

Energy basics

This factsheet is about energy bills and how to get help

If you are struggling to keep up with your energy bill, there are options out there.

Checking your energy bill

It is a good idea to check your energy bill each time you get it, to make sure you know what you are paying for.

The cost of your bill can be because of:

- The size of your house and number of people.
- The appliances you have such as a fridge and air-conditioning and their age.
- The time of day you use your energy.
- Your usage is 'Estimated', meaning the energy company guesses how much energy you used, or 'Actual', meaning the actual amount of energy you used.
- Energy costing more.

Your energy provider should have an online guide to help you read and understand your bill or give them a call for help.

Saving on energy costs

- **Contact your energy provider** to check you are on the best plan for you and if you are receiving the concessions/rebates you may be entitled to.
- **Do an energy audit** - turn off your power points and appliances and your power box, wait 20 minutes then turn each appliance on one by one and see if the energy meter has changed and by how much. There could be an appliance that is hogging the power or a faulty outlet.
- **Contact your landlord** for faulty power issues - talk to your tenancy advocate about this.
- **Apply for an energy voucher** if you can.
- Check the **Energy Made Easy website** to compare the cost of each energy provider to find the best plan. You will still have to pay your old energy bills before disconnection, talk to the provider if you are unable to pay the full amount.

For more information visit the Moneysmart website.

Assistance with paying your energy bill

Depending on your situation there should be rebates and concessions available.

If you are experiencing financial hardship, you may be able to apply for energy vouchers from your state or territory.

It's a good idea to speak to your energy provider and let them know what's happening as they should try and help.

You can find information on rebates and concessions at **energy.gov.au**.



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Issues with an energy bill

If you think there is an issue with your energy bill, first call your provider and ask them to explain the bill.

If you are not happy with how they handle it you can make a complaint to your state or territory's energy and water ombudsman. They are a free service that will look at your complaint and decide if your energy provider isn't doing the right thing.

If you make a complaint to the ombudsman, you should still pay what you can on the bill.



Received a disconnection notice?

If you receive a disconnection notice, contact your provider and ask for a financial hardship plan.

- Ask that they do not disconnect you.
- Ask for written confirmation that they won't disconnect you.
- Work out what you can afford with a budget.
- If you have a serious illness or on a pension or experiencing a loss, tell them.
- Take notes of who you spoke to and the plan you agreed to.
- Ask the provider to send you the agreement in writing.

If you cannot work it out with your supplier, you can contact your state energy ombudsman.

Help

Call **Mob Strong** on 1800 808 488 for more information. We are a free First Nations driven legal advice and financial counselling service. We help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples from anywhere in Australia.

We are a free and independent service. We keep your information private.

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the traditional owners and celebrate their diversity, their ongoing cultures and connections to all lands and waters and pay our respects to elders past, present and future.

This fact sheet is for information only. You should get legal advice about your personal situation.

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