDICAL CONCESSIONS

The Electricity Life Support Concession Scheme and the Medical Cooling and Heating Electricity Concession Scheme provide assistance with meeting electricity costs to eligible people. Call the Department of Communities on 13 74 68 for more information.

Dialysis patients in south east Queensland may also be entitled to a water rebate. Contact your water retailer for more information.

HOME ENERGY EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE SCHEME (HEEAS)

HEEAS is a one-off payment to help people experiencing a crisis or unforeseen emergency and cannot pay their energy bill. On request, energy retailers will forward an application form to qualifying customers to complete. For more information on the scheme, contact your electricity or gas retailer.

DROUGHT RELIEF

Farmers who are customers of Ergon Energy may seek relief from electricity charges if they are in a drought declared area or if their property is individually drought declared by the Queensland Government. Call Ergon Energy on 1800 185 750 for more information.