

Spring 2013 Issue

EWOV Connect

Quarterly newsletter linking the
Energy and Water Ombudsman (Victoria) (EWOV)
with community agencies

EWOV opened in May 1996.

By 31 August 2013, we had assisted 427,801 energy and water customers, most of them residential. We receive, investigate and facilitate the resolution of complaints involving customers and energy and water service companies in Victoria.

We provide independent advice, information and referral regarding energy and water services. We identify, and where appropriate, redress systemic issues and refer these to energy and water companies and regulators. We work with customer groups, industry and regulators to drive ongoing customer service improvement and to prevent complaints.

Contents

Flexible electricity pricing has arrived	3
Changes to concessions for Victorian energy customers	4
An envelope marked 'dear occupier' or 'to the occupier' may not be junk mail!	5
Contact points for energy and water company hardship programs	6
In a world of consumer questions, here's some more help with answers	7
Coming soon – more 'behind the scenes at EWOV' days for community organisations	8
Highlights from Res Online 5, our latest quarterly e-newsletter	9
A positive 'fair and reasonable' review for two EWOV processes	10
Issues watch – energy marketing and transfer, solar, Smart Meters	11
What's an embedded network?	12
EWOV on the road	13



Did this copy of EWOV Connect come second-hand?

You can sign up for your own copy by contacting Kathryn Graham, Research and Communications Administration Support Officer on (03) 8672 4277 or at kathryn.graham@ewov.com.au.



Message from the Ombudsman

We hope you like the new look of EWOV Connect. EWOV Connect is the quarterly e-newsletter EWOV introduced in December 2005, specifically for Victorian community, welfare and health services workers. It provides those of you at the front-line with tips and information about energy and water that you can draw on to help your clients. It also helps you keep up with the changing energy and water industries. Over the past year, it's been a great vehicle for fulfilling information requests you made during our Community Roadshow.

Based on the feedback we received during the Roadshow and through individual interviews with community organisations, we've improved the EWOV Connect design and reviewed the content to ensure it remains as useful as possible for the community sector. Positively, we had a lot of great feedback about the useful/practical information and industry updates we already include. At your request, this issue includes more case studies and information about some of EWOV's processes. We'll be picking up a number of other content requests in future issues.



Cynthia Gebert
Energy and Water Ombudsman (Victoria)

Flexible electricity pricing has arrived

Flexible electricity pricing is also known as time-of-use pricing. On 17 September 2013, it became available to electricity customers in Victoria whose property has a remotely-read Smart Meter. It's voluntary and customers who are interested in changing to it should check with their retailer to see whether their meter is ready.

By understanding their usage, and shifting their use of household appliances to different times of the day (especially off-peak as shown in the below diagram), people should be able to make savings on their electricity bills.

The Victorian Government has set up a price comparator website to help customers compare the available flexible electricity tariff choices. Called 'My Power Planner', it's on the 'Switch On' website (www.switchon.vic.gov.au). Customers who don't have access to the internet can contact the 'Switch On' Information Line on 136 186.

Customers can use the 'My Power Planner' to compare flexible pricing to their current tariff structure. They do this using one of the generic 'user profiles' or their Smart Meter data (which they can get from their electricity retailer or distributor).

MORE

These pages on the 'Switch On' website may be useful in your work with clients:

- [How flexible pricing works](#)
- [Tips for taking advantage of flexible pricing](#)
- [Flexible pricing and concessions](#)
- Flexible pricing and customer impacts ([vulnerable or disadvantaged groups](#))
- Rebates for in-home displays and other energy-related products through the [Energy Saver Incentive program](#)

Customer protections – residential customers

- Customers must give their consent before being put on a flexible pricing offer.
- If they take up a flexible pricing offer with their current retailer and change their mind, they can revert to their old tariff structure without an administration fee. An early contract termination fee may still apply though. Customers should ask their retailer about this.



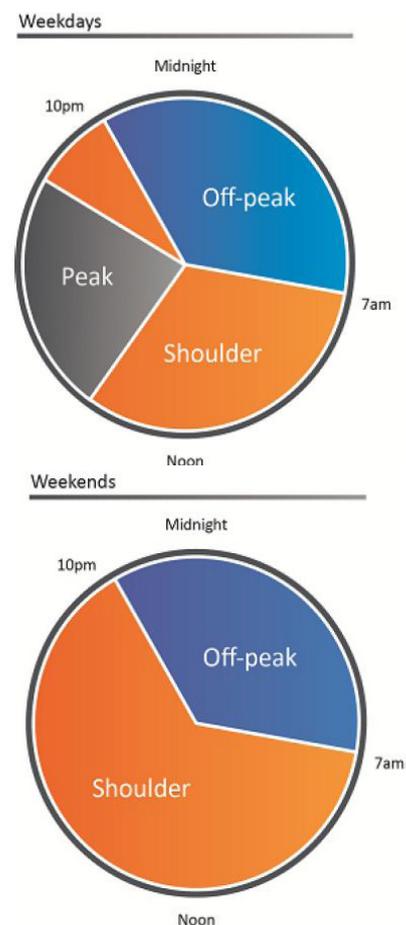
WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOU?

Before you recommend flexible pricing to a client, we suggest you help them look into whether it will be better for them. Our fact sheet will help. They (or you on their behalf) can also use the 'My Power Planner' price comparator tool and other information on the 'Switch On' website.

EWOV's Flexible Pricing fact sheet

... includes our answers to questions we think customers will be asking about flexible pricing:

- What if I already have peak and off-peak tariffs?
- Are the new flexible tariffs higher than the current flat tariffs?
- What will the flexible pricing tariffs be?
- I've received my first bill since switching to flexible pricing and it's a lot higher than normal.
- I don't yet have a Smart Meter. How do I get one?
- How will I know that flexible pricing is right for me?
- Do I have to change to flexible pricing?
- When will the different tariffs apply?



Changes to concessions for Victorian energy customers

The Victorian Department of Human Services (DHS) recently announced changes to some concession entitlements following a review of the system. We've summarised these for you.

You can read more in this new [DHS 'Victorian concession' brochure](#).

Backdating concessions (changes from 1 August 2013)

- The maximum period that a retailer will be able to backdate concessions is 12 months.
- Customers can still apply directly to DHS for special consideration to have concessions backdated for a period longer than 12 months.

New Excess Energy Concession (effective from 1 December 2013)

• What is the Excess Energy Concession?

Households with an annual electricity bill over \$2,763 will need to apply for the Excess Energy Concession to continue to receive the 17.5% concession on electricity they use above this amount.

Similarly, households with a gas bill greater than \$1,462 during the winter period (1 May to 31 October) will need to apply for the Excess Energy Concession to receive the 17.5% concession on gas they use above this amount.

• Are there exemptions?

Yes. People on the Life Support Concession and/or the Medical Cooling Concession are exempt from applying for the Excess Energy Concession.

• How do customers apply for the Excess Energy Concession?

They call their energy retailer to work out if they need to apply.

The retailer will provide an application form.

The customer (an eligible concession card holder) submits the completed application to DHS.

DHS will check eligibility, calculate the Excess Energy Concession and apply the discount to their electricity and/or gas bill (if applicable).

Off-peak Electricity Concession renamed

- The Off-peak Electricity Concession is now called the Controlled Load Electricity Concession, so that it is clear that it applies only to households with separately metered electric hot water or slab heating.
- The concession amount of 13% stays the same.



More information...

can be obtained from the DHS Concessions Information Line on 1800 658 521 or from the [new DHS Concessions brochure](#).



WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOU?

Concessions make energy and water more affordable. It's worth checking the concessions your clients are receiving to make sure they're benefiting as much as they could be.

This is especially important with the reduced backdating of concessions from 2 years to 1 year.



An envelope marked 'dear occupier' or 'to the occupier' may not be junk mail!

If it's from an electricity or gas company, and it is ignored, the person occupying the property may have their electricity or gas disconnected.

If someone receives one of these notices, it means they're using electricity or gas at the property without having set up an account. Before the retailer most recently responsible for the property can disconnect supply, it must send the occupant a notice. That notice gives the occupant 12 business days from the date on the notice, to set up an account. Having sent the notice, and once the 12 days are up, the retailer can disconnect the supply.

What should someone do if they receive an envelope marked 'dear occupier' or 'to the occupier'?

They need to read it and set up an account with a retailer before the warning period set out in it expires. They can choose the retailer that sent the notice or another retailer. It's the occupant's choice, but they must act or risk disconnection.



CASE STUDY 1

The customer rang EWOV in late February 2013 after her electricity supply was disconnected. She said the electricity account had been in her sister's name. When her sister moved out, she made several attempts to set up an account with the retailer, spending long periods on hold and not being called back. When her supply was disconnected on 7 February 2013, she rang the local distributor who told her how to arrange reconnection. She said that by the time she got through, the reconnections section had closed for the day. She called the next day and reconnection was arranged once she had set up an account.

Dissatisfied with the inconvenience, she contacted EWOV seeking an apology and \$250 for food spoilage. Initially the retailer told us it had correctly actioned the disconnection. However, our investigation showed that it hadn't warned her that the electricity was about to be disconnected, because the 'to the occupier' notices were sent to the wrong address.

The retailer acknowledged that, because it couldn't confirm the notices had arrived at her address, the disconnection didn't comply with the requirements of clause 13.4 of the Energy Retail Code. It made a wrongful disconnection payment of \$379.34 for the 37 hours she'd been off supply. It also credited her account with \$50 in recognition of customer service issues. **WDP/2013/290**



CASE STUDY 2

The customer contacted us in mid-May 2013 after her gas supply was disconnected. She'd moved into the property in early February 2013 and had rung a gas retailer to set up an account.

Bills arrived in her name as expected, but she also received 'dear occupier' notices from a different retailer. Assuming the 'dear occupier' notices were marketing letters, she ignored them. When she rang the local gas distributor to find out why her supply had been disconnected, she was told the disconnection had been authorised, but not by her chosen retailer.

When she rang the disconnecting retailer, she was told it didn't know who was occupying the property. When she rang her chosen retailer, she was told it had billed her for an incorrect address. Dissatisfied with the actions of both retailers, she contacted EWOV. Two investigations were opened. The disconnecting retailer said it had complied with its obligations and had tried to warn the customer that she needed to make contact to set up an account and avoid disconnection. We reviewed the disconnecting retailer's efforts to warn the customer and agreed that it had complied with its obligations, so a wrongful disconnection payment was not applicable.

The customer's chosen retailer confirmed it had wrongly billed her for another address and refunded all billed amounts. Having gone through this process, the customer decided to switch from her chosen retailer to the disconnecting retailer. **WDP/2013/808**



WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOU?

If one of your clients receives a 'to the occupier' letter (or letters) from an electricity or gas company, it means they haven't set up an electricity and/or gas account at that property. They are at risk of supply disconnection. They need to ring the energy company that sent the notice, or another energy retailer of their choice to set up an account, without delay.



Contact points for energy and water company hardship programs

 Company	 Contact point for customers	 Contact point for financial counsellors
AGL	1300 659 925	
Alinta Energy	133 702	
Australian Power & Gas	1300 478 760	
Barwon Water	1300 656 007	(03) 5226 9925 (03) 5226 9902 (03) 5226 9903
Blue NRG Pty Ltd	1300 599 888	
Click Energy	1800 775 929	(07) 3852 8327
Central Highlands Water	1800 061 514	
City West Water	131 691	
Coliban Water	1300 363 200	
Diamond Energy	1300 838 009	
Dodo Power & Gas	1300 37 47 33	
East Gippsland Water	1300 720 700 or 1800 671 841	
EnergyAustralia	1300 723 492	
EnergyAustralia (formerly TRUenergy)	1800 558 643	
Gippsland Water	1800 050 500	
Goulburn Valley Water	1300 360 007	
Goulburn Murray Rural Water	1800 013 357	
Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water	1300 659 961	
Lumo Energy	1800 989 321	
Lower Murray Water	(03) 5051 3400 or 1800 808 830 (after hours emergencies)	
Momentum Energy	1300 662 778, or once on program 1300 415 375 (Tues, Wed and Thurs)	1300 415 375 Only Tues, Wed and Thurs (03) 8102 3287 (Lesley Kelly)
Neighbourhood Energy	1300 764 860	
North East Water	1300 361 633	(02) 6022 0583
Origin Energy	13 24 61	1800 626 320
Origin Energy (Country Energy)	13 23 56	1800 651 705
People Energy	1800 788 970	
Powerdirect	1300 659 925	
Red Energy	(03) 9425 2728 or 1800 723 749	(03) 9425 2728
South East Water	131 851	
Southern Rural Water	1300 139 510	
South Gippsland Water	1300 851 636	
Simply Energy	1800 094 121	
Wannon Water	1300 926 666	
Western Water	1800 093 558	
Westernport Water	1300 720 711 or (03) 5956 4144	(03) 5956 4144
Yarra Valley Water	131 721	1800 637 316

Financial counsellors can use the phone numbers listed above for customers.



In a world of consumer questions, here's some more help with answers

NEW bulk hot water fact sheet

This fact sheet explains how bulk hot water works.

It includes our answers to questions customers often ask EWOV about bulk hot water:

- Will I receive two gas bills?
- Why is there a multiplier on my bill?
- Do I still get cold water bills?
- Can I change my bulk hot water company?
- Who is responsible for reading and maintaining my bulk hot water meter?
- Do I receive a concession on bulk hot water?
- Does the Energy Retail Code apply even though my account is for water?

Bulk Hot Water

INFORMATION FOR RESIDENTIAL BULK HOT WATER CUSTOMERS

AUGUST 2013 FACT SHEET 25

Frequently Asked Questions (continued)

Do I still get cold water bills?
Yes. Customers with bulk hot water are billed separately for cold water usage by their local water corporation. Customers receive quarterly water bills from their water corporation, in addition to a bi-monthly bulk hot water bill from their bulk hot water company.

Can I change my bulk hot water company?
Generally not. Individual properties within a multi-dwelling building cannot transfer their individual account to a different bulk hot water company.
However, it may be possible to change bulk hot water companies if the Owners' Corporation or Building Management decide to transfer the Master Gas Meter and all of the bulk hot water accounts to a new company.

Who is responsible for reading and maintaining my bulk hot water meter?
Your bulk hot water company is responsible for taking bi-monthly meter reads and also for maintaining your meter in good working order.

Do I receive a concession on bulk hot water?
If you hold an eligible concession card, you can receive relevant concessions. More information on concessions is available from the Department of Human Services: 1800 658 521 or www.dhs.vic.gov.au/concessions

Does the Energy Retail Code apply even though my account is for 'water'?
Yes. All of the customer protections and responsibilities under the *Energy Retail Code* apply as the contract is for energy (usually gas) not water. Bulk hot water companies must hold a relevant energy licence to sell you bulk hot water, not a water licence.

Does a daily supply charge apply?
No. A daily supply charge should not apply to bulk hot water bills as this is factored into the tariff.

A typical bulk hot water system set up

Key

- Hot water meter
- Gas cook top (if applicable)

UPDATED

Fact sheet for Members of Parliament (MPs)

This fact sheet is written for MPs and their electoral office staff.

It explains EWOV and its role, the main energy and water customer codes, our process for a third party to be able to act on behalf of a customer, and more.

Electricity, Gas and Water Complaints

INFORMATION FOR VICTORIAN MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT AND ELECTORATE OFFICERS

JULY 2013 FACT SHEET 19

Constituents sometimes approach Members of Parliament or Electorate Officers with electricity, gas or water complaints. This fact sheet explains when they or you, acting on their behalf, should contact the Energy and Water Ombudsman (Victoria) (EWOV).

An industry-based scheme
EWOV is an independent industry-based dispute resolution scheme. We are approved by the independent economic regulator, the Essential Services Commission of Victoria.
Unlike statutory Ombudsmen, we do not receive any funding from government. Instead, EWOV charges the energy companies and water corporations for the complaints we handle.
This provides an incentive for the energy companies and water corporations to directly settle complaints within their companies.

Does the company know about your constituent's complaint?
If a customer has not spoken with their energy company or water corporation, we usually refer them back to the company's contact centre.
If a customer has spoken to their energy company or water corporation once, EWOV usually asks a higher-level representative at the company to phone the customer back within three business days.
Please check if your constituent has spoken with the energy company or water corporation about their complaint. If they haven't, they should try direct resolution before contacting EWOV.
All the stages of our complaint handling process are outlined in our *How we help* brochure (<http://www.ewov.com.au/publications-and-media/information-and-fact-sheets>).

Tips for resolving complaints
Check you have the following details about your constituent's complaint:

- the supply point (their address)
- details of any disputed bills
- when and who they previously spoke with at the company
- what they want to resolve their issue/s.

Find out where your constituent stands
Most of the rights and responsibilities of your constituent — and those of their company — are set out in codes.
For electricity and natural gas, the main codes are the *Energy Retail Code* and *Energy Marketing Code*.
For urban and rural water, there are *Customer Service Codes*.
These are all available on the Victorian Essential Services Commission's website (www.esc.vic.gov.au).
For LPG (bottled gas), the Victorian *LPG Retail Code* applies to Elgas, Kleanheat, Origin Energy, Powergas and Supagas. Links to the codes are on our website: <http://www.ewov.com.au/complaints/assistance-to-locate-a-complaint>.
You can also phone EWOV on 1800 500 509 for information.

EWOV is a company limited by guarantee — not a government agency. EWOV is an impartial industry-based customer dispute resolution scheme.
If your constituent wants your help in dealing with us, they will need to complete an Authority form for you to act on their behalf.

Freecall: 1800 500 509 Post: GPO Box 469
Freefax: 1800 500 549 Melbourne Victoria 3001

Email: ewovinfo@ewov.com.au TIS: 131 450
Web: www.ewov.com.au NRS: 133 677

Fact sheet for Members of Parliament (MPs)

There are presently 25 EWOV fact sheets on our website under Publications & Media.

7

Coming soon...

more 'behind the scenes at EWOV' days
for community organisations.



You can book in now.

As well as listening in on calls taken by our Intake Officers, you'll have the opportunity to spend some time sitting with our Real Time Resolution Conciliators to observe how that team handles complaints.

There's also a presentation from EWOV staff, including a hardship section.

Feedback from the community representatives who have taken part already is that coming in to EWOV really improved their understanding of how we work.



You can book in by...

contacting **Kathryn Graham**,
Research and Communications Administration
Support Officer

on **(03) 8672 4277**
or at **kathryn.graham@ewov.com.au**.

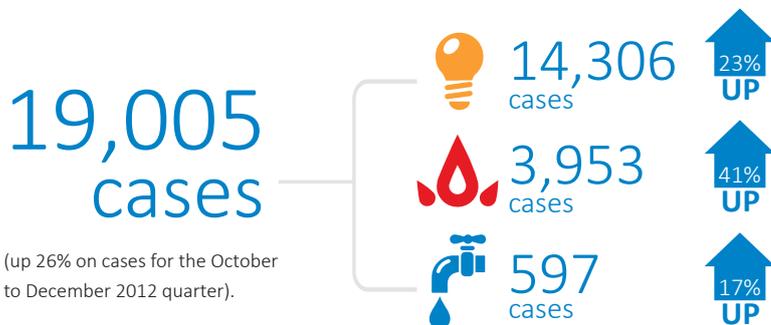


Highlights from Res Online 5, our latest quarterly e-newsletter

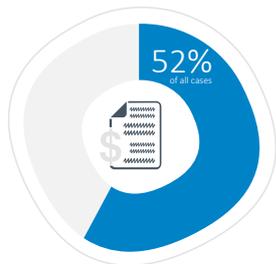
Res Online provides transparent and timely information on case and issues trends (by industry, industry sector and company).

Case trends for the first quarter of 2013

In the January to March 2013 quarter, EWOV received:



Billing continued to top the list of customer complaints. It was raised by **9,914** customers as their main issue.



By industry, the top three billing issues were:

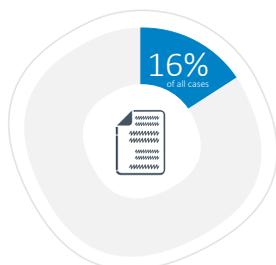
- **Electricity** – billing delays, high bills, electricity tariffs
- **Gas** – high bills, billing errors, billing delays
- **Water** – high bills, fees and charges, billing errors.

Read more about [the billing cases](#) on our website.

Credit followed billing.

It was raised by **3,072** customers as their main issue.

Energy supply disconnection continued to be the most common credit issue overall:



- **Electricity** – 376 cases about actual supply disconnection (up 39%) and 637 cases about imminent electricity disconnection (up 3%)
- **Natural gas** – 207 cases about actual supply disconnection (down 10%) and 299 cases about imminent natural gas disconnection (down 3%).

Read more about [the credit cases](#) on our website.



CREDIT CASE STUDY:

Inappropriate debt collection activity and failure to offer hardship assistance

The customer said she rang her energy retailer in August 2012 to ask about applying for a Utility Relief Grant (URG) and to say she'd be moving from the property in late October 2012. She said she lodged her URG application in early September 2012. When she recontacted the energy retailer in early October 2012, she learnt it hadn't received a response on the URG from the Department of Human Services.

The customer moved out of the property on 24 October 2012. She said she was then told she wouldn't receive the URG because she was no longer at the property. She also said a debt collection agency was chasing her, despite the retailer saying her arrears were on hold. The customer was finding this increasingly distressing. Her thinking was that if the URG had been approved and applied before she moved out, both debts (electricity and gas) may have been cleared. She was aware she'd have to pay the outstanding bills if we found she wasn't eligible for the URG. We undertook a 'fair and reasonable' assessment, including a financial assessment of the customer's budget and advice from our in-house financial assessor.

Responding to our investigation, the energy retailer acknowledged the customer had previously paid her bills in full and was working with a financial counsellor on her current issues. It apologised for not offering her hardship assistance when she identified herself in need of it. It waived the outstanding balances on her electricity and gas accounts (totalling \$1,027.82) leaving zero balances. It also confirmed there would be no further debt collection activity on either account. **2012/54379**

Yes, we have more case studies!

Each week case studies are added to our [website](#) to highlight current issues and outcomes achieved through EWOV investigations.

Check our ['Case studies home page'](#).



A positive ‘fair and reasonable’ review for two EWOV processes

We’ve recently undertaken a ‘fair and reasonable’ review of two key EWOV processes.

This independent review found that these processes—Assisted Referral and Real Time Resolution—are working well.

In 2011-12, rising case volumes challenged EWOV’s capacity to deliver high quality external dispute resolution services. After a comprehensive operational review (EWOV 2.0) in early 2012, we made significant changes to our processes, procedures and work practices. Fine-tuning of the changes continues, especially to make sure we’re supporting vulnerable customers appropriately. One of our priorities is to ensure that efficiency gains from the changes aren’t at the expense of fair, reasonable and independent dispute resolution. To assess how well this important balance is being maintained, we commissioned an independent review of the Assisted Referral and Real Time Resolution processes by consultants experienced in Ombudsman operations. Undertaken in January 2013, the review found that these processes are working well. Some suggested minor adjustments are being implemented as part of our continuous improvement process.



Assisted Referral process

We register an Assisted Referral where the customer has already spoken with someone at their company’s call centre about their complaint, but it remains unresolved. We record the details of the complaint, provide independent advice on the customer’s rights and responsibilities and arrange for a higher level complaint resolution officer at their energy or water company to contact them.



Real Time Resolution process

Not all Assisted Referrals result in resolution. Some customers return to us still dissatisfied with the solution their company has proposed. Our Real Time Resolution Team receives customer calls about failed Assisted Referrals and works to resolve each complaint through customer education and direct negotiation with the customer and their company. The aim is to reach a fair and reasonable outcome, typically within 24 hours.



CASE STUDY

Real Time Resolution resolves high bills issue

The customer was worried about receiving three high electricity bills in a row. Despite her own efforts and an Assisted Referral from us back to the retailer, an explanation for the high bills wasn’t provided.

Dissatisfied, the customer came back to us and one of our Real Time Resolution Conciliators rang the retailer. We found that (because of an error made by the retailer) she hadn’t been billed for off-peak usage for three years from October 2009 to October 2012. Discovering its error, the retailer had reissued her July 2012 bill to include off-peak usage for the April to June 2012 quarter. Her next two quarterly bills correctly included both peak and off-peak usage. This explained the three high bills the customer was concerned about.

However, in investigating the complaint, the retailer found that the final bill for the old meter at the customer’s property had been estimated. When it was recalculated based on actual data, it came down from \$1,058.89 to \$380.38. Prompt payment discounts of \$211.48 were also applied, leaving the customer owing only \$176.50.

She was satisfied with this outcome and the complaint was quickly resolved. Aware the customer’s property had slab-heating, we informed her of its potential for high electricity consumption. She appreciated this advice, saying she’d have it checked and watch her use of it.
2013/3177

Yes, we have more case studies!

Each week case studies are added to our website to highlight current issues and outcomes achieved through EWOV investigations. Check our [‘Case studies home page’](#).

Issues watch – energy marketing and transfer, solar, Smart Meters



Marketing and Transfer Report

This report highlights trends in the energy retail competition cases EWOV received from 1 April to 30 June 2013. The main findings were:

- A 9% increase in marketing cases
- A 25% decrease in door-to-door marketing cases
- A move away from door-to-door marketing towards other sales methods, such as telephone sales and shopping centre approaches
- A 12% increase in transfer cases
- A significant increase in transfer without consent cases.



CASE STUDY

Non-English speaking customer has his electricity account transferred after telephone marketing

The customer's father-in-law contacted EWOV unhappy that his non-English speaking son-in-law had been sold an electricity contract over the phone. The customer later received a bill for \$682.64 and asked his father-in-law for help. The father-in-law said the customer didn't understand he was entering into a contract.

When the father-in-law contacted the retailer that signed the customer up he was simply told to contact the customer's original retailer and arrange a transfer back. Unhappy with this response, the father-in-law sought our help. An Assisted Referral was raised, but the retailer didn't contact the customer within the required timeframe.

The complaint was resolved through our Real Time Resolution process. The retailer arranged for the customer's electricity account to be transferred back to his original retailer, credited the billed charges and closed the account. **2013/31121**



Solar and Smart Meter Update

This report highlights trends in the solar and Smart Meter cases EWOV received from 1 April to 30 June 2013. The main findings were:

- A 9% decrease in Smart Meter cases
- 60% of all Smart Meter cases involved a billing issue
- A 10% increase in the solar cases
- 26% of all solar cases involved issues with Feed-in Tariffs.



CASE STUDY

Customer loses off-peak tariff after the installation of a Smart Meter

After a Smart Meter was installed at her property in mid-June 2013, the customer received two electricity bills based on a peak-only tariff. Before the Smart Meter was installed, her billing was peak and off-peak, as set out in her contract. Despite the retailer saying it would investigate and fix the loss of the off-peak tariff, she continued to receive bills based on a peak-only tariff.

Contacted by the customer in late November 2012, we raised an Assisted Referral. Once again, the retailer said it would investigate and resolve the issue. When, in February 2013, she received another bill based on a peak-only tariff, she came back to EWOV. The complaint was handled through our Real Time Resolution process. We rang the retailer. We were told a request would be lodged with the local distributor to replace the meter with metering that could support both peak and off-peak. When this hadn't happened by early March 2013, we opened an investigation. We found that the Smart Meter installed at the customer's property was incorrect, as it didn't support a dedicated off-peak load for a hot water service.

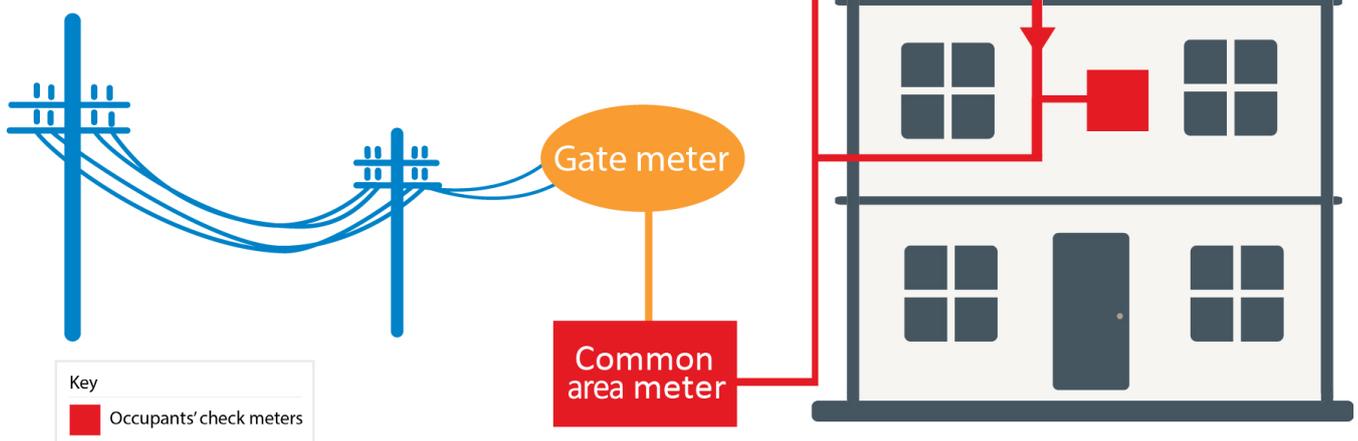
The retailer arranged for the correct meter type to be installed by the distributor in late March 2013. It waived nine months' of charges for usage on the off-peak dedicated load, between 11pm and 7am. This reduced the customer's bills by nearly \$735. The account was re-billed on this basis. The customer was satisfied that the meter would be replaced and the complaint was closed on this basis. **2012/56606**

What's an embedded network? Why is it important to me?

An embedded network is electrical infrastructure that's privately owned and managed. Examples you may see in your work with clients are unit complexes, retirement villages, caravan parks and rooming houses.

In this situation, the customer can't choose their electricity retailer and may or may not have an individual meter (depending on the metering set-up at the property). This meter may also be known as the 'check meter' as shown in the diagram. The check meter records the usage consumed at the individual occupant's property. All of the usage consumed at the property will also be recorded at the gate meter and this will include additional consumption from common areas in the property (recorded by the common area meter) i.e. public lighting.

The embedded network provider sets up its own connection to the local electricity distribution network, buys electricity, sells it to its customers and bills those customers directly.



WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOU?

EWOV can't deal with complaints about embedded networks.

If a client has a complaint about this type of electricity service (for example, about the billing, customer service or an electrical fault with the check meter), they need to call Consumer Affairs Victoria on 1300 55 81 81 or (for energy distribution issues) the Australian Energy Regulator on 1300 585 165.



EWOV on the road

NAIDOC Week

NAIDOC Week is held across Australia each July. It celebrates the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

On July 2013, we set up an EWOV information booth at the NAIDOC Week event at the Fitzroy Town Hall. It was a great opportunity to engage with some 500 people from the community and spread the word about EWOV's services and resources.

Other participants included local, state and Commonwealth Government representatives, City West Water, Yarra Valley Water and the Consumer Utilities Advocacy Centre (CUAC).



Spreading the word about EWOV at the NAIDOC Week event.



Bring Your Bills Days

We've also recently taken part in Bring Your Bills Days in Bairnsdale and Dandenong.



Meeting with community representatives at a Bring Your Bills Day in Bairnsdale.



Meeting with community representatives at a Bring Your Bills Day in Dandenong.