



Saving on your energy bills

There are steps you can take to reduce your energy bills by shopping around for a better energy retail offer.

This guide is about the choices available to you when selecting the best energy deal to suit your particular needs.

You can save by shopping around for a better energy retail offer

Energy retailers generally have a range of energy retail offers, and prices can vary substantially. Accordingly, you could save money by either

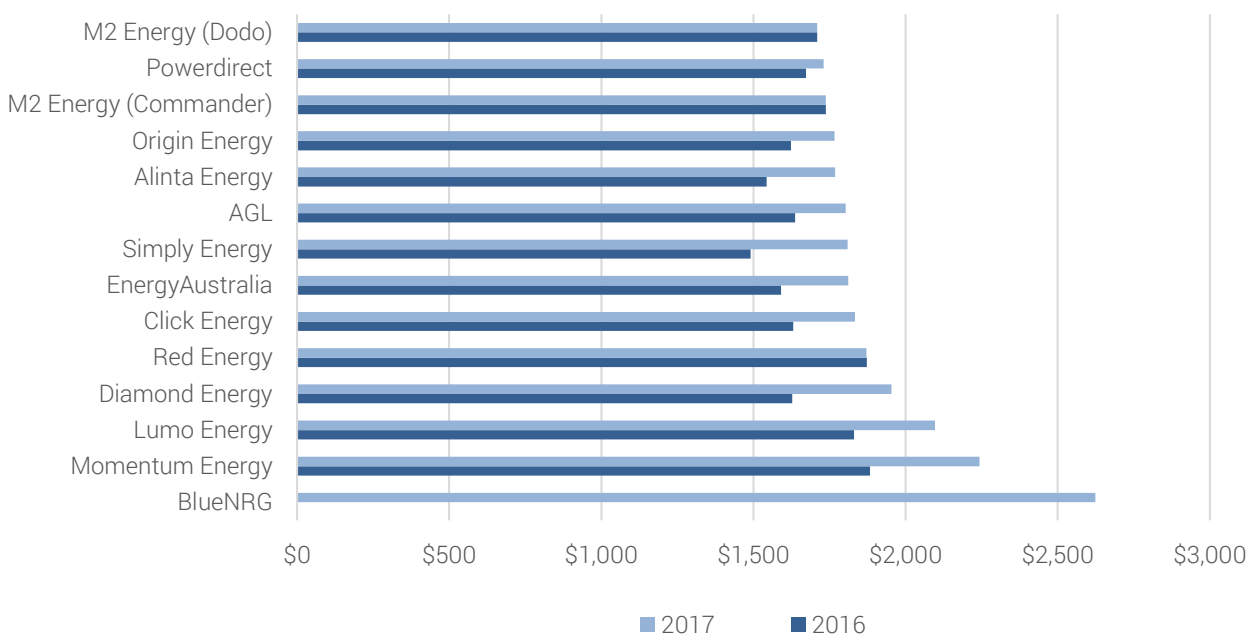
changing your energy retailer or finding a better offer with your current energy retailer.

Over the past year, by switching retailers or energy retail offers, you might have been able to save up to \$575 (for electricity) and \$151 (for gas) by switching to the lowest-priced Market Offer available in the market.

Figures 1 and 2 show retailers' cheapest electricity and gas retail offers as at 30 June of 2016 and 2017.

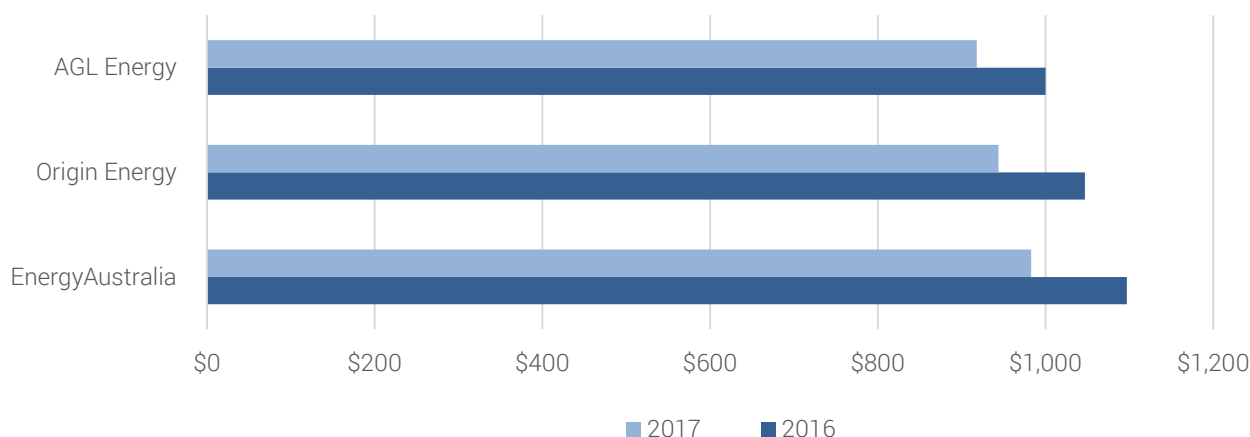
Note that these amounts are a guide only. Exact savings will vary depending on your consumption profile, the energy prices that you currently pay and the type of energy offer that you choose.

Figure 1: Retailers' cheapest electricity retail offer (as at 30 June)¹



^{1 and 2} All estimated figures (GST inclusive) are based on electricity and gas retail offer prices as at 30 June 2017 for a residential customer with an annual consumption profile of 5,000 kWh (for electricity) and 21,000 MJ (for gas). Pricing data have been sourced from the Australian Energy Regulator's Energy Made Easy, supplemented or confirmed with information from retailers.

Figure 2: Retailers' cheapest gas retail offer (as at 30 June)²



How to switch to a better energy retail offer

It is easy to shop around and find the electricity or gas offer that works best for your household. The following steps will help you compare, consider and check whether you are getting the best energy offer for you.

Steps in comparing energy offers

- ▶ **Compare** – you can quickly compare the energy offers currently available in South Australia by visiting the Australian Government's Energy Made Easy website (www.energymadeeasy.gov.au). Ideally, use key information from a recent electricity and/or gas bill for an accurate comparison of energy offers. If you do not have any recent bills, the comparison tool can make estimations for you.
- ▶ **Consider** – because retailers differentiate their energy offers in many ways it is important that you consider the specific terms and conditions of the offers. Some energy retail offers may include conditional discounts, such a pay on time discount, or require you to enter into a direct debit arrangement to receive a greater discount. Conditional discounts may not be worthwhile if you can't meet the condition. Also consider all associated fees including any account establishment fees, exit fees and late payment fees.

- ▶ **Check** – before switching retailer, you should contact your current retailer and ask for their best offer as they may be able to improve your current deal.

Switching between energy retail retailers

If you choose to switch energy retailer, check if your current retailer will charge an exit fee.

The switching process is relatively straightforward. Your new retailer will notify your current retailer on your behalf about your decision to switch retailers. The reliability and quality of your energy supply will not be affected.

It may take a few months for your account to be transferred to the new retailer depending on when your next meter reading is scheduled.

Financial assistance

If you are having trouble paying your electricity or gas bills, there is help available. By seeking help as soon as possible, you can avoid late payment fees and disconnection of your energy supply.

How your retailer can help you

The National Energy Retail Law requires energy retailers to assist customers experiencing difficulty paying their energy bills. Energy retailers can help you in the following ways:

- ▶ **Payment plans** – a payment plan lets you pay for your energy bill in instalments. Your energy retailer and you will discuss your particular circumstances and agree on how much you can pay.

- ▶ **Hardship program** – where a customer would like to pay their energy bill but doesn't have the means to do so, they can access information and bill payment assistance options through an energy retailer's hardship program.

Help under a retailer's hardship program can include tailored payment plans and further support measures to assist customers to manage their bills on an ongoing basis. As long as a customer is meeting their payments, they can't be disconnected.

Energy bill concessions

To help with the cost of energy bills a State Government concession is available to eligible South Australians on low or fixed incomes.

The energy concession is to cover both electricity and gas payments (including LPG bottled gas) for up to \$215 per year.

The energy bill concession is administered by the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion. To apply, you can use the online application form at www.sa.gov.au/concessions.

Further information

Australian Energy Regulator

- ▶ **AER Infoline**
1300 585 165
- ▶ **Energy Made Easy**
Australian Government energy price comparison website
www.energymadeeasy.gov.au
- ▶ **Energy retailer contact details**
Website addresses and telephone numbers for energy retailers
<https://www.aer.gov.au/consumers/useful-contacts-for-customers/energy-retailer-contact-details>

Essential Services Commission

- ▶ **Annual energy retail offers comparison report**
Comparison report on energy retail offer prices available to South Australia residential and small business customers
<http://www.escosa.sa.gov.au/industry/electricity/reporting---compliance/energy-retail-offer-prices>

Energy bill concessions

- ▶ **Department for Communities and Social Inclusion**
Energy concession to assist eligible South Australians on low or fixed incomes
<https://www.sa.gov.au/topics/employment-money-taxes/financial-support/concessions-and-benefits/concessions/energy-bill-concessions>

Australian Government

- ▶ **Energy offers checklist**
What to look out for when comparing energy retail offers
<http://yourenergysavings.gov.au/energy/energy-efficient-living/electricity-gas-market-offers/compare-electricity-gas-market-offers>

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