



Level 2, 35 Spring St  
Melbourne 3000, Australia  
Telephone +61 3 9651 0222  
              +61 1300 664 969  
Facsimile +61 3 9651 3688

# ENERGY RETAILERS COMPARATIVE PERFORMANCE REPORT 2008-09

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

DECEMBER 2009

**An appropriate citation for this paper is:**

Essential Services Commission 2009, Energy Retailers – Comparative Performance Report 2008-09, Summary of Findings, December 2009

## PREFACE

The Victorian energy market continues to be highly competitive during 2008-09, with removal of price oversight by the Victorian Government from 1 January 2009 matched with improved transparency in energy pricing for customers.

The purpose of the Commission's Energy Retailers Comparative Performance Report 2008-09<sup>1</sup> is to enhance this transparency, and to provide accountability to the performance of the retail energy industry. The report provides information on pricing trends in the energy market and the savings that are available to customers if they look around for better prices or other benefits for example, pay-on-time discounts.

The report also shows how well retailers respond to their customers by assisting those with payment difficulties and those who need more intensive assistance through the retailers' financial hardship programs.

There are up to 14 energy retailers competing in this market, some of which are quite large utilities and others smaller 'niche' retailers. The report published by the Commission is extensive, so this snapshot report highlights the key high level findings for the industry.<sup>2</sup>

There are pockets of poor performance in some areas, which are highlighted in the report. Generally Victoria's energy retailers are performing well for their customers.

Overall, the report shows that, despite energy prices rising over the past two years, customers can make savings if they shop around and find a competitive market offer.

Retailers must publish some market offer prices on their website, which are also published on the Commission's YourChoice website. Research has shown, however, that if customers ring the retailer directly for a market offer, that price may be higher than what is published by the retailers.

Customers therefore must be informed about the published offers and know how to negotiate with their retailers.

**Handy guides to assist with how to negotiate with a retailer, and how to access the YourChoice website, are shown on pages 16 and 17.**

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<sup>1</sup> The information is contained in two reports: *Energy Retailers Comparative Performance - Customer Service* and *Energy Retailers Comparative Performance – Pricing and the Competitive Market*. Both 2008-09 reports are available at [www.esc.vic.gov.au/public/energy/regulation+and+compliance/performance-reports](http://www.esc.vic.gov.au/public/energy/regulation+and+compliance/performance-reports)

<sup>2</sup> The Commission only looks at certain tariffs and savings.

The reports also provide considerable information on how well retailers treat their customers, including providing financial assistance and programs to avoid disconnection off supply, and how well they respond to customer complaints and call centre service.

Overall, the Victorian energy retailers performed well, but the report highlighted some areas for further investigation or improvement.

Some areas were negatively impacted by AGL's performance. The Commission has separately reported on the independent audit it undertook earlier this year of AGL's computer systems and related processes.<sup>3</sup> This resulted in a widespread and persistent failure of the billing systems, and the inability of its call centres to respond to the volume of complaints.

The Commission will be auditing AGL again in early 2010 and pursuing other areas of poor performance with the retailers in 2010.

**Dr Ron Ben-David**  
Chairperson

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<sup>3</sup> The full audit report is available from the Commission's website, [www.esc.vic.gov.au/energy/regulation&compliance/auditreports](http://www.esc.vic.gov.au/energy/regulation&compliance/auditreports)

## ALL REPORTS

The Commission's Energy Retail - Comparative Performance Report 2008-09 is set out in three volumes:

- This summary report provides an overview of the Commission's key findings from the two Comparative Performance Reports.
- The *Comparative Performance Report – Pricing and the Competitive Market* The report provides considerable information on the range of standing (default) and market offer products available to Victorian consumers in the competitive market. It analyses energy costs over time, and compares the various tariffs of retailers in each area of the state.
- The *Comparative Performance Report – Customer Service* examines retailer performance against those performance indicators, which are important to customers – billing and credit management, financial assistance, disconnections and reconnections and customer complaints and call centre service.

All three volumes are available on the Commission's website [www.esc.vic.gov.au](http://www.esc.vic.gov.au).

The key highlights are set out in the following pages.

## ENERGY PRICES AND OFFERS

### Pricing trends since competition

The Victorian energy industry was privatised in 1994/95 and progressively opened up to competition from that time. In 2001, all customers were able to choose their electricity retailers and this choice was extended to all gas customers in late 2002.

Until 31 December 2008, energy prices for domestic and some small business customers were overseen by the Victorian Government. The Victorian energy market was found by the Australian Energy Market Commission (AEMC) in 2008 to be highly competitive so that customers could rely on competition to keep prices lower than they otherwise would be.<sup>4</sup>

There are two types of pricing arrangements for customers in the energy market – standing offer (or default prices) and market offer prices. Standing offer prices apply to those customers who have not shifted from, or changed their arrangements with, their existing retailers since the start of competition. Market offer prices are those that are offered competitively by the different retailers.

The comprehensive Pricing and the Competitive Market Report shows the historical trends for a range of tariffs and their impacts on customers' bills. Standing offer prices are generally higher than market offer prices, so it is wise for customers to think about changing from their standing offer to a market offer

In this summary the trend in average gas and electricity standing offer prices for two types of residential and small business customers over the past decade are highlighted.<sup>5</sup> For residential, the example shows a customer on a two-rate tariff (including hot water) and for business customers, a single rate tariff.

Figure 1 shows that these customers have experienced price rises in the past two years. This is mostly attributed to drought conditions reducing the output of many hydro electricity plants and increasing the use of more expensive gas-fired electricity generation. This in turn has increased the overall electricity wholesale costs.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> AEMC report

<sup>5</sup> The reporting periods are different. Information is available for a longer-time period for electricity (1994-95), whereas the data has only been available for the gas sector since 2001-02.

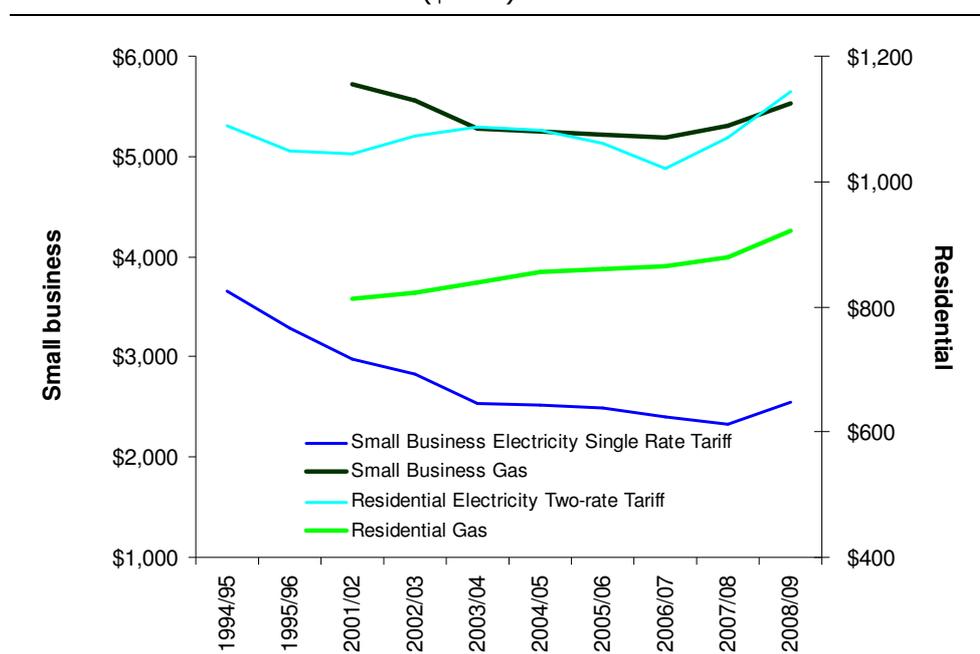
<sup>6</sup> See Fact Sheet: Energy in Victoria, Department of Primary Industries, 2007

Electricity charges for residential customers have generally risen over the period, whereas prices for small businesses are lower:

- The industry average annual bill for household customers on two-rate tariff has fluctuated since 1994-95, and is now 5 per cent higher than at that time.
- The bills for small business have fallen by up to 30 per cent since 1994-95, but have risen in the past two years.

For residential gas customers, the average charge is 16 per cent higher than in 1999, but prices on average for small business customers are 9.5 per cent lower than in the same period.

**Figure 1 Average Annual Standing Offer Energy Charges**  
1994-95 to 2008-09 (\$2009)



### Standing offer prices for all retailers

Standing offer tariffs are default tariffs that must be offered to a customer under a retailer's obligation to supply.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> The Victorian Government has placed an obligation to supply on energy retailers so that no customer can be left without supply. Prior to 1 January, 2009, the obligation to supply was only placed on AGL, Origin Energy and TRUenergy. Now all retailers have an obligation to supply on their standing offer terms.

Table 1 shows the lowest standing offers available to residential consumers in each of the electricity distribution zones. It shows that the cheapest offers came from Energy Australia or Jackgreen, and the most expensive were from Momentum Energy.

**Table 1 Residential Electricity Standing Offers Summary**

Based on 4,000 kWh peak / 6,500 kWh two rate<sup>8</sup> /  
6,000 kWh time of use<sup>9</sup> per annum

Distribution Zone	Tariff type	Lowest price	Highest price	Median
Jemena	Single rate	\$848 (Jackgreen / Energy Australia)	\$1,089 (Momentum)	\$917
	Two rate	\$1,049 (Jackgreen / Energy Australia)	\$1,376 (Momentum)	\$1,163
	Time of use	\$1,136 (Jackgreen / Energy Australia)	\$1,444 (Momentum)	\$1,231
United Energy	Single rate	\$839 (Energy Australia)	\$1,097 (Momentum)	\$910
	Two rate	\$1,069 (Energy Australia)	\$1,378 (Momentum)	\$1,163
	Time of use	\$1,117 (Energy Australia)	\$1,464 (Momentum)	\$1,215
Citipower	Single rate	\$795 (Jackgreen / Energy Australia)	\$1,089 (Momentum)	\$860
	Two rate	\$1,021 (Jackgreen / Energy Australia)	\$1,376 (Momentum)	\$1,109
	Time of use	\$1,048 (Jackgreen / Energy Australia)	\$1,444 (Momentum)	\$1,136
Powercor	Single rate	\$881 (Jackgreen / Energy Australia)	\$1,180 (Momentum)	\$960
	Two rate	\$1,112 (Jackgreen / Energy Australia)	\$1,433 (Momentum)	\$1,214
	Time of use	\$1,123 (Jackgreen / Energy Australia)	\$1,466 (Momentum)	\$1,230
SP Ausnet	Single rate	\$817 (Energy Australia)	\$1,062 (Momentum)	\$889
	Two rate	\$1,139 (Energy Australia)	\$1,461 (Momentum)	\$1,230
	Time of use	\$1,126 (Energy Australia)	\$1,452 (Momentum)	\$1,223

<sup>8</sup> The two rate tariff comprises 4,000 kWh/pa peak and 2,500 kWh/pa off-peak electricity

<sup>9</sup> The time of use tariff comprises 3,000 kWh/pa peak and 3,000 kWh/pa off-peak electricity

Table 2 shows the lowest standing offer gas prices available in each of the gas pricing regions. It shows that the cheapest standing offers varied between regions, with either Energy Australia, Origin Energy or AGL offering the cheapest rates.

**Table 2 Residential Gas Standing Offers Summary**  
Based on 60GJ per annum

Distribution Zone	Lowest Price	Highest Price	Median
<b>Envestra Central 1</b>	\$787 (Energy Australia)	\$936 (Victoria Electricity)	\$882
<b>Envestra Central 2</b>	\$798 (Energy Australia)	\$940 (Victoria Electricity)	\$879
<b>Envestra North</b>	\$831 (Energy Australia)	\$969 (Victoria Electricity)	\$918
<b>Envestra Cardinia</b>	\$1,095 (Origin Energy)	\$1,271 (TRUenergy)	\$1,258
<b>Envestra Murray</b>	\$1,106 (AGL)	\$1,155 (Origin Energy)	\$1,129
<b>Envestra Mildura</b>	\$1,345 (Origin Energy)	\$1,345 (Origin Energy)	\$1,345
<b>Envestra Bairnsdale</b>	\$1,124 (Origin Energy)	\$1,493 (TRUenergy)	\$1,308
<b>Multinet Main 1</b>	\$803 (Energy Australia)	\$959 (Victoria Electricity)	\$899
<b>Multinet Main 2</b>	\$776 (Energy Australia)	\$900 (Victoria Electricity)	\$854
<b>Multinet Murray</b>	\$1,052 (Origin Energy)	\$1,126 (TRUenergy)	\$1,068
<b>Multinet Gas Extension Zone</b>	\$928 (Origin Energy)	\$1,141 (TRUenergy)	\$1,065
<b>SP Ausnet Central 1</b>	\$853 (Energy Australia)	\$1,001 (Victoria Electricity)	\$959
<b>SP Ausnet Central 2</b>	\$852 (Energy Australia)	\$990 (Victoria Electricity)	\$932
<b>SP Ausnet Adjoining Central</b>	\$963 (AGL)	\$1,202 (TRUenergy)	\$1,082
<b>SP Ausnet West</b>	\$839 (Energy Australia)	\$934 (Red Energy)	\$897
<b>SP Ausnet Adjoining West</b>	\$1,123 (AGL)	\$1,171 (TRUenergy)	\$1,147
<b>Gas Extension Zone</b>	\$1,106 (AGL)	\$1,160 (TRUenergy)	\$1,133

## **Market offers published on the internet**

From 1 January 2009, Victorian customers have access to a range of discount market offers published by the energy retailers on their websites and the Commission through its YourChoice website.

These offers are required to be generally available for acceptance by customers, subject to their meter type. They are published so that customers can see the range of offers that might be available to them through the internet. They often have lower tariffs than the standing offer tariff, or may have some other benefit, for example, a pay-on-time discount.

Details of all the offers published are in the complete Pricing and the Competitive Market Report and a summary of the other incentives and benefits provided with the offers is shown in Attachment A.

Table 3 shows the lowest published market offers available to residential consumers in each of the electricity distribution zones, as at 30 June 2009, together with the possible savings available upon standing offer rates. It shows that in most cases, the cheapest published market offers are from Energy Australia.

**Table 3 Residential Electricity Published Market Offers Summary**

Based on 4,000 kWh single rate / 6,500 kWh two rate / 6,000 kWh time of use per annum

Distribution Zone	Tariff type	Lowest price	Highest price	Median	Median savings on standing offer
<b>Jemena</b>	Single rate	\$818 (Energy Australia)	\$923 (Origin Energy)	\$870	\$47 (5%)
	Two rate	\$1,029 (Energy Australia)	\$1,169 (Simply Energy)	\$1,094	\$69 (6%)
	Time of use	\$1,095 (Neighbourhood Energy)	\$1,237 (Origin Energy)	\$1,151	\$80 (6%)
<b>United Energy</b>	Single rate	\$814 (Neighbourhood Energy / Energy Australia)	\$914 (Origin Energy)	\$859	\$51 (6%)
	Two rate	\$1,032 (Energy Australia)	\$1,322 (Click Energy)	\$1,091	\$72 (6%)
	Time of use	\$1,070 (Energy Australia)	\$1,217 (Origin Energy)	\$1,129	\$86 (7%)
<b>Citipower</b>	Single rate	\$759 (Energy Australia)	\$869 (Origin Energy)	\$807	\$53 (6%)
	Two rate	\$949 (Energy Australia)	\$1,111 (Click Energy)	\$1,028	\$81 (7%)
	Time of use	\$1,005 (Energy Australia)	\$1,140 (Click Energy)	\$1,055	\$81 (7%)
<b>Powercor</b>	Single rate	\$850 (Energy Australia)	\$969 (Origin Energy)	\$905	\$55 (6%)
	Two rate	\$1,048 (Energy Australia)	\$1,241 (Country Energy)	\$1,136	\$78 (6%)
	Time of use	\$1,079 (Energy Australia)	\$1,230 (Origin Energy)	\$1,140	\$90 (7%)
<b>SP Ausnet</b>	Single rate	\$792 (Jackgreen)	\$905 (Victoria Electricity)	\$843	\$46 (5%)
	Two rate	\$1,034 (Energy Australia)	\$1,240 (Origin Energy)	\$1,167	\$63 (5%)
	Time of use	\$1,063 (Energy Australia)	\$1,280 (Victoria Electricity)	\$1,151	\$72 (6%)

Table 4 shows the lowest standing offer gas prices available in each of the gas pricing regions as at 30 June 2009, together with the possible savings available upon standing offer rates. It shows that the cheapest published market offers were from Australian Power & Gas, Origin Energy or AGL.

**Table 4 Residential Gas Published Market Offers Summary**

Based on 60GJ usage per annum

Distribution Zone	Lowest Price	Highest Price	Median	Median Savings
<b>Envestra Central 1</b>	\$791 (Australian Power & Gas)	\$1,025 (Victoria Electricity)	\$823	\$59 (7%)
<b>Envestra Central 2</b>	\$786 (Australian Power & Gas)	\$887 (Origin & Victoria Electricity)	\$829	\$50 (6%)
<b>Envestra North</b>	\$774 (Australian Power & Gas)	\$940 (Australian Power & Gas)	\$865	\$53 (6%)
<b>Envestra Cardinia</b>	\$1,151 (Australian Power & Gas)	\$1,282 (Origin Energy)	\$1,200	\$58 (5%)
<b>Envestra Murray</b>	\$1,035 (Australian Power & Gas)	\$1,155 (Origin Energy)	\$1,076	\$53 (5%)
<b>Envestra Mildura</b>	\$1,345 (Origin Energy)	\$1,345 (Origin Energy)	\$1,345	\$0 (0%)
<b>Envestra Bairnsdale</b>	\$1,125 (Origin Energy)	\$1,448 (TRUenergy)	\$1,286	\$22 (2%)
<b>Multinet Main 1</b>	\$806 (Australian Power & Gas)	\$901 (Origin Energy)	\$839	\$60 (7%)
<b>Multinet Main 2</b>	\$771 (Australian Power & Gas)	\$858 (Origin Energy)	\$804	\$50 (6%)
<b>Multinet Murray</b>	\$1,022 (AGL)	\$1,064 (TRUenergy)	\$1,052	\$16 (1%)
<b>Multinet Gas Extension Zone</b>	\$928 (Origin Energy)	\$1,106 (TRUenergy)	\$1,068	N/A
<b>SP Ausnet Central 1</b>	\$857 (Australian Power & Gas)	\$972 (Origin Energy)	\$933	\$26 (3%)
<b>SP Ausnet Central 2</b>	\$852 (Australian Power & Gas)	\$953 (Victoria Electricity)	\$883	\$49 (5%)
<b>SP Ausnet Adjoining Central</b>	\$1,074 (AGL)	\$1,107 (TRUenergy)	\$1,101	N/A
<b>SP Ausnet West</b>	\$809 (Australian Power & Gas)	\$925 (Origin Energy)	\$860	\$37 (4%)
<b>SP Ausnet Adjoining West</b>	\$1,074 (AGL)	\$1,107 (TRUenergy)	\$1,101	\$46 (4%)
<b>Gas Extension Zone</b>	\$937 (Origin Energy)	\$1,096 (TRUenergy)	\$1,059	\$74 (7%)

## Other market offers available from the retailers

Not all customers can access the internet to find the best published market offer for them. The Commission also wanted to find out if customers could get a similar or better offer when they contacted retailers directly and asked for an offer over the telephone.

To get this information, an independent telephone survey was undertaken, which obtained 462 residential quotes and 157 small business quotes from retailers.

The survey returned a number of findings, including:

- Electricity rates for both residential and small business customers vary considerably between retailers, with the highest rates generally being quoted in regional areas. Most retailers quoted higher rates than those published on their websites.
- Gas charges showed little variation between retailers, for both the residential and business market, and were similar to the published rates.
- Variation between average published rates and what was quoted was considerable.
- The most common contract term for both residential and business customers was two years. Early termination fees for business customers were generally between \$50 and \$99, while most residential consumers received quotes were not subject to an early termination fee.

Based on these findings, customers are encouraged to be aware of the market offers published on the YourChoice website prior to obtaining a quote from a retailer. This will help to compare the information they are given verbally by the retailers and make a comparison between the quotes.



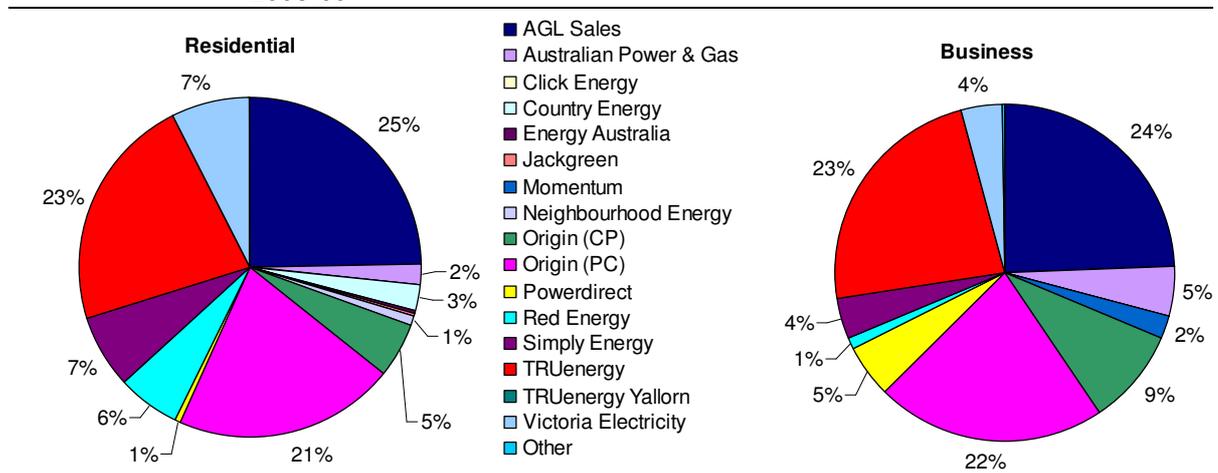
Make your  
**Choice**  
the best choice  
1300 134 575 or  
visit [www.esc.vic.gov.au/choice](http://www.esc.vic.gov.au/choice)

## MARKET ACTIVITY

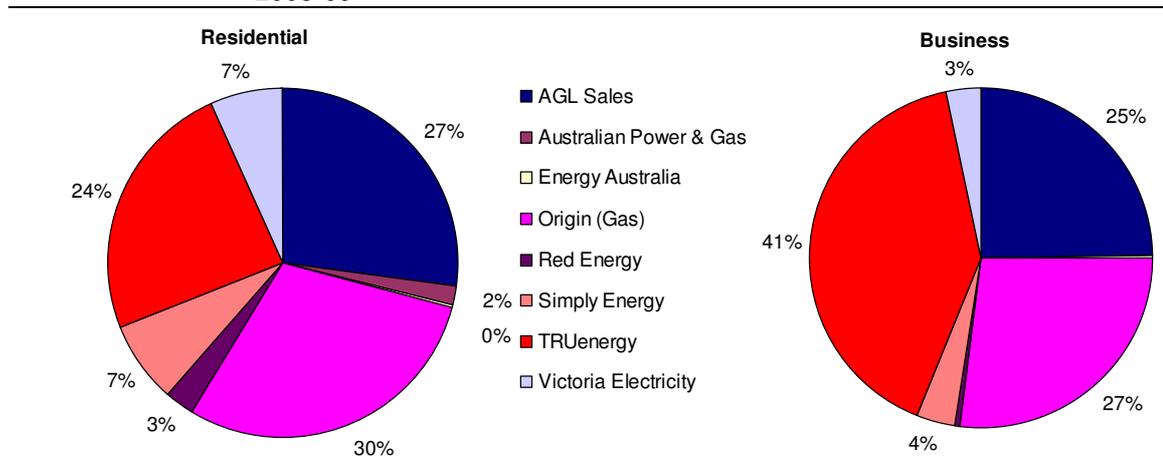
There are thirteen retailers currently active in the Victorian residential market, including the previous local retailers (AGL, Origin Energy and TRUenergy) and a range of newer market entrants. Figures 1 and 2 show the market shares of each active retailer in the Victorian energy market during 2008-09.

Most of these retailers sell electricity across Victoria, but not all retailers sell gas. Gas is also not physically available in some regional and rural areas, so the competition is less robust for customers in these areas.

**Figure 2 Customer Market Share – Electricity**  
2008-09



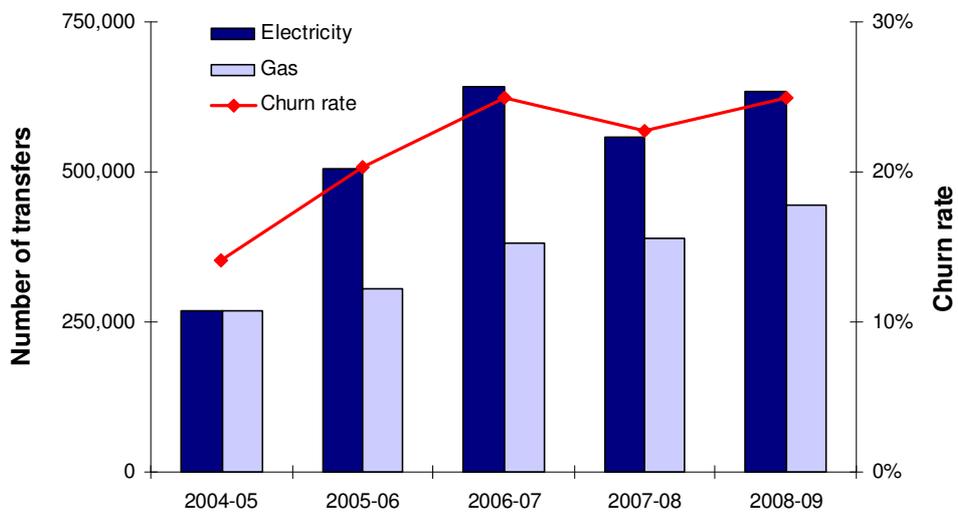
**Figure 3 Customer Market Share – Gas**  
2008-09



A good indicator of the competitiveness of the energy market in Victoria is the rate with which customers shift from one retailer to another.

Figure 4 shows increased market activity during 2008-09, with a total of 635,191 electricity and 445,470 gas customers switching retailers. The number of electricity customers switching retailers was up 14 per cent from 2007-08, with an increase in both gas and electricity shift rates to 25 per cent.

**Figure 4 Completed Retail Transfers**  
2003-04 to 2008-09



Victoria had the highest gross switching rate for electricity customers in Australia in 2008-09. South Australia recorded the next highest rate, with 17 per cent, while New South Wales (11 per cent) and Queensland (9 per cent) had a much lower rate of customers changing electricity retailers.

## SERVICE TO CUSTOMERS

The Commission collects data against a range of performance indicators with respect to the manner in which retailers' customer service affects their customers. Key indicators show how successful the retailers are in helping their customers in hardship, including avoid disconnecting customers from supply, and how responsive they are to their complaints and call service.

### Financial hardship programs

In 2008-09, retailers reported for the first time against the financial hardship programs they are required to have in place to ensure that customers are not disconnected from supply simply because of an inability to pay. In addition to this, the Victorian Government provides a range of programs to improve the affordability of energy services for low income individuals and families, including energy concessions and grant schemes to assist in replacing inefficient appliances.

Nearly 23,000 customers participated in the retailers' financial hardship programs in 2008-09, 74 per cent of whom were low income concession card holders. There were some good outcomes for customers who participated in the hardship programs. Their level of debt was reduced and, of those leaving the program during the year, approximately 30 per cent successfully completed the program and returned to 'mainstream' billing.

The remaining customers who left the program did so because they did not comply with the requirements. Retailers reported that many did not make their instalment payments or maintain contact with their retailers. There was a relatively low level of disconnections of customers who had been through the program, that is, only 5 per cent of customers disconnected were those customers who had participated in the program.

This report only shows one year of data. So it is too early to show trends by retailers, although the full report shows some very good outcomes by retailers. Full analysis of retailers' financial hardship programs is in the relevant chapter of Volume III.

Customers' use of Government financial assistance increased during 2008-09. The Department of Human Services reports that expenditure on energy concessions increased for all electricity programs, although there was a fall in expenditure for the Gas Winter Energy Program. There was a 60 per cent increase in the number of Utility Relief Grants (URGS) approved by DHS in 2008-09 compared with 2007-08.

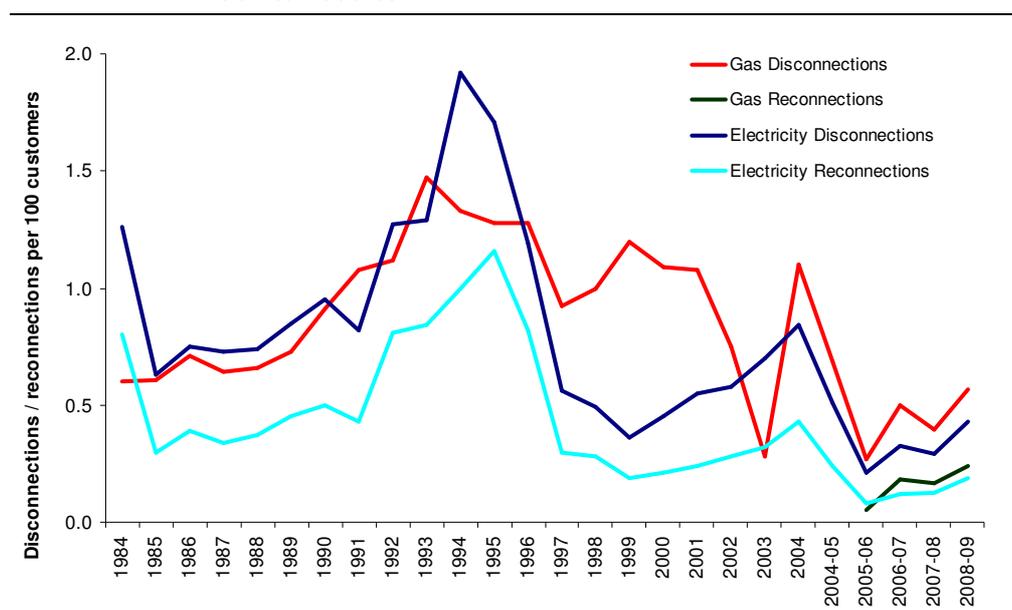
The Commission will continue to monitor these indicators and investigate some of the issues arising from the 2008-09 financial assistance data reported by the retailers.

## Disconnections and Reconnections

Although the disconnection and reconnection rates have generally been decreasing over the past 10 years, a rise was recorded in 2008-09. AGL and TRUenergy notably increased their disconnection activity.

Nevertheless, the disconnection and reconnection rates remain low when compared with historical levels and as a proportion of all energy customers.

**Figure 5 Historical Disconnections and Reconnections**  
1984 to 2008-09



Victoria's disconnection rate also compares favourably to other jurisdictions, with only the ACT recording a lower rate (see Table 5 below). Table 12 compares those jurisdictions where data is available.

**Table 5 Jurisdictional Domestic Electricity Disconnections**  
Per 100 Domestic Electricity Customers

Jurisdiction	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
Victoria	0.54	0.22	0.33	0.29	0.43
NSW	1.00	0.90	0.70	0.60	n/a
ACT	0.36	0.40	0.30	0.43	0.27
South Australia	1.20	1.14	0.76	0.85	0.87
Queensland	1.57	n/a	n/a	1.13	Avail 10 Dec
Tasmania	0.53	0.59	0.47	0.49	0.45
Western Australia	n/a	1.16	0.97	0.77	0.55

\* Data unavailable for WA prior to 2005-06. WA combined residential and business disconnections data for 2005-06 only. *Data source:* IPART, ICRC, ESCOSA, QCA, OTTER, ERA.

## Estimated Accounts

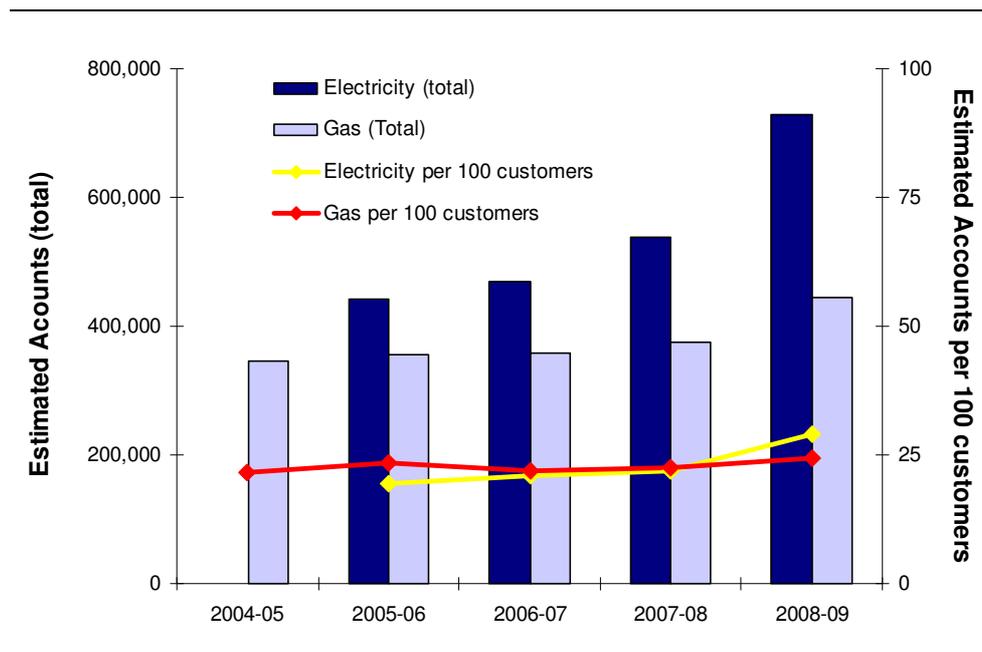
Retailers may issue an account based on estimated consumption, including where there is explicit informed consent between customer and retailer (for example, monthly 'bill smoothing'), or when it has not been possible to obtain an actual meter read.

Estimations can be a relatively inaccurate method of billing a customer. Except where customers agree to receive an estimated account (reconciled by an actual meter read within a reasonable time period), the retailers' use of estimated accounts should be minimised. Actual consumption, once confirmed with a meter read, may be substantially more or less than estimated.

Figure 6 (below) demonstrates the trend in the use of estimated accounts over the last five years. It shows that the number of estimated accounts has increased in each of the past five years, while the estimated accounts per 100 customers has increased at a slower rate.

AGL and Origin Energy were the main contributors to the increase in the use of estimated billing; a number of other retailers decreased the practice.

**Figure 6 Estimated Accounts**  
2004-05 to 2008-09

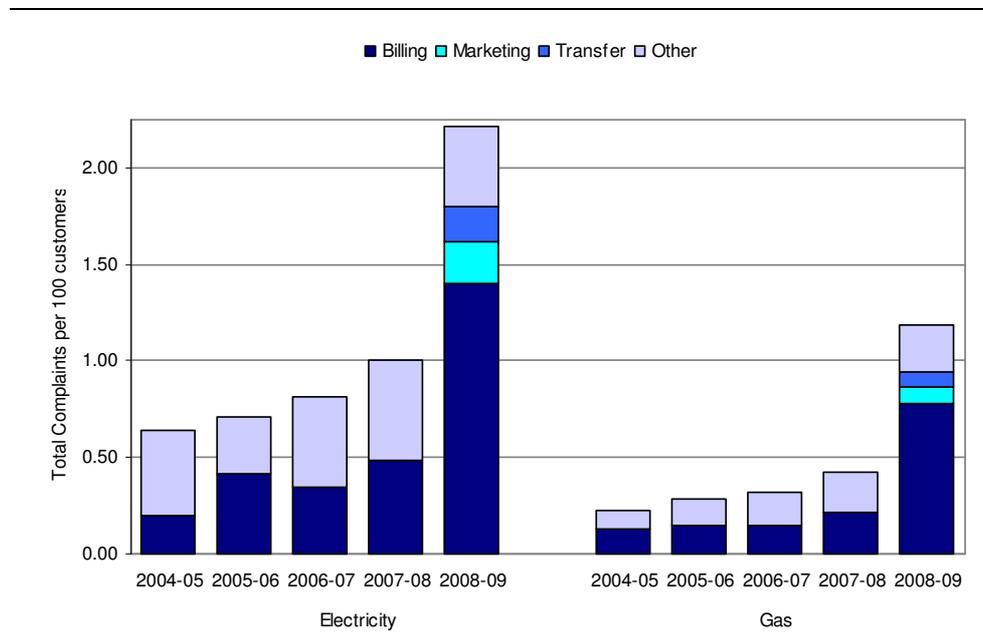


## Complaints

The level of complaints increased significantly (by 127 per cent) in 2008-09. This increase is mostly attributable to a large increase in complaints to AGL, mainly due to the systems issues which have affected its billing system. A significant increase in complaints was also reported by Victoria Electricity.

Figure 7 shows the trend in complaints per 100 customers, together with a breakdown of the types of complaints made to retailers.

**Figure 7 Complaints – Electricity and Gas**  
2004-05 to 2008-09



Make your **electricity & gas**

# Choice

the best choice

## Ten steps to making the best choice

1. Decide what is important to you: price, green energy, service or special offers.
2. Determine how much you paid for electricity and gas over the past 12 months.
3. Visit [www.esc.vic.gov.au/yourchoice](http://www.esc.vic.gov.au/yourchoice) or call **1300 134 575** for a list of all retailers or information to help you ask the right questions.
4. Contact one or more electricity or gas retailers and ask them to give you details of the plan they think is best for you.
5. Ask each retailer about price, length of contract, payment options and other fees.
6. Check what additional benefits or services are offered including payment assistance.
7. Ask for an Offer Summary to help you compare plans before you enter a contract.
8. Compare how much you would pay on each plan over a 12 month period. The price comparator on the ESC website may help you.
9. Check whether you would have to pay any fees to end your current plan.
10. Choose your plan. Remember there is a cooling-off period if you change your mind.

**These are the same steps we recommend if electricity or gas retailers contact you by phone or visit your home.**

[www.esc.vic.gov.au/yourchoice](http://www.esc.vic.gov.au/yourchoice)  
or call **1300 134 575**



Make your **electricity & gas**

# Choice

the best choice

You can choose your electricity and gas retailer. There are up to 14 licensed energy retailers operating in Victoria. If you do decide to investigate your options or an energy company contacts about changing your plan, it's important to remember:

- You do not have to accept an offer on the spot. Take time to make sure you understand the offer and that it is right for you.
- Ask for an 'Offer Summary' to help you compare energy plans. Energy prices are set by the energy companies and you may find a better price if you shop around.
- Check the offer for any additional fees, minimum periods, payment options and any extra benefits or services.
- Be aware of your rights. There are a range of legal safeguards in place to protect you while you are making your choice.
- If you change your mind, you have up to 10 business days to contact the retailer and cancel the contract.

**For more information about your rights or practical tips about how to make the best choice for you, call the State Government's energy regulator, the Essential Services Commission on the Energy Choice hotline on 1300 134 575 or visit [www.yourchoice.vic.gov.au](http://www.yourchoice.vic.gov.au)**



## APPENDIX A – PUBLISHED MARKET OFFERS – SUMMARY OF FEATURES

Retailer	ELECTRICITY		GAS	
	Residential	Business	Residential	Business
AGL (AGL Advantage 5 Energy Plan)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* 5% discount off consumption charge on bill</li> <li>* \$50 voucher for AGL Energy Shop or AGL Assist</li> <li>* 24 month fixed term contract</li> <li>* \$75 early termination fee</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* 5% discount off consumption charge on bill</li> <li>* 24 fixed term contract</li> <li>* \$100 early termination fee</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* 5% discount off consumption charge on bill</li> <li>* \$50 voucher for AGL Energy Shop or AGL Assist</li> <li>* 24 month fixed term contract</li> <li>* \$75 early termination fee</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* 5% discount off consumption charge on bill</li> <li>* 24 fixed term contract</li> <li>* \$100 early termination fee</li> </ul>
Australian Power & Gas (Simplicity Plus)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* 5% discount off usage and supply charges for prompt payment</li> <li>* No fixed term contract</li> <li>* No early termination fees</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* 5% discount off usage and supply charges for prompt payment</li> <li>* No fixed term contract</li> <li>* No early termination fees</li> </ul>	
Australian Power & Gas (Savings Plus)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* 3% discount off usage and supply charges for prompt payment</li> <li>* \$25 up front rebate</li> <li>* 3 year fixed term contract</li> <li>* Early termination fees vary from \$60 to \$40 depending on when contract is cancelled</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* 3% discount off usage and supply charges for prompt payment</li> <li>* \$25 up front rebate</li> <li>* 3 year fixed term contract</li> <li>* Early termination fees vary from \$60 to \$40 depending on when contract is cancelled</li> </ul>	

	ELECTRICITY		GAS	
Retailer	Residential	Business	Residential	Business
Australian Power & Gas (Super Saver)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* 5% discount off usage and supply charges for prompt payment</li> <li>* 5% less than APG's standing offer tariff</li> <li>* 3 years fixed term contract</li> <li>* \$30 early termination fees</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* 5% discount off usage and supply charges for prompt payment</li> <li>* 5% less than APG's standing offer tariff</li> <li>* 3 years fixed term contract</li> <li>* \$30 early termination fees</li> </ul>	
Click Energy (Click Natural)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* 25% GreenPower accredited electricity</li> <li>* \$50 sign up rebate, paid in two instalments</li> </ul>			
Click Energy	Product Name is Click Easy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* 7% discount off bill if bill is received via email and paid by the due date using Click's approved payment method</li> <li>* \$50 sign up rebate, paid in two instalments</li> <li>* No fixed term contract</li> <li>* No early termination fees</li> </ul>	Product Name is Click Business <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* 7% discount off bill if bill is received via email and paid by the due date using Click's approved payment method</li> <li>* \$50 sign up rebate, paid in two instalments</li> <li>* No early termination fees</li> </ul>		
Country Energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* 2 year fixed term contract</li> <li>* \$40 welcome credit</li> <li>* \$95 early termination fees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* 2 year fixed term contract</li> <li>* \$40 welcome credit</li> <li>* \$95 early termination fees</li> </ul>		

Retailer	ELECTRICITY		GAS	
	Residential	Business	Residential	Business
Energy Australia (1 January – 15 June 2009)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* 4% off electricity rates, increasing to 6% in the second year, 8% for third year</li> <li>* a \$50 credit on your account</li> <li>* one-off \$20 credit on your account for direct debit</li> <li>* No early termination fees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* 10% discount off electricity rates</li> <li>* No early termination fees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* 5% discount off gas rates</li> <li>* No early termination fees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* 5% discount off gas rates</li> <li>* No early termination fees</li> </ul>
Energy Australia (15 – 30 June 2009)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* 10% discount off electricity rates</li> <li>* Early termination fees: \$50 if cancelled in Year 1; \$25 in Year 2</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* 10% discount off electricity rates</li> <li>* No early termination fees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* 5% discount off gas rates</li> <li>* Early termination fees: \$50 if cancelled in Year 1; \$25 in Year 2.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* 5% discount off gas rates</li> <li>* No early termination fees</li> </ul>
Jackgreen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* 5% discount off bill for prompt payment if not on a fixed term contract <b>or</b></li> <li>* 8% discount off bill for prompt payment on a 2 year fixed term contract</li> </ul>			
Neighbourhood Energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* 10% discount off bill for prompt payment</li> <li>* Reward (gift voucher) for email billing, direct debit and referrals</li> <li>* No fixed term contract</li> <li>* No early termination fees (10 business days notice required)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* 10% discount off bill for prompt payment</li> <li>* Reward (gift voucher) for email billing, direct debit and referrals</li> <li>* No fixed term contract</li> <li>* No early termination fees (10 business days notice required)</li> </ul>		

	ELECTRICITY		GAS	
Retailer	Residential	Business	Residential	Business
Momentum Energy		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* 10% discount off bill for prompt payment</li> <li>* 12 or 36 month fixed term contract</li> </ul>		
Origin Energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* No fixed term contract</li> <li>* No early termination fees</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* No fixed term contract</li> <li>* No early termination fees</li> </ul>	
Red Energy (Fixed Term Saver)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* 7% discount off bill for prompt payment</li> <li>* 2 year fixed term contract</li> <li>* \$20 early termination fee</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* 7% discount off bill for prompt payment</li> <li>* 2 year fixed term contract</li> <li>* \$20 early termination fee</li> </ul>	
Red Energy (Fixed Term Saver)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* 7% discount off bill for prompt payment</li> <li>* Entitlement to Good Life Rewards card</li> <li>* 2 year fixed term contract</li> <li>* \$20 early termination fee</li> <li>* Early termination fees of \$79 (for termination in first year) and \$50 (for termination in second year) applies if customer accepts Good Life Rewards card</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* 7% discount off bill for prompt payment</li> <li>* 2 year fixed term contract</li> <li>* \$20 early termination fee</li> </ul>		

	ELECTRICITY		GAS	
Retailer	Residential	Business	Residential	Business
Simply Energy (Simply Click) (Until 25 May 2009)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* 7% discount off consumption component on bill</li> <li>* 1% discount off bill for prompt payment</li> <li>* 1% discount off bill for using direct debit</li> <li>* 1% rebate for 12 month loyalty</li> <li>* No fixed term contract</li> <li>* No early termination fees</li> </ul>			
Simply Energy (Until 25 May 2009)	Product Name is Green@Home <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* 10% GreenPower accredited electricity</li> <li>* 2% discount off consumption component on bill</li> <li>* 1% discount off bill for prompt payment</li> <li>* 1% discount off bill for direct debit</li> <li>* 1% rebate for 12 month loyalty</li> <li>* No fixed term contract</li> <li>* No early termination fees</li> </ul>	Product Name is Save@Work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* 5% discount off consumption rates</li> <li>* No fixed term contract</li> <li>* No early termination fees</li> </ul>		

	ELECTRICITY		GAS	
Retailer	Residential	Business	Residential	Business
Simply Energy (Green Deal) From 25 May 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* 10% GreenPower accredited electricity</li> <li>* 2% rebate off consumption component of bill for 12 month loyalty</li> <li>* No fixed term contract</li> <li>* No early termination fees</li> </ul>			
Simply Energy (Smart Deal) As at 25 May 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* 2% discount off consumption component</li> <li>* 4% discount off bill for direct debit</li> <li>* 2% rebate off consumption component of bill for 12 month loyalty</li> <li>* No fixed term contract</li> <li>* No early termination fees</li> </ul>			
TRUenergy	Product name is Go For More <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* 3% discount (shown in tariff)</li> <li>* 3% discount off bill for prompt payment</li> <li>* 3 year fixed term contract</li> <li>* Early termination fees vary from \$40 to \$20 depending on when contract is cancelled</li> </ul>	Product Name is Business Edge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* 10% discount (shown in tariff)</li> <li>* 3 year fixed term contract</li> <li>* Early termination fees vary from \$55 to \$35 depending on when contract is cancelled</li> </ul>	Product name is Go For More <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* 3% discount (shown in tariff)</li> <li>* 3% discount off bill for prompt payment</li> <li>* 3 year fixed term contract</li> <li>* Early termination fees vary from \$40 to \$20 depending on when contract is cancelled</li> </ul>	Product Name is Business Edge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* 10% discount (shown in tariff)</li> <li>* 3 year fixed term contract</li> <li>* Early termination fees vary from \$55 to \$35 depending on when contract is cancelled</li> </ul>
Victoria Electricity (No Risk Offer)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* 7% discount off bill for prompt payment</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* 7% discount off bill for prompt payment</li> </ul>	