

## Contents

### 2 Current consumer issues

Update on energy contracts and marketing complaints  
Solar Bonus Scheme  
Estimated bills and meter reads

### 4 Case studies

#### 5 For community workers

EWON stalls at major community events  
Customer hardship regulation  
NSW Government Energy Rebates

#### 6 Complaint statistics

#### 8 EWON and energy pricing

### EWON Members as at 31 March 2010

#### Energy Distributors

ActewAGL Distribution  
Albury Gas Company  
APT Allgas Energy  
Central Ranges Pipeline  
Country Energy  
EnergyAustralia  
Integral Energy  
Jemena  
TransGrid

#### Energy Retailers

ActewAGL  
AGL  
AGL Victoria  
Aurora Energy  
Australian Power and Gas  
Country Energy  
EnergyAustralia  
Independent Electricity Retail Solutions  
Integral Energy  
Jackgreen (suspended)  
Momentum Energy  
NSW Electricity  
Origin Energy  
Powerdirect  
Red Energy  
Sanctuary Energy  
TRUenergy

#### Water Distributors & Retailers

Gosford City Council  
Hunter Water  
Shoalhaven Water  
State Water  
Sydney Water  
Wyong Shire Council



EWON INDUCTION FOR MEMBER PROVIDERS, NOVEMBER 2009

## From the Ombudsman

### Complaints overview

Customer complaints to EWON have been increasing for several years. Our statistics for the six month period from October 2009 to March 2010 show this trend is continuing. In this period EWON finalised 7249 complaints, which represents an 11% increase from the previous six months.

Billing continues to be the primary reason for customer complaints, accounting for 41% of all issues raised by customers. Of the billing complaints, 1860 customers complained about a high bill or disputed their account, compared with 1392 customers in the previous six months. A breakdown of billing issues is provided on page 7.

We are aware of current public concerns about price increases and the affordability of essential services. EWON is trying to ensure that we are adequately prepared to deal with any further increase in complaints, particularly in relation to affordability. We meet regularly with energy and water providers, government, regulators and other stakeholders, and we are reporting on issues raised by customers.

We continue to meet with individual retailers where customers raise specific concerns about their systems or processes. In particular, we are meeting with retailers about billing delays, failure to follow-up with customers and complaints about fees and charges.

### New Council Chairperson

Earlier this year EWON welcomed a new Council Chairperson, Professor Julian Disney. Professor Disney has extensive experience in both government and community sectors. He is currently a Professor in the Law Faculty of the University of NSW and Chair of the National Affordable Housing Summit, and Anti-Poverty Week. He has been appointed an

Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) for services to the development of economic and social welfare policy, and to the law.

We sincerely thank Professor Stuart Rees, the retiring Council Chairperson, for his commitment, skills and expertise.

### Jackgreen customers

In December 2009, the electricity retailer Jackgreen was suspended from the national electricity market. This triggered a Retailer of Last Resort (RoLR) arrangement which affected around 45,000 Jackgreen customers in NSW. With RoLR arrangements, affected customers were automatically transferred to an alternate retailer to ensure continuity of electricity supply.

Over the past few months former Jackgreen customers have complained to EWON about a range of issues including that:

- they have been contacted by debt collectors who cannot verify how the charges have been calculated
- they have been threatened with referral to debt collectors with high commission charges
- they paid their account in advance in good faith and are now having to wait to receive a refund, if they receive one at all
- they are querying the accuracy of their bills

EWON continues to work with the Jackgreen Receivers to resolve customer complaints as quickly as possible.

### New members

EWON is pleased to welcome Gosford City Council as a voluntary member of the scheme in their capacity as a water retailer/distributor.

**Clare Petre**  
Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW

## Energy contracts and marketing complaints

Complaints to EWON about energy marketing and contracts remain stable and a relatively small proportion in comparison to other complaint areas. However the continued steady flow of these complaints means it remains an important issue for EWON to raise, particularly when there is confusion over energy offers or contracts. Over the past six months, the following issues featured in customer complaints.

### Rebate offers

In the latter part of 2009 EWON received a number of complaints from customers who had received written information about 'claiming a rebate' on their electricity account. Some of the customers were not clear that they would be switching retailers if they accepted the offer and complained to EWON about misleading marketing. EWON reported this to the regulator, which resulted in a revision of the marketing material to make the conditions of the offer clearer.

### Fees and charges for customers on a negotiated contract

We continue to receive enquiries about the fees and charges a retailer can pass on to a customer. It is important to note that if you are on a standard customer contract, the fees a retailer can charge are regulated. For example, there is a regulated maximum late payment fee that customers on a standard contract can be charged. However, customers who sign a negotiated contract are subject to the terms and conditions of the energy offer they agree to, and the fees and charges disclosed in their contract with the retailer.

Before agreeing to an energy offer, check with your retailer about any fees and charges which may apply during the contract period, or when you close your account or move properties (eg. ask the retailer *what is their late payment fee? do they charge a disconnection fee?*).

### Energy switching websites

There are a number of energy comparison websites which offer services to customers wanting to switch retailers. Many of these sites do not charge the customer a fee, however they typically receive a broker's commission from participating energy retailers or their 'preferred suppliers'.

If you are considering using a broker, ensure you have read and understood the terms and conditions of using their service. Due to the constantly changing nature of energy products, they may not be able to guarantee that the deal they offer you is the 'cheapest' or the 'best' product the retailer currently offers.

We urge customers to be cautious about verbally accepting or signing for an energy offer unless you understand the full terms and conditions of the offer. If you have any questions about a particular product, contact the retailer directly to check the offer or contact EWON on freecall 1800 246 545.

## Solar Bonus Scheme

On 1 January 2010 the NSW Government introduced the Solar Bonus Scheme which offers eligible customers a gross feed-in tariff rate of 60 cents per kilowatt hour for all the electricity that their eligible solar photovoltaic (PV) system or wind turbine generates.

### The difference between 'gross' and 'net'

Prior to 1 January 2010, feed-in tariffs were not regulated in NSW, and many retailers offered their customers a 'net' tariff. The energy produced by their solar systems went first to supply the current usage in the household, and customers received a rebate for the extra or 'net' energy they produced (ie. the energy they didn't use). Under the Solar Bonus Scheme, the feed-in tariff of 60 cents per kilowatt hour is paid on the total or 'gross' amount of energy produced.

### What does this mean for customers?

Currently customers in NSW's three electricity network areas – Country Energy, EnergyAustralia and Integral Energy – have different arrangements for electricity metering. Generally customers with small-scale renewable energy generators in Integral Energy's area already have gross metering. Customers in Country Energy and EnergyAustralia network areas have net metering, and will need to change to a gross meter if they wish to receive the benefit of the gross feed-in tariff.

The networks will provide the new gross meter free of charge, but customers will need to arrange for their own electrical contractor to install it. If you have any problems with the solar installation service you have contracted or you are seeking an accredited service provider, phone NSW Fair Trading on 13 32 20 or visit [www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au](http://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au)

### Transitional arrangements

All electricity retailers in NSW are required to apply the credit effective from 1 January 2010. Some retailers were not immediately able to apply the rebate as their billing systems required some adjustment. Once this is done, they will backdate the credit to 1 January 2010.

Certain customers who meet all requirements for eligibility under the NSW Solar Bonus Scheme (other than having gross meters installed) and have net metering installed are able to receive net credits for their generation.

For more information on the Solar Bonus Scheme visit the Industry & Investment website, [www.industry.nsw.gov.au](http://www.industry.nsw.gov.au)

### Estimated bills and meter reads

The electricity, gas or water distributor for the area is responsible for reading the meter and sending the meter data to the retailer. If the meter reader is not able to access the meter (eg. due to a locked gate, or a dog in the yard), the distributor will provide the retailer with an 'estimated' read, based on the customer's past usage.

When the retailer issues a bill to the customer based on this read, the fact that it is estimated should be clearly shown on the invoice. If the estimated bill results in the customer being significantly over or under charged, this can lead to a complaint to EWON. The following points reflect some common questions to EWON relating to estimated bills and meter reading:

- **Frequency of bills**

According to legislation\*, "a bill must be issued by a supplier to a small retail customer under a customer supply contract at least once every 3 months".

For customers on a negotiated contract, the frequency of their bills will depend on the terms and conditions of their contract.

- **Frequency of meter reads**

An energy distributor must do an actual meter read once every six months. If lack of access prevents this, the customer may be asked to make an appointment for a special read. If access is a continuing problem, the retailer can arrange to disconnect the supply.

- **Authority to enter property**

A distributor can enter a property to read the meter without the prior consent of the customer.

- **Estimated accounts**

If the meter reader is unable to access the meter, the distributor can estimate any period of up to 6 months before the meter was last read.

- **Self reads**

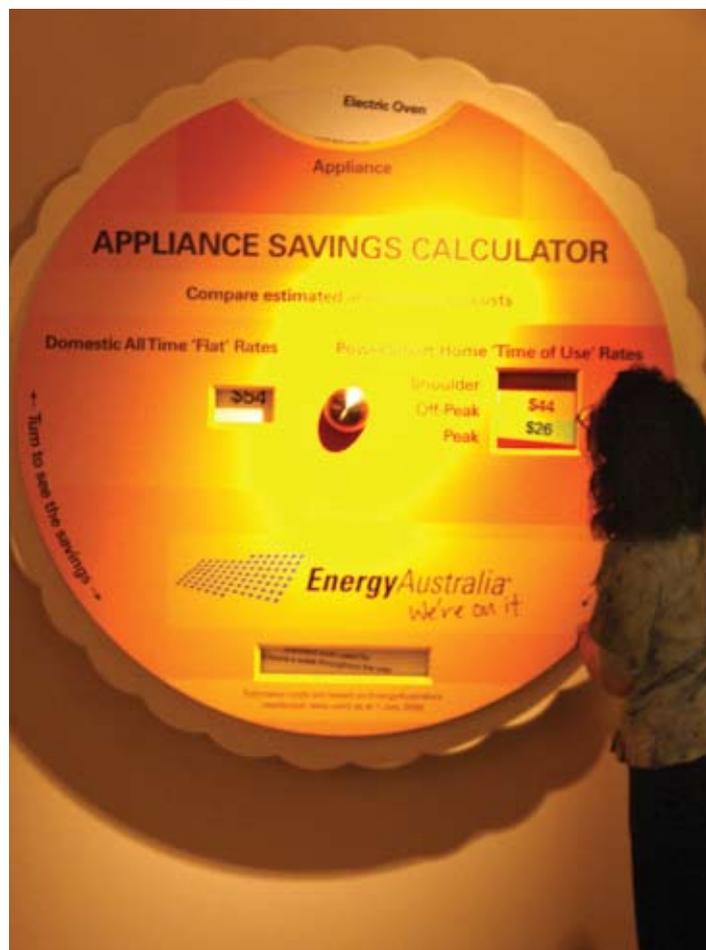
After a customer receives an account based on an estimated reading, a retailer may agree to accept a customer's reading of their own meter. This will be considered an actual read.

- **Special meter reading fee**

If a customer is concerned that their bill is high because their meter reading is incorrect, they can ask their retailer for a special meter read. The retailer is able to charge the customer a special meter reading fee for this. This fee should be waived if the meter reading is found to be incorrect. (Note that the legislation allows for a 2% margin in over or under registering.)

\*See Clause 29, *Electricity Supply (General) Regulation 2001* and Clause 29, *Gas Supply (Natural Gas Retail Competition) Regulation 2001*

EWON STAFF VISIT ENERGYAUSTRALIA'S SMART ENERGY CENTRE



# 4

## Case studies

### High bill follows account transfer

Martin, an elderly pensioner, called EWON on behalf of his son Luke, who has an intellectual disability and had been approached by an energy marketer to sign a contract. While his son lives independently, Martin explained he looks after Luke's bills and manages his disability pension, as well as helping with his washing, cleaning and cooking.

Martin wasn't aware Luke had transferred the account until he received a bill from the new electricity retailer for \$325, which he said was much higher than his previous \$100 quarterly bills. When Martin contacted the new retailer to explain that his son didn't understand what he was signing, he found the call centre staff to be judgemental and their comments inappropriate. The retailer offered Martin an extension of time to pay the bill, but advised him to write to head office if he wanted to be released from the two-year contract.

Not satisfied with the retailer's response, Martin called EWON for help. EWON contacted the new retailer who agreed to transfer Luke's account back to his previous retailer without penalty, after the next scheduled meter read. We also began a high bill investigation as Martin was concerned about the accuracy of the bill. While we investigated the complaint, Martin paid \$150 towards Luke's account.

The retailer confirmed with EWON that Luke's bills were based on actual reads however they agreed that given the circumstances, they would waive the \$175 owing on this account.

We advised Martin that it appeared the retailer had billed him appropriately however they would waive the amount owing as a goodwill gesture. He was satisfied with this outcome and we suggested that he may need to monitor Luke's consumption to avoid further high bills.

### Customer misled by energy broker

Sue saw an energy broker's advertisement which promoted cheaper electricity for eligible customers. She contacted the energy broker who advised Sue that Retailer X could provide a tariff of 17.075 cents/kWh, which was cheaper than the 19.602 cents/kWh her current retailer was charging her. The broker also said she would receive a \$200 rebate on the account if she switched. Sue agreed to the contract over the phone believing she would be paying less for her electricity.

A few days later Sue received a welcome pack from Retailer X. Sue noticed the contract did not state a tariff however information about the charges was contained in a separate pamphlet. The pamphlet stated she would be charged a tariff of 19.602 cents/kWh.

Sue contacted Retailer X who investigated her complaint. The retailer advised her that they had checked the voice recording and it did not mention a tariff. Retailer X offered to transfer Sue back to her original retailer after the next meter read and credit the \$200 rebate towards the \$125 termination fee that she would be charged.

Sue was not satisfied with Retailer X's response. She wasn't happy to be charged at a rate higher than what she had agreed to and she felt the termination fee should be waived as she had been misled by the energy broker. Sue contacted EWON for help.

EWON contacted Retailer X who advised that the energy broker had no authority to quote tariffs to customers and they didn't offer a product with the tariff Sue was quoted. The retailer noted however that they did not listen to the entire voice recording between the energy broker and Sue. We highlighted that Sue felt she had been misled and she wanted to return to her previous retailer. Retailer X agreed to transfer Sue's account back to her previous retailer and she was satisfied with the outcome.

EWON raised the issue of misleading marketing with the regulator and the energy broker subsequently revised their marketing approach.



#### **Warning about unauthorised sellers**

The Minister for Water, Phillip Costa, has issued a warning about door-to-door salespeople who are masquerading as Sydney Water staff or offering to install free showerheads.

These salespeople do not work for Sydney Water and the NSW Government does not sell showerheads door-to-door.

Customers concerned about door-to-door salespeople approaching them to install water efficient appliances can call **Sydney Water on 13 20 92** or **Fair Trading on 13 32 20**.

## EWON stalls at major community events

For the past six years EWON has hosted stalls at major community events to raise awareness of our service. These events also enable our staff to talk directly to consumers about any issues they may have. Our key activities in the past six months have included:

- Yabun Festival (Survival Day, 26 January)
- Mardi Gras Fair Day
- Bankstown Lunar New Year Festival
- O-Weeks at University of Technology, University NSW, Macquarie University and the University of Western Sydney as part of ANZOA (Australian and New Zealand Ombudsman Association)
- International Womens' Day Festival
- Seniors Days at the Easter Show
- Annual Aboriginal Early Childhood Education Conference

## Customer hardship regulation

In February 2010 amendments were made to the *Electricity Supply (General) Regulation 2001* and *Gas Supply (Natural Gas Retail Competition) Regulation 2001* regarding customer hardship provisions. The changes have been incorporated into Clause 13 of the above Regulations. Specifically, the amendments provide that suppliers must:

- develop and implement a customer hardship charter to assist small retail residential customers experiencing financial difficulty to better manage their energy bills on an ongoing basis, and
- offer a customer at least two payment plans within 12 months before they are entitled to disconnect for non-payment.

The Regulations and amendments can be found at

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

## Update on NSW Government Energy Rebates

In March 2010 the NSW Government announced changes to the Energy Rebate. From 1 July this year the energy rebate will increase to \$145 per year and the program will be extended to all Commonwealth Health Care Card holders including single parents, low income card holders, students and households receiving Farm Family Assistance. The Medical Rebate will also increase from \$130 to \$145 per year as of 1 July 2010.

Customers requiring emergency financial assistance to pay their bills can apply for up to \$480 in EAPA (Energy Accounts Payment Assistance) vouchers. For more information visit [www.industry.nsw.gov.au/energy](http://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/energy)



EWON PRESENTATION TO A SPANISH COMMUNITY GROUP AT ST GEORGE MIGRANT RESOURCE CENTRE



EWON AND COMMONWEALTH OMBUDSMAN STAFF AT THE ANZOA O-WEEK STALL AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

EWON AND COUNTRY ENERGY STAFF DURING A VISIT TO COUNTRY ENERGY'S NORTHERN NSW OPERATIONS



## Understanding energy

How it works. How to save. How to get help

### FREE Community Sector Education Forums

■ Sydney 16 June ■ Newcastle 22 June ■ Central Coast 24 June

See enclosed brochure for details.

Spaces limited.  
Register today at  
[energy.com.au/forum](http://energy.com.au/forum)



# 6

## Complaint statistics

### Overview

Compared with the previous six month period, there was an 11% increase in complaints to EWON (7249 cases up from 6513 cases). As in previous periods, most of the complaints were from residential customers about electricity.

Overall there was a 17% increase in complaints about electricity, while complaints about gas, water and dual fuel remain stable.

In terms of location, there were increased complaints from most areas. In particular, cases were up 30% from customers in the Illawarra and 19% from the Hunter region. Complaints from Richmond-Tweed customers increased 83% from 78 to 143 cases during this period.

Billing continues to be the top issue for customers and complaints about high bills or disputed accounts continue to rise (up 34% from the previous period). In particular for this period, there was an increase in complaints about estimated billing.

While there was a decrease in complaints from customers who had been disconnected due to non-payment, there was a 39% increase in complaints from customers facing disconnection. The number of customers with utility arrears continues to rise.

#### 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

#### ABBREVIATIONS

**ATSI:** Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

**CALD:** culturally and linguistically diverse

FOR THE PERIOD 1 OCTOBER 2009 – 31 MARCH 2010

#### SNAPSHOT OF COMPLAINTS

Overall	Total complaints closed	7249
Companies	Complaints about retailers	6494 (90%)
	Complaints about distributors	581 (8%)
Customers	Residential customers	6809 (94%)
	Small business customers	364 (5%)
	Living in public housing*	272 (4%)
	Top issue for customers in public housing	Billing (38% of issues^)
	Receiving pension/benefits*	1545 (21%)
	Top issue for customers receiving pension/benefits	Billing (38% of issues^)
	ATSI customers*	36 (<1%)
	Top issue for ATSI customers	Credit (59% of issues^)
	CALD customers*	223 (3%)
	Top issue for CALD customers	Billing (41% of issues^)

\* EWON does not routinely collect demographic information however it is recorded if offered by the customer.

^ Represents the percentage of all issues raised for this group of customers.

Note: a customer can raise more than one issue in their complaint.

#### PRIMARY ISSUES PER REGION

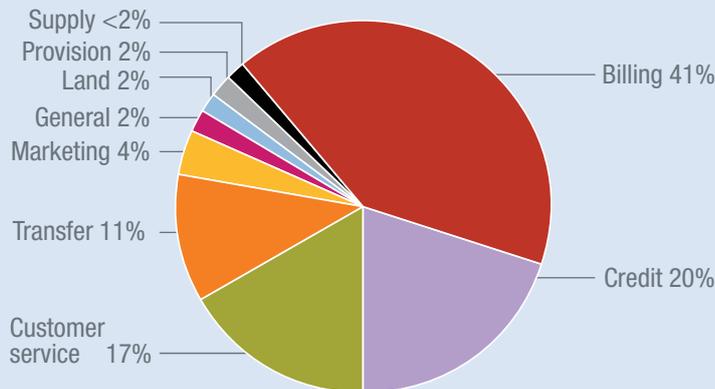
REGION	NO. COMPLAINTS	TOP THREE ISSUES		
Central West	194	Billing 37%	Credit 24%	Customer service 14%
Far West	11	Billing 33%	Credit 17%	Customer service 8%
			Provision 17%	Land 8%
Hunter	682	Billing 36%	Credit 25%	Customer service 17%
Illawarra	506	Billing 40%	Credit 18%	Customer service 16%
Mid North Coast	173	Billing 41%	Transfer 15%	Credit 14%
Murray	104	Billing 41%	Credit 31%	Customer service 16%
Murrumbidgee	77	Billing 38%	Credit 15%	Transfer 13%
North Western	54	Billing 38%	Credit 24%	Customer service 15%
Northern	78	Billing 39%	Credit 18%	Marketing 11%
Richmond-Tweed	143	Billing 53%	Customer service 14%	Credit 13%
South Eastern	146	Billing 40%	Credit 20%	Customer service 15%
Sydney Inner	2001	Billing 46%	Customer service 19%	Credit 16%
Sydney Outer	2390	Billing 40%	Credit 22%	Customer service 15%
Sydney Surrounds	575	Billing 39%	Credit 21%	Customer service 18%
Other (non-NSW)	115	Billing 34%	Credit 21%	Transfer 17%

#### INVESTIGATION LEVELS

INDUSTRY	NO. COMPLAINTS	COMPLAINT ENQUIRY	RHL	INVESTIGATION	DETERMINATION
Electricity	5265	2449	1260	1556	--
Gas	1325	370	326	629	--
Water	427	309	70	48	--
Dual Fuel	183	52	59	72	--
Non-energy/non-water	49	49	--	--	--

FOR THE PERIOD 1 OCTOBER 2009 – 31 MARCH 2010

## ALL ISSUES RAISED BY CUSTOMERS



## SNAPSHOT OF ISSUES RAISED BY CUSTOMERS

COMPLAINT ISSUE	NO. COMPLAINTS
<b>Billing complaints</b>	
High bill or disputed account	1860
Estimated account	388
Backbilling	199
Delay in billing or bill not received	196
Error with a rebate or concession	64
Common hot water system	17
<b>Disconnection and credit complaints</b>	
Arrears or utility debt	920
Facing disconnection for non-payment	710
Debt collection or credit listing	348
Disconnected due to non-payment	298
Denied an extension or instalment plan	226
<b>Marketing complaints</b>	
Misled by marketers	281
Pressured into signing or agreeing to a contract	83
Non-account holder approached for consent	35
<b>Transfer complaints</b>	
Problems with the contract terms (variation in price, termination fees)	499
Did not consent to the transfer	219
Delayed billing or problems with the new billing system	176
Site ownership or disconnected in error due to transfer	170
Account transferred in error	142
Not informed about cooling-off rights or cooling-off not actioned	98
Delay in the transfer	79
Transfer request rejected by retailer	31

## 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:** failure to respond, incorrect advice, poor attitude/service  
**Marketing:** conduct by marketers, misleading information, pressure, non-account holder signed up  
**Provision:** problems with new or existing connections  
**Supply:** quality, damage/loss, outages  
**Transfer:** error in billing or transfer of account due to switching retailers, contract terms, delay in transfer, site ownership  
**Land:** impact of network assets, maintenance, environment  
**General:** non-energy/non-water related, contractors

## Delayed bill causes concern

Anne lives in public housing in regional NSW and relies on a disability pension for her income. She contacted EWON when there was a delay in receiving her first bill after she switched retailers. Anne said she contacted her retailer to ask why they hadn't sent her a bill. The retailer advised her that she owed \$384 and a bill had been issued. Anne told them she hadn't received the bill and asked them to resend it.

When Anne still hadn't received her first bill, she contacted her retailer again. The retailer advised that she would receive a bill in 10 days. Anne then received an estimated bill for \$459 for the most recent billing period, which was higher than the bills she received from her previous retailer. She contacted the retailer who requested that she pay \$140 per fortnight to cover the arrears on her account.

Concerned about the billing delay, the estimated account and her limited income, Anne asked EWON to investigate the accuracy of the bills. Anne said she could afford to pay \$50 per fortnight towards her account.

We explained to Anne that estimated bills are generally issued when the meter reader cannot access the meter. Anne said that she keeps her gate locked because the property she lives in has a history of being vandalised. She said she had a previous arrangement where the meter reader would knock on her door and she would unlock the gate for them.

EWON confirmed with the retailer that they had estimated the bill due to lack of meter access. The retailer checked the fees and charges on Anne's account and found they had incorrectly applied a termination fee and not applied the energy rebate. The retailer agreed to do a special meter read at no cost to Anne and to re-issue her bills based on actual reads. They also agreed to a payment plan of \$50 per fortnight and an extension of time to pay.

We advised Anne of the special meter read arrangements and the payment plan offer, and she was satisfied with the outcome.

### What is EWON's role in regards to utility pricing?

The regulated tariffs for gas and electricity in NSW are set by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART), and typically come into effect on 1 July each year. EWON has no role or authority in setting prices. While this means we are not able to investigate complaints about price increases, EWON can review whether charges and tariffs have been correctly applied to an account. So, if you have received a high bill that you consider does not accurately reflect your usage and your retailer is either not able to explain it or you are not satisfied with their response, you can contact EWON for assistance. If you are having problems paying your bill or you have received an unexplained high bill, visit [www.ewon.com.au](http://www.ewon.com.au) for more information.

### How are energy prices determined?

IPART invites submissions on proposed price increases, to which any individual or business may respond. Utility companies and consumer groups regularly put in submissions presenting their point of view about any price increase. All EWON's submissions are available on our website at [www.ewon.com.au](http://www.ewon.com.au)

EWON also has regular contact with government agencies and regulators about issues arising from customer complaints. Where these complaints indicate that pricing is a concern, this issue is raised and highlighted.

### Energy charges on your bills

The tariff you see on your electricity or gas bill reflects the retailer's costs of supplying the electricity or gas to you, which include:

- the costs of purchasing wholesale electricity or gas
- the cost of transporting it through the transmission and distribution networks (note that electricity network charges are set separately by the Australian Energy Regulator)
- the retail operating costs such as billing and operating call centres

Retail tariffs comprise both fixed and variable charges.

- The variable component is applied to the amount of electricity or gas you use. Electricity is expressed in cents per kilowatt hour. This will vary each quarter, depending on your consumption.

While we are not able to investigate complaints about price increases, EWON can review whether charges and tariffs have been correctly applied to an account.

- The Service Availability Charge (SAC) is expressed in cents per day. This represents the fixed charges the network incurs, (for example meter readings, maintaining the poles and wires/pipes, vegetation management, maintaining a call centre) regardless of how much energy the customer uses. Every customer pays SAC, even if they have consumed little or no energy at all that quarter.

### What should you be paying?

How much you pay for electricity or gas each quarter depends on how much energy you have consumed and the tariff you are charged.

The retail tariff you are charged will depend on the type of contract you have with your retailer.

- **Customers on a standard form contract**  
Domestic electricity customers who are on a standard form contract with the standard retailer for their geographic area are charged the regulated retail tariff set by IPART.
- **Customers on a negotiated/market contract**  
As the retail energy market is competitive, different retailers can charge different tariffs. Each retailer offers a variety of contracts and they may introduce new offers or deals at any time.
- **Small business customers** typically consume more energy than a standard domestic customer. If they consume more than 160,000 kWh electricity per year or 1 terrajoule of gas per year they are required to enter into a negotiated contract where the tariff is not regulated.

For more information on regulated retail pricing in NSW visit [www.ipart.nsw.gov.au](http://www.ipart.nsw.gov.au)

For more information on national regulation visit [www.aer.gov.au](http://www.aer.gov.au)

### About us

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.

### Contact EWON

FREECALL	<b>1800 246 545*</b> Monday–Friday, 9am–5pm
FREEFAX	1800 812 291
FREEPOST	Reply Paid K1343 Haymarket NSW 1239
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>
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.

### About EWONews

EWONews is a bi-annual publication of the Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW (EWON)  
Editorial enquiries: [news@ewon.com.au](mailto:news@ewon.com.au)

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

ABN: 21 079 718 915

Stock No: 1830-0510



Energy & Water  
Ombudsman NSW

[www.ewon.com.au](http://www.ewon.com.au)