



Media Statement

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Energy retailers and distributors 2024 – Annual data report

The Economic Regulation Authority publishes an annual report using data from energy retailers and distributors supplying small use customers in Western Australia.

[The 2023/24 report released today](#) includes information on the size of the network, customer complaints, call centre performance, reliability and streetlight repairs, as well as indicators of financial hardship like payment difficulties, access to hardship programs, and disconnections.

At the end of 2023/24, there were approximately 1.2 million small use customer accounts for electricity and 800,000 for gas.

While 98.5 per cent of electricity and 97.7 per cent of gas customers did not have a bill debt, some customers are clearly experiencing cost of living pressures and seeking support to pay their electricity and gas bills. For these customers, support programs and government payments are helping, according to the data.

“Over the past two years, we made changes to the customer protection codes to require electricity and gas retailers to provide all customers with access to support measures previously only available to those enrolled in a financial hardship program. That includes accessing a payment plan, or being given more time to pay a bill,” ERA Chair Steve Edwell said.

In the first full year of data since payment options in the Electricity Code were expanded, 98,186 residential customers used a bill extension and 62,426 used a payment plan, either for overdue bills or to smooth bill cycles into easier monthly payments.

“We hope that providing customers with easier access to these support measures will lead to fewer customers accruing large amounts of debt and risking disconnection,” he said.

Across both electricity and gas, there were 33,915 residential and 1,712 business customers with bill debts, excluding customers in hardship programs.

“The average household electricity bill debt fell for the first time in many years, from \$773 in 2022/23 to \$652 in 2023/24, which we attribute to electricity assistance payments from both the state and federal governments,” Mr Edwell said.

“But the number of customers starting a financial hardship program with more than \$500 in bill debt has increased for the last three years.”

The ERA has also introduced new protections into the customer protection codes for those experiencing family and domestic violence, including a nine-month ban on disconnecting a customer who has identified as being affected.

“All energy retailers supplying households are also required to train their staff in how to assist customers experiencing family violence, to protect the privacy of those affected, and to have measures in place so that customers are not forced to repeat distressing information each time they call their retailer,” Mr Edwell said.

“In 2023/24, 3,229 electricity customers were identified as being affected by family violence, and retailers reported that the new protections were helping them to provide more integrated assistance to these customers, many of whom were also experiencing financial hardship.”

“The data reflects that energy retailers appeared to be doing a good job in implementing customer support mechanisms.”

Read the full report: www.erawa.com.au/energyreports

About the ERA

The ERA is Western Australia’s independent economic regulator. We aim to benefit all Western Australians by promoting strong economic outcomes through effective regulation and decision making. We strive to make sure current and future consumers pay no more than necessary for safe and reliable utilities.

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