

Moving into transitional housing?

Information for Victorian electricity, gas and water customers

→ Now that you've signed a lease and become a tenant, utilities – such as electricity, gas and water – will be your responsibility. This fact sheet will help you avoid utility hassles.

To avoid hassles, set up accounts as soon as you move in and close them when you move out. Sometimes Transitional Housing Managers will arrange for the electricity, gas and water to be connected for you.

Setting up electricity or gas

1. Choose an energy retailer

You can go with an energy retailer of your choice.

Otherwise talk to your Transitional Housing Manager to find out who the previous energy retailer was.

See the reverse side of this fact sheet for information on choosing an energy retailer.

2. Contact the retailer to set up an account

- *call them or visit their website*
- *give at least 2 business days notice if the electricity or gas isn't already on.*

You'll need to provide your name, address and identification.

Don't worry if you're asked whether you receive welfare payments and have a Centrelink number – the retailer can use this information to give you concessions to help reduce your energy costs.

3. Provide details of any concessions

If you are on a government concession and the retailer hasn't asked you – tell them! Make sure the name on your concession card is the same as the name that you give.

See our fact sheet – '[Concessions and Grants](#)' – for more information.

4. Initial fees

There is a connection fee, but you don't have to pay this upfront. It will be included on your first bill. If you hold a concession card, you may be able to get a concession for this – don't forget to ask for it.

Setting up water

You have to use the water company that supplies the area where you live.

If you don't know who this is, visit: water.vic.gov.au/water-reporting/water-in-your-region

The cost of water is divided between you and the landlord:

You pay for the water you use, and the landlord pays the service fees.

Tell the water company that you've moved in:

In metropolitan areas the property owner must tell the water company that you've moved in. It's also in your interests to let the water company know that you've moved in – if you don't you could be charged back to the last time the meter was read.

MY UTILITIES

(to be filled in by the Transitional Housing Manager)

Your electricity company is:



..... Phone:

Your gas company is:



..... Phone:

Your water company is:



..... Phone:

Your bulk hot water company is (if applicable):



..... Phone:

Moving out

You must tell the energy retailer and water company when you move out. If you don't, they may keep charging you. Or, when you go to set up another account they may transfer the debt to your new account. Keep a note of when you rang and who you spoke to in case there are any problems afterwards.

Sharing

If you're sharing with someone who isn't part of your family, the Transitional Housing Manager should keep the utility accounts in their name. It will charge you a regular amount for your utilities as part of your rent.

Choosing an energy retailer

To help choose the best energy plan for you, use the Victorian Government's independent energy price comparator – **Victorian Energy Compare:** compare.energy.vic.gov.au

You can also ask energy retailers to provide you with an **energy fact sheet** for each different plan they offer. This can help you compare different plans from the same retailer or plans between different retailers.

You might be contacted by electricity and gas salespeople who try to get you to change your retailer – **you don't have to say yes!**

Retailers offer different types of energy plans:

1. Victorian Default Offer (VDO)

This is a contract where the price of electricity is set by the Essential Services Commission, based on where you live. The Essential Services Commission sets the price at what they think is a fair and reasonable price for electricity, and they review that price every year on 1 January.

2. Market Offers

These are contracts offered by retailers who set the price of electricity and gas.

- They usually have a contract term (e.g. two years) and early termination or 'exit fees' if you cancel early – **remember that in transitional housing your tenancy is considered to be short term.**
- They may include discounts if you meet certain conditions – **but check the details carefully!** Some discounts may only apply to usage and not service charges. Late payment fees might also apply if you don't pay on time.

For more information about contracts and the types of charges on energy bills, see our fact sheet – '[Switching Energy Plans](#)'.

Need help with bills?

- Electricity bills usually come every 3 months, although you can ask to be billed monthly if you would prefer and most retailers will provide this.
- Gas bills must come at least every 3 months, but will often arrive at 2-monthly intervals.
- Water bills come every 3-4 months depending on where you live

These can be a shock when they arrive, but there is help available!

Ways to manage payments:

- It may help to have some of your Centrelink payment taken out fortnightly before you get it – a service known as *Centrepay*. Your utility company can help organise this.
- You can also get a card from your utility company to make small regular payments towards your bills at the post office – a service called *EasyPay*.
- Remember to let your energy retailer or water company know of any concessions you are on.

What if I can't afford to pay?

If you've received a bill you can't pay, ring the company and tell them you are having some difficulty. They should set up a payment plan for you – be honest about what you can regularly afford to pay.

Your electricity and gas can't be disconnected or your water restricted if you're on a payment plan.

EWOV help

Need more information?
These EWOV fact sheets might help:

[Energy Payment Difficulties](#)

[Water Payment Difficulties](#)

[Saving Energy at Home](#)

If you have a problem with your electricity, gas or water and can't sort it out with your company, contact EWOV – we're here to help! EWOV is a free and independent dispute resolution service.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

Online: ewov.com.au

Freecall: 1800 500 509

Email: ewovinfo@ewov.com.au

Post: GPO Box 469, Melbourne, Victoria 3001

Translating and Interpreting Service: 131 450

National Relay Service: 133 677