

## What are my choices?

The NSW Government introduced retail competition so consumers could choose which retailer supplies their energy. You don't have to change retailers if you don't want to, and your electricity and gas will continue to be supplied by the standard retailer in your area.

For a full list of retailers in your area contact the Department of Water and Energy on 1300 136 888 or visit [www.dwe.nsw.gov.au](http://www.dwe.nsw.gov.au)

## Does it pay to shop around?

It pays to shop around so you can compare prices and services. Carefully read any contract offer before signing and check that it matches the deal the marketer described to you.

## What does this mean?

**Distributor** The company that owns the network and supplies electricity and/or gas to your home.

**Green energy** Renewable or green energy is produced from sources such as the sun, wind, water and waste.

**Retailer** The company that bills you for electricity and/or gas.

**Marketer** The salesperson who contacts you on behalf of an energy retailer. They must follow the rules contained in the Marketing Code.

**Marketing Code** The NSW Energy Marketing Code of Conduct outlines what marketers can and can't do.

**Negotiated contract** An energy supply agreement entered into between you and a retailer.

**Standard Form Customer Supply Contract** The contract you enter into with the standard retailer for the area when you move into a property and use electricity or gas. The rates for these contracts are regulated by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART).

**Standard retailer** The retailer responsible by law for supplying you with gas or electricity under a standard form contract.

## What doesn't change if you agree to a contract

### Your supply

Your quality of supply will not change if you choose a new retailer or take up a green energy offer. Your energy will come through the same poles, wires and pipes, and will still be subject to the same supply issues.

### Meter reading

The distributor that owns the network will continue to read your meter, and they will provide the readings to your retailer, who will then bill you.

## Get advice before you take up an energy offer

If you feel pressured by time, don't sign or agree to anything. You can tell the marketer you will get back to them after you have read and considered everything. Ask someone you trust or an independent advisor to review the contract terms before you agree or sign.

Contact the Consumer Credit Legal Centre NSW on 1800 808 488 for advice on contracts or a referral, or visit [www.cclcnsw.org.au](http://www.cclcnsw.org.au)

## The marketing process

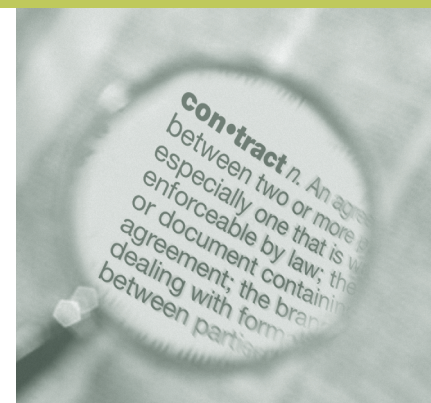
Retailers may approach you in person, by phone or by mail, and invite you to take up an energy offer or enter a negotiated contract. They may ask you:

- your name and address
- how much you usually spend on electricity or gas
- your National Metering Identifier (NMI) for electricity or your Delivery Point Identifier (DPI) for gas, which appears on your bill.

Marketers must provide you with information including:

- your right to be supplied under a Standard Form contract
- what's different about the negotiated contract they are offering
- the ten day cooling-off period

You are under no obligation to answer a marketer's questions, unless you are interested in what they are offering.



## 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 not fixed, contact EWON by phone, fax, email, letter or visit [www.ewon.com.au](http://www.ewon.com.au) to make an online complaint.

## About EWON

The Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW (EWON) provides an independent way of resolving customer complaints about all electricity and gas suppliers in New South Wales and some water suppliers. Our service is free, fair and independent. Our aim is to keep essential services within reach of everyone.

## Contact EWON

FREECALL	1800 246 545*
	Mon–Fri, 9am–5pm
FREEFAX	1800 812 291
FREEPOST	Reply Paid K1343 Haymarket NSW 1239
INTERPRETER	131 450
TTY/VOICE	133 677
EMAIL	<a href="mailto:omb@ewon.com.au">omb@ewon.com.au</a>
WEBSITE	<a href="http://www.ewon.com.au">www.ewon.com.au</a>

\*Calls from mobile phones may attract a fee, which will vary depending on your service provider. If you are calling from a mobile phone, let us know and EWON will call you back.

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### Are there rules for marketers?

Yes. A marketer must follow the rules set out in the Marketing Code. Under the Code, marketers must not contact you:

- before 8am or after 8.30pm on weekdays
- before 9am or after 7pm on Saturdays
- before 10am or after 7pm on Sundays

### Complaining about a marketer

If you are contacted by a marketer who pressures or misleads you in any way, contact the retailer they represent to complain. You can also ask EWON to investigate the matter. We will take up the issue with the retailer concerned and advise the authorities about any breaches of the Marketing Code.

### Don't want to be contacted?

If you don't want to be contacted again by that retailer, let the marketer know.

To prevent telemarketing calls, you can put your name on the Do Not Call Register, phone 1300 792 958 or visit [www.donotcall.gov.au](http://www.donotcall.gov.au)

You can also clearly display a sign at your property stating 'No Marketers'. Marketers must abide by such signs. If you have a sign displayed and an energy marketer visits your home, contact the retailer immediately or call EWON.

### Types of contracts

Basically, there are two types of contracts:

**Standard Form contracts:** When you buy electricity or gas direct from the standard retailer in your area, you automatically enter into a Standard Form Customer Contract (your signature is not required). This contract is regulated by the NSW Government and has standard rules and customer protections.

**Negotiated contracts:** If you change your retailer or accept a different offer from your standard retailer, you will enter a negotiated contract. These contracts vary between retailers, and contain different terms and conditions from

Standard Form contracts. You can enter a negotiated contract over the phone, or by completing a form you receive in the mail or from a door-to-door marketer.

### What you need to know about energy contracts

#### Ten day cooling-off period

When you agree to or sign a negotiated contract offer, you have ten days to reconsider your decision (the cooling-off period) and withdraw from the contract without penalty. A marketer must tell you about the ten day cooling-off period.

#### Early termination fees

There may be a fee for terminating your negotiated contract early. The marketer must tell you about this fee and this information must be clearly stated in the contract. Be aware that if you move to a new property it may be regarded as a termination of the contract, even if the same company will be your retailer.

### Energy contract checklist

Not all negotiated contracts are the same, so you may want to ask about:

- How long does the contract last?
- What happens when the contract expires?
- What happens if I move house?
- Are there any termination or disconnection fees for ending the contract early?
- What tariff or rate will I be charged for the energy I use?
- Do I need to pay a security deposit? How much will it be?
- Which part of the rate is fixed and which part is subject to change?
- Are there any late payment fees or other account charges?
- How often will I receive a bill?
- What payment options are available (eg BPAY, Centrepay, direct debit, post office)?
- Is accredited renewable/green energy available? How much extra will it cost?
- Have my pension or rebate details been noted?

### Green energy

When you are contacted about an energy offer, it's likely you'll be given the option of purchasing renewable energy (green energy). In most cases it will cost you more to choose this option.

Look for green energy products which are accredited under the GreenPower scheme (set up by the NSW Government). Ask the marketer if their product is accredited, what the rating is (eg the percentage or star rating) and how much extra it will cost.

For more information visit:

[www.greenpower.nsw.gov.au](http://www.greenpower.nsw.gov.au)

[www.greenelectricitywatch.org.au](http://www.greenelectricitywatch.org.au)

### About the transfer process

It can take a few months to complete a transfer to a new retailer. This is because the transfer cannot occur until after the next scheduled meter reading.

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 are unable to help you, or you are unhappy with their response, contact EWON.

### Unwanted transfers

Sometimes accounts are transferred in error and customers can be significantly inconvenienced. In some cases customers have been disconnected in error when transfers don't go smoothly.

Contact your retailer immediately if you receive:

- a letter from another retailer advising that you are now their customer, or
- an unrequested 'final account' from your usual retailer.

If you are unable to resolve the unwanted transfer with the new retailer or your usual retailer, contact EWON.