

# WANT TO SAVE UP TO 20% OFF YOUR POWER USE?

The Home Power Savings Program offers eligible\* lower income households:



\* Eligible lower income households include Pensioner Concession, Low Income Health Care and Veterans' Affairs Pensioner or Repatriation Health (Gold and White) card holders, social housing tenants or energy utility hardship customers. NSW residents only. Supply and installation of fixed kit items depends on landlord's consent for rental and social housing tenants.



## CALL 1300 662 416 NOW



### FREE HELP TO SAVE POWER

The NSW Government's free Home Power Savings Program is helping eligible lower income households save power, money and cut carbon pollution.

More than 66,000 households have already taken advantage of this free service and are expected to save up to 20 per cent off their power use.

The free program is available right across NSW to anyone who has a nominated Centrelink or Veterans' Affairs concession card as well as energy utility hardship customers and social housing tenants.

The program offers households a FREE:

1. in-home assessment by an energy expert to find out how much their appliances cost to run

2. Power Savings Kit, that comes fully installed and includes a stand-by saver power board, energy efficient light globes, draught-proofing, a water efficient showerhead, shower timer, thermometer and tap aerators.

3. personalised Action Plan showing the household how much more money and carbon pollution they can save by being energy efficient.

Households who have joined the program are already noticing the savings.

Ron and Marg from Lake Macquarie will save at least \$129 a year from their Power Savings Kit and around \$210 more by following their Action Plan.

"As pensioners we were worried about the escalating cost of electricity which had started to impact on our living standards and our

ability to pay other bills," said Ron. "The visit from the [Government] representative has helped us considerably. By following all of the recommendations we have experienced a significant reduction in our power bill and kept our house warmer in the chilly weather."

The Home Power Savings Program is managed by the Office of Environment and Heritage and is available until 30 June 2013.

Eligible households can **call 1300 662 416** now to join the program.

If you work with vulnerable households and you would like to partner with the program, please call the Home Power Savings Program Stakeholder Team on (02) 9995 5479 or email [powersavings@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:powersavings@environment.nsw.gov.au).

For more information on the program go to [savepower.nsw.gov.au/freehelp](http://savepower.nsw.gov.au/freehelp)

### About EWON

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.

We can help customers with a range of problems including:

- high bills, disputed accounts
- debts, arrears
- negotiating affordable payment plans
- problems getting reconnected
- disconnection/restriction of supply
- opening/closing accounts
- energy marketing practices
- negotiated contracts or switching retailers
- reliability or quality of supply

### Contact EWON

**Freecall 1800 246 545\***

Monday–Friday, 9am–5pm

\*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 we will call you back.

Freefax 1800 812 291  
Freepost Reply Paid K1343  
Haymarket NSW 1239  
Email [omb@ewon.com.au](mailto:omb@ewon.com.au)  
Website [www.ewon.com.au](http://www.ewon.com.au)  
Interpreter 131 450  
TTY/Voice 133 677 (National Relay Service)

### About EWONews

EWONews is a bi-annual publication of the Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW.

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: 1990-1110



Energy & Water  
Ombudsman NSW

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

## Contents

- 2 Consumer issues
- 3 Case studies
- 4 Complaint statistics
- 6 Outreach report
- 7 For community workers
- 8 Home Power Savings Program

## Ombudsman's report

### Annual Report 2010-2011

EWON recently released its annual report for 2010-2011, which showed a 17% increase in complaints – up from 15,048 complaints the previous year to 17,559 this year.

The majority of complaints continue to concern electricity retail matters and more than half (9669) involved billing issues. The dominant complaint issues were disputed high bills and other billing problems, payment difficulties, disconnection and poor customer service.

Complaints received throughout the year indicate growing numbers of consumers are facing affordability challenges. We noted the value to be gained from discussion at a national level about financial hardship, addressing issues such as energy affordability benchmarks.

Energy marketing emerged as a consumer issue to watch closely too. With increased market competition following the sale of state-owned electricity retailers, complaint numbers for misleading marketing and transfers without consent began to rise in the last quarter.

Our annual report also highlighted the need for retailers and distributors to respond to heightened consumer expectations with good service, effective communication and appropriate referrals by contact centre staff.

### Putting the 'free' in freecall

In September 2010, EWON wrote to the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) to support a pricing review of calls to 1800, 13/1300 numbers from mobile phones. This was a priority issue for us as we were concerned that those already experiencing financial hardship are greatly disadvantaged under the current arrangement, with charges of up to \$1.78 per minute applying.

Customers often report having to make numerous phone calls to their provider to sort out a problem and being on hold for extended periods of time. This means trying to resolve a utility issue can be a costly exercise.



CLARE PETRE, ENERGY & WATER OMBUDSMAN NSW

With these concerns in mind, we are delighted that ACMA has now announced its intention to put an end to the high cost of 'freecalls' from mobiles. ACMA's agreement to take the financial sting out of 1800 and 13 calls is a big win for all consumers, most especially those whose finances are under strain.

In the interim, if a customer contacts EWON by mobile phone we'll continue to offer to call them back.

### Complaint statistics: 2011 trends

In the 6 months to 30 September 2011 complaints finalised by EWON increased by 24% compared with the previous period. Complaints concerning high and disputed electricity bills continue to dominate, but complaint numbers are growing across the board. For more details on our most recent figures, see the statistics overview on pages 4-5 and a selection of marketing case studies on page 3.

### New EWON members

We welcome to EWON the following new members:

- Veolia Water Solutions and Technologies
- Simply Energy
- Water Factory Company

*Clare Petre*

Clare Petre  
Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW

### Companies within EWON's jurisdiction (as at 1 October 2011)

#### Energy Distributors

- ActewAGL Distribution
- Albury Gas Company
- APT Allgas Energy
- Ausgrid
- Central Ranges Pipeline
- Endeavour Energy
- Envestra NSW
- Essential Energy
- Jemena
- TransGrid

#### Energy Retailers

- ActewAGL
- AGL
- Aurora Energy
- Australian Power and Gas
- Country Energy
- Diamond Energy
- Dodo Power & Gas
- EnergyAustralia
- Integral Energy
- Lumo Energy
- Momentum Energy
- Origin Energy
- Powerdirect
- Red Energy
- Sanctuary Energy
- Simply Energy
- TRUenergy

#### Water Distributors & Retailers

- Gosford City Council
- Hunter Water
- Shoalhaven Water
- State Water
- Sydney Water
- Veolia Water Solutions and Technologies
- Water Factory Company
- Wyong Shire Council



Energy & Water  
Ombudsman NSW

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

## CONSUMER WARNING: energy-saving device telemarketing scam

**I**N SEPTEMBER 2011, EWON and the Minister for Fair Trading issued an urgent warning to all consumers about a hoax product, called an 'electricity-saving box', being sold by fraudulent telemarketers claiming to represent the government.

The telemarketers claim that the electricity saving box, which is priced at around \$200, will save 30-40% of a household's electricity and reduce energy bills. They also falsely claim that they are from the Australian Electricity Commission or Australian Energy Marketing Commission and

that consumers will recover the full cost of the device via a government rebate 90 days after purchase.

The product (pictured below) does not work, as testing by CHOICE has demonstrated. The telemarketers have no affiliation with any government body and there is no rebate available for this device.

Since issuing the release, EWON has received reports of new twists on the scam and increasingly intimidating tactics being used by the marketers, who have targeted the Farsi-speaking community in particular.

They've claimed that the government requires people to obtain the device. They've also made threats that the government will come to their home to check they've installed it and will fine them if they find they haven't.

"This is clearly an opportunistic scam that's designed to exploit people's concerns about rising energy bills," said Clare Petre, Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW. "We advise anyone who receives a phone call from these fraudulent operators to contact EWON or NSW Fair Trading immediately."

From left: the dodgy device; testing in the CHOICE lab; Clare Petre addresses media with the Fair Trading Minister Anthony Roberts.



## Got an itch to switch? Look for independent energy pricing comparison

**R**ISING ENERGY PRICES have prompted many consumers to shop around for a more competitive offer and a number of commercial energy price comparator websites are competing to attract them. EWON is concerned that these websites may not have information on all offers available to consumers and that in some cases they may act more as a broker for particular companies.

EWON has received a number of complaints from people who have experienced problems with commercial switching sites and we strongly recommend that consumers access the free, independent energy pricing comparison information provided by IPART at: [www.myenergyoffers.nsw.gov.au](http://www.myenergyoffers.nsw.gov.au).

However, if you are looking at referring to a commercial switch site, be aware of these common problems customers have reported to EWON:

### "Switching has cost me more money"

Sometimes the savings customers stand to make may be offset by the cost of breaking a contract with your existing provider. It pays to check out all the costs involved in switching, as well as expected savings.

### "I only enquired about prices, but then I discovered they'd signed me up"

Some people report making contact with these businesses simply to enquire about prices, but then later find out that they've been signed up and their account has been transferred without their consent. Take care to understand what you are agreeing to and in giving your personal details.

### "The customer service is poor"

The switching companies are not the energy retailer to which customers sign up. This often creates confusion around customer service expectations. For example, when customers who decide not to go ahead with a transfer

advise the switching site, this notice may not get passed onto the retailer within the cooling off period. Similarly, when customers encounter problems with their service and contact the switch site, they may not receive any actual assistance and be left waiting unnecessarily. If you agree to transfer to another retailer, be sure to contact the retailer directly from then on.

Get independent energy pricing comparison at:

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

For more information or help using the site phone the Energy Information Line on 1300 136 888.





“We are still in a contract with our present supplier... We do not want to change... No means no.”

EWON customer

Increased competitive marketing activity in the energy industry has meant opportunities and challenges for consumers and retailers alike. EWON is receiving growing numbers of marketing complaints as customers report problems of misleading and pressured marketing as well as poor follow up customer service. The following case studies demonstrate some common complaints.

### Householder misled by door-to-door marketer

Kimberley was approached at home by a door-to-door marketer from Retailer A who advised her that her current retailer was no longer issuing bills to customers and that she would have to sign an agreement with Retailer A to issue her bills now. Kimberley believed the story and signed the papers.

Soon after, she was contacted by her previous provider to ask why she was transferring. Kimberley explained what the marketer had told her and, realising now that she had been misled, she decided she did not want to go ahead with the transfer.

When Kimberley called Retailer A to cancel the contract, she was told she would have to pay a significant amount in termination fees. Kimberley came to EWON for assistance.

When we spoke to Retailer A, they maintained they hadn't received a cancellation call from Kimberley, but agreed nonetheless to transfer the account back to her previous retailer at no charge and to investigate the marketer.

### Vision-impaired pensioner signs contract under pressure

Ronald is an aged pensioner with impaired vision. When he was visited by a door-to-door marketer from an energy retailer, he felt he wasn't given enough time to think through the offer. Under pressure, he signed a contract and agreed to transfer his account to this retailer.

Ronald wanted the transfer cancelled and to stay with his existing energy retailer. He called the new retailer, but the cooling off period had passed and he felt he did not fully understand all the questions that were asked of him. He came to EWON for help.

We spoke with the new retailer who agreed to transfer Ronald's account back to his previous retailer and waive any early termination fee.

### Marketer signs up 16 year old non-account holder

Hayley was alone at her sister's home when a door-to-door marketer arrived. Hayley took down the details of the offer to pass onto her brother-in-law, Tim, who was the account holder. Tim did not want to take up the offer. He was then contacted by his existing retailer about the transfer and said he did not want the transfer to go ahead.

Some months later, a bill for \$412 arrived for Hayley from the retailer that the door-to-door marketer had been promoting. As Hayley's advocate, Tim contacted EWON for assistance to get the account transferred back into his name and returned to his preferred retailer.

We spoke to the new retailer who said that while they were able to do a retrospective transfer to the previous retailer, their records showed that Hayley was 19, that she had

agreed to the contract and that she provided her Medicare card to the marketer. They confirmed that the company could not sign up a 16 year old.

The account was transferred back to Tim with his preferred provider. We established that Hayley was in fact 16 years old and reported this to the retailer, who advised that they would be following up the matter with the marketer who signed Hayley up.

### Retailer doesn't action cancellation within cooling off period

87 year old pensioner Aphra was approached by a door-to-door marketer one night and felt pressured into signing a contract to transfer over to the electricity retailer represented by the marketer. She was uncomfortable with the situation, so decided to cancel the contract.

Two days after the marketer's visit an advocate at Aphra's local council contacted the retailer on her behalf to request the cancellation. Aphra also posted a letter to the retailer requesting the cancellation of her contract.

Some weeks later, Aphra was advised her account had been transferred, despite the letter and phone call made within the cooling off period to cancel the transfer. The retailer advised that they hadn't received Aphra's letter, but she had retained a registered post slip confirming the letter she sent had been received and signed for. Aphra considered that her account should never have been transferred and wanted it returned to her previous retailer at no cost.

EWON spoke with the retailer, who agreed to transfer Aphra back to her previous retailer without charge or penalty.

# 4 Complaint statistics

## SNAPSHOT: 2011 GROWTH ISSUES

### MARKETING-RELATED COMPLAINTS MADE TO EWON

QUARTER	1	2	3
Misleading marketing	172	211	350
Marketing to non-account holder	28	27	48
Pressure marketing	53	90	88
Transfer-related marketing issues	60	64	108

### AFFORDABILITY-RELATED COMPLAINTS MADE TO EWON

QUARTER	1	2	3
Debt collection/Credit listing	270	307	375
Payment difficulties	624	637	741
Facing disconnection for non-payment	401	403	481
Disconnected due to non-payment	201	232	302

## CHILL ENERGY BILLS

Older second fridges guzzle electricity, adding around \$265 per year to energy bills. Free collection and a rebate of \$35 is available for some NSW residents wanting to give up their old fridge.\*



Old fridges are one of the biggest energy users in the home, consuming up to three times the energy of new fridges. Running an older second fridge significantly increases a household's power bill and expands its carbon footprint by around 20,000 'black balloons' each year.

Fridge Buyback is a government supported initiative available to residents in some areas of NSW. Under the program, eligible second fridges can be taken away for free if they're presented for collection so that removal involves less than 20 steps. Residents attract a \$35 rebate if the removal involves less than 7 steps.

To be eligible for collection, a fridge must be a working second unit that has been in regular use, is 250 litres or more in size (8.83 cubic feet) and at least 10 years old.

Call **1800 708 401** to confirm eligibility and schedule a collection.

\*Conditions apply. Visit [www.fridgebuyback.com.au](http://www.fridgebuyback.com.au) for more info.

Source: [www.fridgebuyback.com.au](http://www.fridgebuyback.com.au)

## Overview of complaints:

### 1 April – 30 September 2011

From April to September 2011, EWON finalised 11,073 cases, a 24% increase from the previous 6 month period. While the majority of complaints (69%) related to electricity retailers, complaints about gas, dual fuel and water also increased.

High and disputed bill complaints continued to dominate customer issues. Of growing concern however is the increasing number of reports by consumers that they were misled or pressured by marketers, or that their account was transferred without consent or in error. We are also concerned to see a continuing rise in credit-related complaints involving payment difficulties, disconnection and credit listing.

### SNAPSHOT OF CUSTOMER ISSUES

#### 1 OCTOBER 2010 – 30 SEPTEMBER 2011

	Oct 2010- Mar 2011	April 2011- Sept 2011	% increase
<b>Billing</b>			
High bill or disputed account	2094	2203	+5%
Estimated account	500	432	-14%
Delay in billing or bill not received	396	357	-10%
Backbilling	307	320	+4%
<b>Credit</b>			
Arrears or utility debt	1071	1139	+6%
Facing disconnection for non-payment	782	884	+13%
Debt collection or credit listing	543	682	+26%
Disconnected due to non-payment	400	534	+36%
Denied an extension or payment plan	220	197	-10%
<b>Marketing</b>			
Misled by marketers	339	560	+65%
Pressured into signing or agreeing to a contract	111	177	+59%
Non-account holder approached for consent	44	75	+70%
<b>Transfer</b>			
Problems with the contract terms (variation in price, termination fee)	502	657	+31%
Did not consent to the transfer	238	479	+101%
Site ownership or disconnected in error due to transfer	205	254	+24%
Transferred in error	110	182	+65%

# Complaint statistics

# 5

## SNAPSHOT OF COMPLAINTS

1 APRIL 2011 – 30 SEPTEMBER 2011

Overall	Total complaints closed	11073
Customers	Residential customers	10545 (95%)
	Small business customers	415 (4%)
	Living in public housing*	329 (3%)
	Receiving pension/benefits*	2001 (18%)
	Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander customers*	53 (<1%)
	Culturally and linguistically diverse customers*	295 (3%)

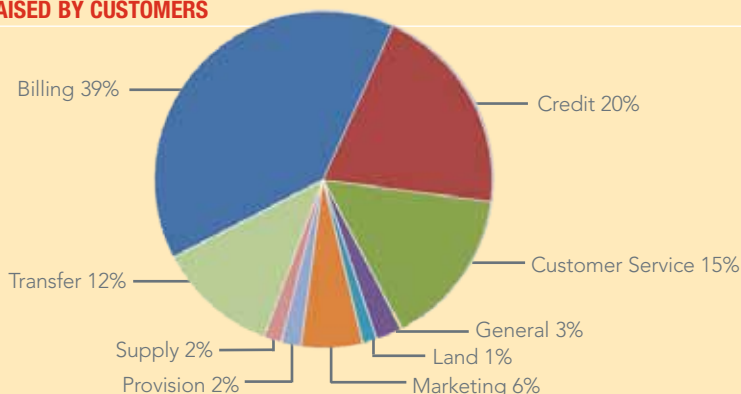
\*EWON does not routinely collect demographic information however it is recorded if offered by the customer.

## COMPLAINTS BY INDUSTRY

Industry	Provider type	Oct 2010- March 2011	April 2011- Sept 2011	% change
Electricity	Retailer	6162	7645	+24%
	Distributor	491	711	+45%
	Exempt Retailer	31	34	+10%
	Other*	86	199	+131%
Gas	Retailer	1375	1492	+9%
	Distributor	34	56	+65%
	Exempt Retailer	1	0	-100%
	Other*	7	14	+100%
Dual Fuel	Retailer	284	388	+37%
	Other*	5	5	0%
Non-energy/non-water	Other*	37	39	+5%
Water	Retailer	267	318	+19%
	Distributor	123	147	+20%
	Exempt Retailer	0	1	-%
	Other*	18	24	+33%
<b>Total</b>		<b>8921</b>	<b>11073</b>	<b>+24%</b>

\*Non member specific, out of jurisdiction

## ALL ISSUES RAISED BY CUSTOMERS



### HOW WE CATEGORISE COMPLAINT ISSUES

Note: there may be more than one issue raised per complaint

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

\*On 1 March 2011 TRUenergy purchased the retail arm of EnergyAustralia and Origin Energy purchased the retail arms of Country Energy and Integral Energy. Complaint data for EnergyAustralia, Country Energy and Integral Energy has been reported separately for the period and has not been rolled into TRUenergy and Origin Energy data post 1 March 2011.

## COMPLAINTS BY COMPANY\*

1 APRIL 2011 – 30 SEPTEMBER 2011

### LEGEND: NSW RETAIL CUSTOMER BANDWIDTH

- Above 1 million customers
- 500,001 to 1 million customers
- 100,000 to 500,000 customers
- under 100,000 customers

### Energy Retailers

### No. complaints

● ActewAGL	84
● AGL	2929
● Aurora Energy	1
● Australian Power and Gas	406
● Country Energy	477
● Dodo Power and Gas	2
● EnergyAustralia	1315
● Integral Energy	1103
● Jackgreen (suspended from market)	100
● Lumo Energy	37
● Momentum Energy	1
● Origin Energy	1948
● Powerdirect	72
● Red Energy	137
● Sanctuary Energy	133
● Simply Energy	1
● TRUenergy	631

### Energy Distributors

### No. complaints

ActewAGL Gas Distribution	1
Central Ranges Pipeline	1
Endeavour Energy	250
Essential Energy	154
Ausgrid	297
Jemena	53

### Water Distributors/Retailers

### No. complaints

● ActewAGL*	2
● Essential Energy**	2
● Gosford City Council	9
● Hunter Water	56
● Shoalhaven Water	9
● State Water	1
● Sydney Water	349
● Veolia Water Solutions and Technologies	2
● Wyong Shire Council	6

There were no complaints received about Albury Gas Company, APT Allgas, Diamond Energy, Envestra NSW, TransGrid or Water Factory Company.

\* These complaints were out of jurisdiction.

\*\*Essential Energy is a water provider for Broken Hill customers only.

# 6

## Community outreach

**E**WON'S COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT officer, Narelle Brown, visits community organisations including EAPA agencies to promote awareness about EWON's services and to listen to energy related problems raised by community workers and consumers.

In the past six months, she has addressed community workers and financial counsellors from welfare agencies, migrant resource centres and community centres. Narelle has also travelled to visit community groups located around greater Sydney, the Central Coast, Newcastle and the Hunter. EWON works closely with NSW government and its agencies to deliver outreach and Narelle has also run sessions on understanding key issues for customers for NSW Fair Trading contact staff and MPs' staff.

*Please contact Narelle at [narelleb@ewon.com.au](mailto:narelleb@ewon.com.au) if you would like to organise a presentation or have EWON attend a community event.*

**A**BORIGINAL AND TORRES Strait Islander outreach initiatives have seen EWON travelling to various locations across NSW. The NSW Aboriginal Rugby League Knockout in Bathurst over the October long weekend proved a highlight. With over 10,000 attendees, this major event was a great opportunity for EWON to connect with communities from around NSW.

### EWON STAFF AT WILCANNIA



### ILLAWARRA MULTICULTURAL SERVICES INFORMATION DAY



In October, Tracey Duncan, EWON's Aboriginal Project Officer, and Clare Petre, Ombudsman, enjoyed the opportunity to reach Koori Radio's audience through a live broadcast interview on the Blackchat on Mondays program. Together they provided advice to listeners about resolving common problems with energy providers and about how EWON can help consumers.

EWON also attended community events in Wilcannia, Wollongong, Bowral and Picton organised by the NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet.

*Please contact Tracey at [traceyd@ewon.com.au](mailto:traceyd@ewon.com.au) if you would like to organise for EWON to participate in a community event or initiative or to give a presentation.*

### EWON OUTREACH VISIT TO CENTRAL WEST NSW



### KOORI RADIO INTERVIEW



# For community workers



## EWON Anti-Poverty Week Forum 2011

A major event on EWON's community outreach calendar is our Anti-Poverty Week forum, focusing on essential services and affordability. Held in Campbelltown this year, the forum brought together 80 community workers, advocates and consumers to raise awareness about issues affecting consumers in financial hardship and to provide information about helping utility customers stay connected to essential services.

Clare Petre talked about energy and water challenges currently facing consumers. Speakers from AGL, Sydney Water and Origin Energy/Integral Energy addressed the audience on hardship programs for customers and ways to reduce bills. Diane Carmody, Deputy Ombudsman for the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman, spoke about tips for managing mobile phones, internet services and landlines.

The forum also included an expo for attendees to meet and speak with stall holders from a range of agencies and services — such as NSW Fair Trading, Legal Aid, Centrelink, Savers Plus, ASIC, Housing NSW, Campbelltown Council, the Aged-care Rights Service and the Home Power Savings Program — to access information and advice.

## Want to know more about EWON?

Visit us and subscribe to our publications online at [www.ewon.com.au](http://www.ewon.com.au)

## Community workers report EAPA problems

In recent months many community workers have reported that the Energy Accounts Payment Assistance Scheme (EAPA) allocation is no longer sufficient to meet the needs of consumers facing rising utility bills.

Community workers provide assistance with EAPA vouchers, referrals to the Home Power Savings Program and arrange payment plans with utility providers, however, they report that they're finding customers' situations are becoming long term and that options for assistance are exhausted.

Community workers have raised the following EAPA issues:

**Some retailers don't have an Australia Post facility for payment.** When vouchers have to be mailed to the retailer,

## DID YOU KNOW?

### EWON ASSISTS SMALL BUSINESS TOO

EWON assists small business as well as residential customers with free, fair and independent resolution of complaints about all electricity and gas suppliers in New South Wales and some water suppliers.

We've increased awareness of EWON's services among small business through NSW Fair Trading events, including Building Expos for tradespeople and builders as well as forums for real estate agents and landlords, motor dealers and traders and incorporated associations.

## Updated: Energy Assistance Guide

NSW Trade & Investment has released an updated Energy Assistance Guide and updated fact sheets. The Guide has been developed for community welfare organisations, energy retailers' customer hardship units and financial counsellors and is intended to provide a 'one stop shop' of information for assisting households manage their energy use.

The Guide outlines customer rights and billing information as well as details about what rebates and programs are available to assist with payment of energy bills.

The updated fact sheets contain short summaries of information in the Guide as well as details of where to go in the Guide to find out more.

The latest Energy Assistance Guide and fact sheets are available online. They can be downloaded at: [www.trade.nsw.gov.au/energy/customers/energy-assistance-guide](http://www.trade.nsw.gov.au/energy/customers/energy-assistance-guide)



processing is delayed considerably. This delay can land a customer in the disconnection cycle unnecessarily as the vouchers are valid for only 14 days from their date of issue.

Please note: TRUenergy has advised they are now able to accept EAPA through Australia Post.

**Shortage of EAPA across NSW in the third quarter of 2011.** Community agencies need to return used booklets to the Energy branch of NSW Trade & Investment with a request for emergency vouchers and should also contact the Department by phone to let them know of the shortage.

*Please contact EWON on 1800 246 545 to report any problems with EAPA access and availability.*