

## ENERGY FACTS: GUIDE TO NEGOTIATING A CONTRACT

Victorian households and businesses are able to choose their electricity and gas retailer. You can also choose the type of contract that you have with your energy retailer. This brochure provides you with information to help exercise the power of choice.

### The Power of Choice

To make sure you are getting the contract with the right service and price to suit you, you should shop around and compare the different offers available. To obtain more information, you can visit retailers websites or call them over the phone (see list of energy retailers and contact numbers over the page). You do not have to choose a new retailer in order to benefit – you may stay with your existing retailer but move onto a different contract.

You can compare various offers against what you are currently paying by using the Essential Services Commission's **Energy Comparator** at [www.esc.vic.gov.au/yourchoice](http://www.esc.vic.gov.au/yourchoice).

### Key Contract Terms

Importantly, the price charged for energy (referred to as the tariff) is not the only thing to consider before entering a market contract. You should also check the following carefully:

- What is the duration of the contract?
- If a discount is offered, what is the base rate before the discount? You should consider the total cost of the energy, not just the size of the discount.
- If the retailer is offering you a discount or other benefit, do you understand what you need to do to qualify for the benefit and how it will be paid? For example, do you only receive the benefit if you pay by direct debit or pay all your bills by the due date?
- Are there additional charges, such as a penalty fee for terminating the contract early?
- Will the contract continue if you move house?
- How and when will you be billed and do bills have to be paid in a certain way, such as via direct debit?

- Will prices change during the contract term and, if so, how will you be notified?
- If you have entered into a dual fuel contract (where the same retailer is supplying you with both electricity and gas), will you receive separate bills for each fuel or a combined bill?

A retailer should always be able to explain the terms of their own contract to you and, if they cannot, you should consider whether this is the right contract and retailer for you.

### You are Still Protected

All energy contracts with small retail customers must meet certain minimum requirements set out in the Energy Retail Code. For example, all contracts must comply with the requirements for complaint handling and dispute resolution. Likewise the obligations on retailers in relation to disconnection cannot be varied.

When marketing a contract to you, the retailer is required to explain any differences between the proposed contract terms and the Energy Retail Code.

### Checklist – Before taking up an offer

- Have you read the offer carefully? Are there any terms that you do not understand?
- Have you compared prices using the amount of gas and electricity you actually use? Be careful to consider for seasonal variation and the impact of GST. The Commission's Energy Comparator can help you compare ([www.esc.vic.gov.au/yourchoice](http://www.esc.vic.gov.au/yourchoice)).
- If you are already on a contract, do you know whether or not a termination fee will be payable if you accept another offer?
- Do you know how the terms and conditions will apply if your circumstances change?
- Do you have a copy of any written material supplied to you? You should keep all this information and anything that you sign, for future reference.
- Take your time before deciding. The retailer must give you time to consider whether the offer suits you.
- Consider verbal offers very carefully and always double check that the written terms and conditions match what you were told.

#### About this Document

This Document has been prepared by the Essential Services Commission - the independent regulator of the energy and water industries in Victoria. For further information, visit [www.esc.vic.gov.au/yourchoice](http://www.esc.vic.gov.au/yourchoice) or call 1300 134 575.

## List of Retailers

Energy Retailers	Phone No.	Fuel
AGL www.agl.com.au	131 245	Electricity & Gas
Australian Power & Gas www.australianpowerandgas.com.au	133 298	Electricity & Gas
Click Energy www.clickenergy.com.au	1800 77 59 29	Electricity
Country Energy www.countryenergy.com.au	132 356	Electricity
Energy Australia www.energy.com.au	131 502	Electricity & Gas
Jackgreen www.jackgreen.com.au	1300 465 225	Electricity
Momentum Energy www.momentumenergy.com.au	1300 662 778	Electricity
Neighbourhood Energy www.neighbourhood.com.au	1300 764 860	Electricity
Origin Energy www.originenergy.com.au	132 463	Electricity & Gas
Powerdirect www.powerdirect.com.au	1300 307 966	Electricity
Red Energy www.redenergy.com.au	131 806	Electricity & Gas
Simply Energy www.simplyenergy.com.au	138 808	Electricity & Gas
TRUenergy www.truenergy.com.au	133 466	Electricity & Gas
Victoria Electricity www.victoriaelectricity.com.au	1300 136 749	Electricity & Gas

If you decide to change retailers, don't forget to notify your current retailer. You may be required to give notice of up to 28 days, depending on the terms of your existing contract.

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