



# Our *hardship* policy

We understand that circumstances can make it difficult for you to pay for the everyday essentials, such as electricity, even though you are making every effort to do so.

Our goal is to support you by providing advice and tools to help you to take control of your energy use and pay for your electricity bills on a long term basis.

As part of this, we've set up a program called Customer Assist with a specially trained team who can guide you to better manage your electricity bills and usage.



RETAIL

## Defining hardship.

In our hardship policy, we define *financial hardship* as a situation where you have the willingness to pay your electricity bill but do not have the financial capacity to do so on the set due dates.

## What is Customer Assist?

It's a specialised program designed to help you get back on track with affording your energy bills by the offering of long term payment plans as well as energy usage and financial management education. It outlines how we can work together if you are experiencing hardship in paying your electricity bills due to fluctuating or reduced income caused by unexpected life events that will impact you for a lengthy time. The program protects you from normal credit collection demands and prevents you from being de-energised. We also ensure that all government rebates and concessions are made available to you.

## Who can become part of the Customer Assist program?

Ergon Energy Retail Residential customers who are experiencing financial hardship in paying their electricity bills on their primary residence and who are willing to commit to the program guidelines may participate in the Customer Assist Program.

## What we will do to assist you on the program.

- Work with you to find out what you can afford to pay, taking into account your current financial situation and future energy usage
- Develop and agree on a personalised payment plan that outlines a regular schedule of payments and guidelines for participating in the program
- Provide advice and monitor your usage to help you reduce your electricity usage
- Advise you on eligibility for government rebates, concessions, grants and services
- Provide advice on where you can seek financial counselling and assistance.

## What you need to do to stay on the program.

- To work with the Customer Assist team members to determine your capacity to pay and to develop an agreed payment plan
- To pay the amounts set out in the agreed payment schedule on the due dates
- To advise us of any change in circumstance that may impact your ability to make payments
- To keep us updated with latest phone and email contact details
- To contact us when required to review the Customer Assist package.

We want to assist you but we need you to keep in contact with us.

## How long you can participate on the program.

We are focused on supporting you to understand the high priority of your electricity bill and to make sure you understand how you can manage your affordable choices. When you have been paying the recommended amounts over a period of at least 6 months or your account balance is in credit, you will be graduated from the program. If you have not been able to keep to our program guidelines as agreed, you will be withdrawn from the program.

## We respect your privacy.

Ergon Energy Retail will use your personal information in the correct way in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) and the Australian Privacy Principles.

## Contact us.

Customer Assist

**1800 670 352**

8am – 5pm, Mon to Fri

To read the full Ergon Energy Retail Hardship Policy visit [ergon.com.au/supportprograms](https://www.ergon.com.au/supportprograms)

