



energy+water  
ombudsman  
QUEENSLAND

## Switching energy retailers

Energy and Water Ombudsman  
Queensland can help.



### YOUR SWITCHING CHECKLIST

- Be sure to have the answers to these questions before you switch.
- How do the service access charges and energy usage rates compare?
- What other fees and charges apply?
- Which part of the rate is fixed and which is subject to change?
- What components of the bill is any promised discount applied to?
- Does the new retailer charge a fee for early termination or to transfer the account if you move premises?
- Will your current retailer charge an early termination fee if you switch to a new retailer?
- What is the billing frequency and what payment options are available?
- If you are entitled to a rebate, will it be paid quarterly, six-monthly or annually?
- What is the contract length and does it rollover? If so, what rate is charged?
- Do discounts or other benefits apply for the length of the contract or only part of it?

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](mailto:complaints@ewoq.com.au)

**WEB** [www.ewoq.com.au](http://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



PRINTED 0615



## FINDING A RETAILER

There are a number of electricity and gas retailers that you can sign up with. To find a retailer or to compare prices, visit [www.energymadeeasy.gov.au](http://www.energymadeeasy.gov.au). You can ask any of the retailers what they can offer you. However, not all retailers may operate in your area, and they don't have to offer you a contract. Keep in mind that each retailer has their own terms and conditions under which you're supplied energy, and they may be different to your previous retailer.

The distributor that owns the network and reads your meter cannot be changed. The quality of your supply won't change when you change retailers – your energy will still come through the same poles and wires as before.

## SHOP AROUND AND NEGOTIATE

Like any other purchase, be sure to shop around to find the offer that suits your situation and budget. Don't be afraid to negotiate and see if a retailer can better another offer.

If you're not sure about the offer, ask someone you trust to check it for you. Take your time to read all the terms and conditions before you agree to anything. You can also contact EWOQ if you have problems about the contract.

## SWITCHING SERVICES AND BROKERS

There are commercial companies that offer switching services who can act as brokers between you and the retailer. Typically these agents receive a commission from the retailer. These companies may not represent all retailers and all the products on offer. This means they can't guarantee that you'll be offered the cheapest or the best product available. Check their terms and conditions before using their service to switch retailers.

## COMPARING ENERGY OFFERS

**Price:** Compare the usage charge and the service charge with what you are currently paying.

**Additional fees:** Find out if there are any additional fees and get this in writing. Your retailer should have a schedule of fees and charges available.

**Discount:** Check if the discount on offer is applied to the total bill, or only to specific charges. Also find out when it will be applied to your bill, and if it is for the entire contract period.

**Payment options:** Make sure your preferred payment method is available, and if there are any charges for using that method. Sometimes there are credit card fees or fees for not paying by direct debit.

**Billing:** Ask how often you will get your bill. Some retailers offer monthly billing instead of the standard quarterly bill.

**Green energy options:** If your contract includes this it will usually cost you more. If you are happy to include this, check that it is accredited under the Green Power scheme. For information visit [www.greenpower.gov.au](http://www.greenpower.gov.au).

**Contract expiration:** Find out what happens when your contract expires. You should receive advance notice of your contract ending so you can decide whether you'd like another contract with them or with another retailer. If you fail to contact your retailer, you may be charged a higher rate.

**Early termination fees:** You may have to pay a fee if you end your contract early. These are capped at \$20, but check what your contract specifies.

**Moving house:** Ask if you can transfer the contract and if they charge a fee for this. Some retailers charge a disconnection fee when a customer moves out of a property. Also, ask the retailer whether a new contract term starts if you move.

## THE TRANSFER PROCESS

When you sign up with a new retailer, the transfer won't happen until after your next scheduled meter read. This means it can take a few months for the switch to go through. If you want to transfer before this, you can ask your retailer for a special meter reading, which will be an extra charge to you. If there is a delay in the transfer, the retailer must notify you and advise you of the new expected transfer date.

Once the transfer is complete, you should receive a final bill from your old retailer. If you believe your transfer is taking too long, contact your new retailer and ask why. If they can't explain the delay or you're not happy with their response, contact EWOQ.

Remember, by law you have a cooling-off period of 10 business days if you sign a new electricity or gas contract. This means you can cancel your new energy contract within the cooling-off period without having to pay any costs.



### Thinking of switching retailers?

Compare prices online at :

[www.energymadeeasy.gov.au](http://www.energymadeeasy.gov.au).

It's a free electricity and gas price comparison website, managed by the Australian Energy Regulator.

For more information or for help using the site, phone the Australian Energy Regulator on 1300 585 165.