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CLARE PETRE  
ENERGY & WATER OMBUDSMAN NSW  
PHOTO: SOPHIE HOWARTH

## Ombudsman's message

Recently EWON released its ninth annual report titled, 'Challenge, change and choice'.

In the 2006-2007 financial year EWON finalised 8641 complaints, which represents a 13% increase from last year.

This year marks a significant change in trends, with retail competition complaints (marketing, contracts, transfers) taking over from billing and credit as the primary reason for customers contacting EWON.

I am pleased to report that we continue to see a downward trend in credit related complaints. We believe that utility providers' customer assistance programs have played, and will continue to play, a positive role in this downward trend.

While this trend is encouraging, our complaints indicate that some customer hardship cases are being missed by call centres and are not referred to the assistance programs.

Analysis of complaints from customers receiving a pension or benefit, and/or living in public housing, indicates that affordability is a key issue for vulnerable or disadvantaged consumers.

Of these cases, credit problems (for example disconnection, difficulty in payment, debt collection) were the primary reason for their complaint. This is significant compared with other domestic customers, for whom credit was fourth as their primary issue.

We also continue to receive credit related complaints where customers in hardship have not been able to access EAPA (Energy Accounts Payment Assistance) vouchers.

If customers have difficulty locating EAPA they can contact EWON on freecall 1800 246 545 to find out which agencies in their area distribute the vouchers.

I urge community organisations that run out of vouchers to ring the EAPA Coordinator at the Department of Water and Energy on (02) 8281 7712.

*Clare Petre*

Clare Petre  
Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW

The Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW (EWON) provides an independent way of resolving customer complaints about all electricity and gas suppliers in NSW and some water suppliers.

Our service is free, fair and independent. Our aim is to keep essential services within reach of everyone.

**Freecall ☎ 1800 246 545**



Energy & Water  
Ombudsman NSW

www.ewon.com.au

### Issues for EWON complainants in financial hardship 2006-2007\*

CUSTOMERS	✓ pension/benefit ✓ public housing	✓ pension/benefit x public housing	x pension/benefit x public housing
COMPLAINTS	354 complaints	564 complaints	1587 complaints
ISSUES	38% credit 29% billing 19% retail competition 12% customer service 1% supply 1% general <1% land	26% credit 26% billing 24% retail competition 16% customer service 3% provision 2% supply 2% land 1% general	32% billing 21% customer service 18% retail competition 12% credit 7% supply 5% provision 4% land 1% general

\*EWON finalised a total of 8641 complaints in the 2006-2007 financial year. With 6136 of these complaints, the customer did not specify their income and housing.

# Complaints statistics



## Overview of the period

From January to June 2007 over 92% of complaints to EWON were from residential customers and 75% of all complaints related to electricity. This is consistent with previous periods.

### EXPLANATION OF TERMS

**Complaint enquiry:** a request for information or assistance that can be settled or referred quickly

**Refer to higher level (RHL):** complaint enquiry referred to a senior officer in the energy or water company

**Investigation:** complaint cannot be resolved between customer and company, EWON investigates and negotiates an outcome

**Determination (or binding decision):** outcome cannot be negotiated between the customer and company, Ombudsman resolves the matter through a determination which is binding on the company

### NOTES ON HOW WE CATEGORISE COMPLAINT ISSUES

**Billing:** high and disputed bills, fees and charges, responsibility for accounts

**Credit:** disconnection, arrears, difficulty in payment, payment arrangement declined, debt collection

**Customer service:** poor attitude, failure to respond, incorrect advice

**Retail competition:** conduct by marketers, errors in transferring accounts

**Provision:** problems with new or existing connections

**Supply:** quality, damage/loss, outages

**Land:** impact of network assets, maintenance, environment

**General:** non-energy/water related, contractors

## Customer complaints January to June 2007

During the period 1 January to 30 June 2007, EWON finalised 4,218 customer complaints.

### PRIMARY ISSUES PER REGION

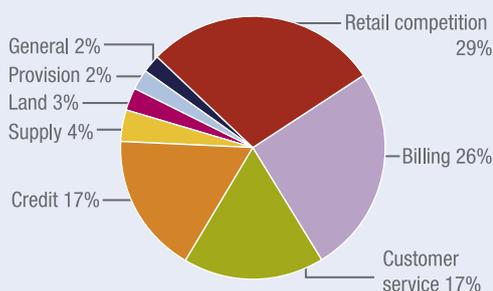
REGION	NO. COMPLAINTS	TOP THREE ISSUES		
Central West	145	Retail competition 49%	Billing 17%	Customer service 16%
Far West	14	Retail competition 35%	Customer service 19%	Provision 16%
Hunter	483	Billing 25%	Credit 22%	Retail competition 20%
Illawarra	289	Retail competition 35%	Billing 21%	Customer service 17%
Mid North Coast	118	Retail competition 44%	Customer service 19%	Billing 15%
Murray	71	Credit 30%	Retail competition 26%	Billing 19%
Murrumbidgee	82	Retail competition 50%	Billing 20%	Credit 14%
North West	44	Retail competition 41%	Customer service 21%	Billing 18%
Northern	77	Retail competition 52%	Billing 15%	Customer service 13%
Richmond-Tweed	95	Retail competition 52%	Billing 20%	Customer service 13%
South Eastern	93	Retail competition 31%	Billing 22%	Credit 20%
Sydney Inner	921	Billing 36%	Retail competition 20%	Customer service 18%
Sydney Outer	1334	Retail competition 27%	Billing 26%	Credit 19%
Sydney Surrounds	368	Retail competition 25%	Billing 23%	Credit 21%
Other	84			

### INVESTIGATION LEVELS

INDUSTRY	NO. COMPLAINTS	COMPLAINT ENQUIRY	RHL	INVESTIGATION	DETERMINATION
Electricity	3183	1320	657	1202	4
Gas	504	169	111	224	--
Water	393	221	79	93	--
Dual Fuel	104	24	27	53	--
Other	34	34	--	--	--

### All issues raised by customers

JANUARY – JUNE 2007



### Disconnection and credit issues

JANUARY – JUNE 2007

**1002 customers** complained about credit related issues. Of these:

- 534 had arrears on their account
- 321 were facing disconnection
- 238 were disconnected
- 159 were denied an extension or payment plan
- 139 had been contacted by debt collectors

### Marketing and transfers complaints

JANUARY – JUNE 2007

**1403 customers** complained about retail competition issues (eg. marketing, contracts, transfers).

Of these, **575 customers** complained about energy marketers:

- 404 customers said they did not consent to a contract or transfer
- 307 customers said they had been misled by marketers
- 94 customers said they had been pressured or coerced into signing

## Electricity facts and fallacies from Country Energy

SOURCE: WWW.COUNTRYENERGY.COM.AU

**FALLACY** Electricity is a static force.

**FACT** Electricity is a flowing force. It always seeks ground and will take all paths to get there – it will flow through water, metal, trees, wood, rubber, straw, tyres or people.

It takes less than a second for electricity to pass from a powerline, through a tree branch, to a person.

The voltage on the ground from a downed powerline is highest in the immediate area around the electrical source and decreases with distance.

Walking over the area or touching an object or person in the area can cause a fatal shock.

**FALLACY** As long as you don't touch a live powerline you are safe to stand near it.

**FACT** Electricity can arc or jump across open air so Country Energy recommends people keep at least 8 metres clear of fallen or low hanging powerlines for safety.

**FALLACY** If you switch the power off at the main switch in the meter box it's safe for you to disconnect the power yourself.

**FACT** You should never attempt to disconnect your meter box as it could explode. Always have a qualified electrician carry out electrical work.

**FALLACY** Water does not conduct electricity very well.

**FACT** Water does conduct electricity so you should never spray water guns or hoses at powerlines – this includes irrigation jets. You should never use electrical equipment near pools or baths.

**FALLACY** It's safe to try to dislodge kites and model planes tangled in powerlines.

**FACT** Kite strings can conduct electricity and should not be pulled free of powerlines. Contact the electricity supplier in your area to retrieve the object and check for damage to the network.

When flying kites or model planes keep a safe distance of 100 metres, or choose an area free of powerlines for the activity.



**FALLACY** Rubber boots, gloves and tyres can protect you from electricity, preventing electrical shocks.

**FACT** Rubber gloves, boots and tyres will not protect you from the voltages carried by powerlines.

Rubber boots and gloves are not made to insulate against the amount of power flowing through a typical distribution line. They can catch fire if hit by electricity.

Rubber tyres that contain carbon-based rubber, steel belts and reinforcements make some tyres very good conductors of electricity.

Tyres on vehicles can explode or begin to burn immediately upon contact with a live powerline and can explode up to 24 hours after contact with the distribution network.

**FALLACY** Wood doesn't conduct electricity and can prevent the flow of electricity

**FACT** Wood can conduct electricity. It only acts as an insulator when every trace of moisture and chemical deposits are removed.

It is not safe to cut tree branches that are touching powerlines as you may touch a line with your saw or hand. If you are on an aluminium ladder or the tree is wet, you run the risk of a deadly electrical shock. Remember, the interior of the tree is always damp with sap and will act as a conductor.

## New survey ranks GreenPower products

Green Electricity Watch surveys energy retailers and provides a ranking of their GreenPower electricity products. Green Electricity Watch is a coalition of the Australian Conservation Foundation, Total Environment Centre and WWF-Australia.

Green Electricity Watch recently released its latest survey results to help consumers who are interested in green energy offers.

The organisation advises consumers to:

- buy accredited GreenPower products
- buy GreenPower with the highest number of stars and as close to 100% as you can afford\*

For the results of the survey visit [www.greenelectricitywatch.org.au](http://www.greenelectricitywatch.org.au)

For information on GreenPower visit [www.greenpower.nsw.gov.au](http://www.greenpower.nsw.gov.au) or phone (02) 8281 7777.

\*Taking up a green energy offer can cost more. According to [greenpower.gov.au](http://greenpower.gov.au), it can cost an extra \$5.50 per week to purchase 100% GreenPower.

## AGL late payment fees

AGL's late payment fees processes changed after 31 July 2007.

A late payment fee of \$9.90 will be applied to electricity accounts and \$8.80 to gas accounts, at the release of a Reminder Notice.

It is important to note that customers on the Staying Connected program or with ongoing unresolved complaints will not have the late payment fee applied to their account.

## Sydney Water and Centrepay

As of June 2007, Sydney Water customers who receive a Centrelink pension or benefit can now pay their bills using Centrepay.

Eligible customers should contact Centrelink about setting up a Centrepay arrangement. They will need to nominate how much of their benefit they want regularly paid towards their Sydney Water account.

Note: most electricity and gas retailers already accept payments through Centrepay.



## FridgeAssist

EnergyAustralia has piloted a program to help low income households buy energy efficient fridges at less than half the normal price, and with no upfront cost, through the No Interest Loans Scheme (NILS).

EnergyAustralia surveyed 400 low income households and around 40% of respondents had secondhand fridges. The company estimates old fridges cost low income households up to \$140 year more on their electricity bills.

How FridgeAssist works:

- The FridgeAssist program is being piloted on the Central Coast and run through the Toukley Neighbourhood Centre.
- People who have a health care card or receive a Centrelink benefit are eligible for the program.
- You will need to pass an income means test through the Neighbourhood Centre.
- You must live in the Wyong or Gosford Local Government Area.
- You can replace an old fridge or buy your first fridge, however only one fridge is allowed per household.
- You can choose one of three new energy efficient Fisher & Paykel fridges with no upfront cost.
- Between \$420 and \$1040 will be cut from the recommended retail price of those fridges and the balance repaid with a No Interest Loan.
- Centrelink payment deductions can be as low as \$10 per fortnight to repay loans.

Anyone interested in participating in this program should call Toukley Neighbourhood Centre on 4396 1555.

To find a NILS program in your area visit [www.nilsnsw.org.au](http://www.nilsnsw.org.au)

## 'No hawkers' please

If you wish to prevent energy marketers visiting your home you can clearly display a sign stating 'no hawkers', 'no canvassing' or 'no door-to-door sales'. The *Marketing Code of Conduct* requires an energy marketer to abide by such signs.

If you have a sign displayed and an energy marketer visits your home, contact the retailer immediately or call EWON on 1800 246 545.

If you wish to prevent telemarketing calls about energy contracts you can put your name on the Do Not Call Register.

For more information on the Register visit [www.donotcall.gov.au](http://www.donotcall.gov.au) or telephone 1300 792 958.

## Entering a contract

There have been important changes to the Electricity Supply Regulation which came into effect 1 July 2007, including:

- Customers entering negotiated contracts can now withdraw during the cooling off period orally or in writing.
- Suppliers must issue new negotiated supply contracts (including terms and conditions or 'disclosure information') within two business days of the contract being entered into.

These are welcome changes which EWON supported in our submissions to government.

**Important message:** St Vincent de Paul Society St Ives Region offers NILS to people living in or outside their area (see contact details below)



Providing **No Interest Loans** for low income people, for any item that will improve their quality of life.

**St Vincent de Paul Society  
St Ives Region**

Contact: (02) 9419 3599

Email: [nilsstives@optusnet.com.au](mailto:nilsstives@optusnet.com.au)

Chatswood Centre  
287 Victoria Avenue, Chatswood  
Easy access rail or bus

## Retailer of last resort

In June 2007 EnergyOne ceased operations as an energy retailer which meant that RoLR (Retailer of Last Resort) provisions were implemented.

This meant that EnergyOne customers were automatically transferred to EnergyAustralia, Integral Energy or Country Energy depending on where they live.

Customers affected by this change went onto a standard retail contract with the new supplier and will be charged the standard electricity rates.

Customers who owed money on their EnergyOne account will still need to pay the account, and those who had prepaid their bills are entitled to a refund.

Customers who used Centrepay to pay their energy bill will need to contact Centrelink to advise of the change in retailers. Customers eligible for pensioner and/or life support rebates will need to contact the new supplier to provide their details.

For more information phone the Department of Water and Energy on 1300 136 888.

## Bankruptcy and disconnection

Can your electricity, gas or water be disconnected if you owe money on your accounts but have been declared a bankrupt? The short answer is 'yes'.

According to the Insolvency and Trustee Service Australia (visit [www.itsa.gov.au](http://www.itsa.gov.au)), "if [a bankrupt has] unpaid accounts relating to housing or essential services such as electricity, telephone or gas the supplier may require payment of the account or a bond for the service to be maintained".

A bankrupt customer who wants to maintain their energy or water supply will generally need to pay what is owing on their account or establish a payment plan to stay connected.

Customers unable to negotiate a realistic and affordable payment plan with their supplier can contact EWON for help on freecall 1800 246 545.

Consumers with credit, debt and banking issues can phone the Credit and Debt Hotline on 1800 808 488, Monday to Friday, 9.30am to 4.30pm, for financial counselling information, advice and referrals, or visit [www.cclcnsw.org.au](http://www.cclcnsw.org.au)

## Leonie's story

### Supply disconnected after bankruptcy

Leonie went bankrupt and in her petition she included her \$530 energy debt. Leonie thought that because it was included as part of her bankruptcy, the energy company would waive what she owed.

Following the bankruptcy Leonie was surprised to find that she had arrears of \$900 on her account, which included what she owed at the time of bankruptcy. She asked EWON to investigate her complaint.

Our investigation revealed that utility debts can be included in a bankruptcy petition and an energy company cannot recover the debt. However, the energy company can still disconnect a customer for an unpaid debt.

We explained this to Leonie and referred her to the company's customer assistance program to set up a payment plan. We also referred her to agencies that distribute EAPA (Energy Accounts Payment Assistance) vouchers to help pay her consumption costs.

## Veronica's story

### A high bill and \$6000 in arrears

Veronica lives in public housing with her six children and relies on a pension for her income. Veronica visited her client services officer at Department of Housing because she owed \$6000 on her electricity and gas accounts, and she thought there may be a gas leak contributing to her high bills.

The client services officer contacted EWON on Veronica's behalf. They explained that Veronica had mental health issues and was already on the energy company's customer assistance program. She was currently paying \$75 per fortnight towards her energy bills. The officer said due to her illness, Veronica was not comfortable speaking directly with the company and asked if we could contact them to discuss her high bill complaint and arrears.

We contacted the customer assistance program case manager who looks after Veronica's energy account and he confirmed she had made every scheduled payment. We noted that Veronica's fortnightly payments didn't cover her consumption and each year she accumulated \$1000 arrears on the account. The case manager said he had tried to contact Veronica to discuss her arrears but was unsuccessful. He believed Veronica's illness made her uncomfortable returning his calls.

We discussed Veronica's options with the case manager, considering her high bill complaint and difficult financial situation.

The case manager suggested Veronica provide them with a letter from her psychiatrist and the company could then review her situation.

We contacted Veronica and let her know what the case manager had offered. Veronica agreed to speak to the case manager if we put her in contact with him.

The case manager advised us that he had successfully made contact with Veronica and she was organising a letter from her psychiatrist. He confirmed that he would arrange a field visit to check the meters and investigate whether there was a gas leak. He would also contact the Department of Housing if there was an issue with supply at the property.



PARTICIPANTS AT EWON'S FORUM FOR TENANTS' ADVOCATES

## Water Industry Competition Act

In June 2007, the NSW Department of Water and Energy released a consultation paper seeking comment on proposed regulations to sit under the Water Industry Competition Act 2006.

The Act aims to encourage competition in the water industry and promote the development of infrastructure for the production and reticulation of recycled water. It aims to do this by establishing:

- a licensing regime for private sector participants in the water industry
- a comprehensive access regime to facilitate the negotiation of water and sewage storage and transportation using existing networks, and
- binding arbitration of sewer 'mining' disputes.

New South Wales is the first state in Australia to legislate competition in the water industry and the short term impact on households and small businesses is not clear as yet.

## EWON's submission ... argued for protection for customers against misleading marketing and unwanted transfers to new water providers

Based on EWON's experience of competition in energy, we are especially concerned about marketers taking advantage of vulnerable or elderly customers.

EWON's submission to the Department in July 2007 argued for:

- sound regulation and licensing of any new retailers entering the market
- protection for customers against misleading marketing and unwanted transfers to new water providers
- guidelines for managing billing issues following the unanticipated business failure of a water supplier or their withdrawal from the market.

EWON awaits the implementation of the regulations and will closely monitor the impact water competition may have on NSW water customers.

Our submission is available in the Policy and Research area of our website at [www.ewon.com.au](http://www.ewon.com.au)

### Johanna's story

## Facing disconnection and having to choose between food or EAPA vouchers

Johanna is a single parent who relies on a pension for her income. She had been on an energy contract for 13 months but had only received three bills in that time. Johanna had kept up monthly payments towards the account but her most recent bill was for \$1144 and she couldn't afford to pay it.

Johanna knew she was facing disconnection and went to a community agency for help. The agency said they could give her either food or EAPA (Energy Accounts Payment Assistance) vouchers, but not both. Johanna chose food vouchers and put \$200 onto her energy account. The agency referred her to EWON for help with the impending disconnection.

We referred Johanna to other EAPA agencies to help pay her bill and she managed to get \$240 in vouchers. She told us however that she wasn't satisfied with the company's billing system as the billing delays had put strain on her finances.

Our investigation revealed that the company had underestimated Johanna's usage and set her monthly payments too low. The company recognised that the significant delay in their six monthly account reconciliation had caused Johanna stress, and credited \$720 towards her account. At Johanna's request they also agreed to cancel her contract without penalty so that she could return to her original provider.

### Grace's story

## Facing restriction of her water supply for missed payments

Grace owns a large property with six bedrooms and three bathrooms, which houses her family of ten. She contacted EWON because she owed more than \$6095 on her water account and she was facing restriction of her supply. Grace said she had entered a payment arrangement of \$250 per fortnight, but she had to replace her fridge so she had missed a few payments.

We contacted the company to discuss Grace's situation and noted that the late fees on her account were a significant proportion of her arrears. In the meantime, we referred Grace to agencies that distribute PAS vouchers (Payment Assistance Scheme for water).

The company found that although Grace was receiving a pension, the pension rebate had not been applied to her account. They applied the rebate and waived the late fees on Grace's account, which reduced her debt by \$1935. Grace agreed to continue with her fortnightly payments and the company gave her the direct number of a senior credit manager should she have problems in the future.

# Community outreach update

## Community visits

Since our last newsletter we have undertaken a range of activities and visits including:

- Chinese seniors group, Granville
- Electoral Officer training, NSW Parliament
- Financial Counsellors training, Gosford, Narara and Ryde
- NAIDOC week stall, Alexandria Park
- Vietnamese womens' group, Cabramatta

In partnership with the Greek Welfare Centre we have presented to a number of Greek community groups in Blacktown, Burwood, Campbelltown, Crows Nest, Harris Park, Kingsford, Kogarah, Gynea, Thornleigh and St Marys.

## Forum for tenants' advocates

Often tenants' utility complaints cannot be resolved by just one agency. In some cases the complaint arises from a problem for which the landlord is responsible but the tenant's energy or water consumption has been affected.

This is often the case with complaints from tenants about high electricity or gas bills resulting from faulty hot water systems. For example, EWON can help the tenant negotiate a payment plan with their supplier. However, if the tenant wants to seek compensation from their landlord for the high bill, they will need to contact the Consumer, Trader and Tenancy Tribunal (CTTT).

In June 2007 we hosted a joint forum to inform tenants' advocates about EWON

and the organisations that deal with tenancy related complaints. Our aim was to help workers understand the role of each organisation and their jurisdiction.

The forum was well attended with over 55 participants. Along with EWON we had presentations from the Department of Housing, the Housing Appeals Committee, the Office of Fair Trading and CTTT.

## Forums for disability organisations

Workers and carers often act as advocates for people with a disability. It is important to remember you will need approval from your client before EWON can investigate a complaint. When lodging a complaint with EWON, we can accept authorisation by phone or letter, or we can provide an 'authority to act' form.

In July and October 2007 we collaborated with the Community Services Division of the NSW Ombudsman to host forums for workers in key disability organisations in western and southern Sydney. The forums covered the ways in which EWON and NSW Ombudsman can assist disability advocates with their clients' complaints.

The western Sydney forum was held at the Northcott Centre in Parramatta and over 50 workers attended. The southern Sydney forum was at the Sutherland Entertainment Centre and 35 workers attended.

If you would like EWON to present to your organisation or community group please call 1800 246 545 or email [omb@ewon.com.au](mailto:omb@ewon.com.au)

## New Indigenous Officer

EWON welcomes Rose Gordon to our Community and Service Development team as our Indigenous Project Officer. Rose will primarily focus on raising awareness of our services among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Rose's family is from the Baryulgil and Bundjalung mobs on the North Coast. She has over 25 years experience working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in New South Wales.

Most recently Rose worked for the Department of Education, Science and Training as an Education Officer with schools and parents in Sydney's West and Northern Beaches areas. Prior to that Rose worked for a number of Aboriginal community organisations in Redfern.

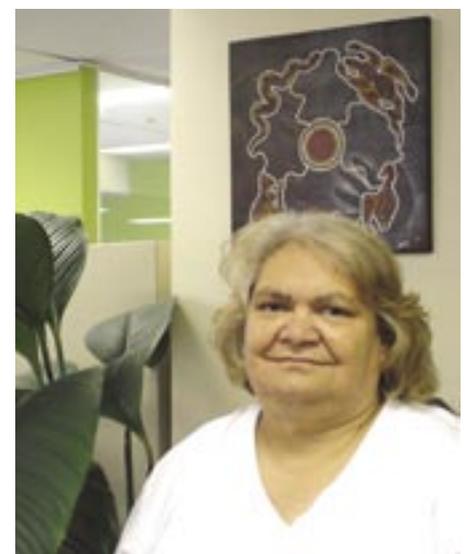
## Good Service forums

EWON continues to be an active member of the Good Service Committee. In August 2007 we attended the Good Service forum in Lismore to talk to Indigenous organisations, workers and the community about our services.

If you would like more information on the Good Service Committee contact Rose Gordon, Indigenous Project Officer on (02) 8218 5221 or [roseg@ewon.com.au](mailto:roseg@ewon.com.au)



NSW OMBUDSMAN AND EWON JOINT DISABILITY FORUM IN SOUTHERN SYDNEY



ROSE GORDON, EWON'S NEW INDIGENOUS OFFICER

## Changing to a smart meter

SOURCE: WWW.ENERGY.COM.AU

EnergyAustralia have been rolling out smart meters over the past few years (they are also called Time of Use or Type 5 meters). During this time customers not scheduled to receive a meter have been able to request a smart meter at a cost.

In September 2007 EnergyAustralia announced that customers in their network area can now have a smart meter installed for free.

When a smart meter is installed, a customer automatically goes onto a PowerSmart tariff and there are significant changes that customers should be aware of. With a smart meter, customers pay more for their electricity between 2pm-8pm (peak time) and less at other times of the day (see rates below).

There is potential for customers to save money where they are able to change their use of electricity to avoid the peak time, for example, if they are able to use the washing machine after 8pm or before 2pm.

Customers who are at home during weekdays or consume most of the electricity in the late afternoon or early evening may need to change their usage patterns to avoid paying the peak rate. For more information contact EnergyAustralia on 13 1535.



PHOTO: COURTESY ENERGYAUSTRALIA

### EnergyAustralia PowerSmart home energy rates\*

Times	ex GST	inc GST	Unit
<b>Off-Peak</b> 10pm to 7am every day	5.10	5.61	cents/kWh
<b>Shoulder</b>			
7am to 2pm & 8pm to 10pm working weekdays			
7am to 10pm on weekends and public holidays	8.90	9.79	cents/kWh
<b>Peak</b> 2pm to 8pm on working weekdays	25.10	27.61	cents/kWh
Service Availability Charge (SAC) connection point	33.00	36.30	cents/day

\*The above rates are current as at 1 July 2007 and have been set in accordance with the June 2007 determination by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART). It is expected that they will be adjusted in July 2008.

### What is SAC?

Retail energy tariffs are made up of fixed and variable charges, and the Service Availability Charge (SAC) represents the fixed charges.

SAC is regulated by IPART (Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal) and is intended to recover the costs associated with supplying energy to customers. These costs may include meter readings, maintaining substations, tree clearing, maintaining a call centre and repairing fallen lines.

Regardless of how much energy a customer uses, they are required to pay SAC. SAC is charged on a daily rate and the amount a customer is charged depends on the number of days in the billing period.

### EWON members

ActewAGL  
AGL  
AGL Victoria  
Aurora Energy  
Australian Power and Gas  
Country Energy  
EnergyAustralia  
Energy One  
Hunter Water  
Independent Electricity Retail Solutions  
Integral Energy  
Jackgreen  
NSW Electricity  
Origin Energy  
Powerdirect  
Red Energy  
State Water  
Sydney Water  
TransGrid  
TRUenergy

### About EWONews

EWONews is a bi-annual publication of the Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW (EWON)

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INTERPRETER 131 450

TTY/VOICE 133 677 (National Relay Service)

\*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.

Editorial enquiries: news@ewon.com.au

Note: names have been changed in case studies for confidentiality reasons.

ABN: 21 079 718 915

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www.ewon.com.au