ESSENTIAL SERVICES COMMISSION

Updated energy consumer protections

1 October 2026

Further changes to improve energy consumer protections will come into effect from 1 October 2026

From 1 October 2026, energy retailers must:

- move eligible customers onto their cheapest plan if they are receiving payment difficulty support, or have owed more than $1,000 for 3 months
- make it easy for customers to switch to their best offer
- offer payment methods other than direct debit for each plan
- only disconnect customers if they meet the minimum debt of $1,000 (up from $300).

The best offer threshold is also increasing to $50 (from $22), which applies to best offer messaging on electricity bills and switching eligible customers experiencing payment difficulty to the best offer.

See below for more information about these changes.

Changes from 1 October 2026

Automatic best offer for customers experiencing payment difficulty

Every year, retailers must automatically switch residential customers experiencing payment difficulty and who meet certain eligibility criteria to the best offer. Customers can choose to remain on their current plan by opting out after receiving a notice to switch.

Residential customers are eligible if they:

- are entering or receiving tailored assistance, or
- have been in debt for at least three months and have a debt of $1,000 or more.

Increasing the best offer threshold

We have increased the best offer threshold from $22 to $50. This will mean:

- Customers will only receive a best offer message on their electricity bill if they will save more than $50 per year, when compared with their current plan.
- Customers in payment difficulty and eligible for the automatic best offer will also only be switched if they could save more than $50 per year on another plan.

Increasing the minimum debt amount for disconnection

We are increasing the minimum amount a residential customer needs to owe their retailer before they can be disconnected for non-payment from $300 to $1,000.

Improving access to cheaper offers

For all new plans, retailers must accept customer payments via these methods:

- in person (including via Australia Post outlets)
- by telephone
- by mail
- by direct debit
- by electronic funds transfer.

Improving the ability to switch to the best offer

Retailers need to make it simpler for customers to switch to the best offer. This must include instructions on how to switch plans on their website and options to switch online or via phone.