

## Media Release: Simplified Power Bills

Published: Tuesday, 26 Sept 2023

**Consumers could save millions of dollars if electricity retailers told customers how to save money on a better plan**

- **Simplified power bills with a Best Plan Notice urgently needed.**
- **Retailers are failing to deliver clear, consistent information to consumers.**

Electricity retailers should be required to tell customers if they can save money on their power bills by switching to a better plan, says the Consumer Advocacy Council.

The Council is calling for power bills to show a prominent Best Plan Notice, letting customers know if there's a cheaper plan available and how much they could save by switching.

It's a key recommendation from research undertaken by the Council on how power bills should be working better for consumers.

"Electricity retailers and your power bill should help you make decisions to save, not spend," said Council Chair Deborah Hart.

"Power bills shouldn't be a riddle. Retailers should all be helping consumers make better decisions about how they manage their electricity use. There needs to be simple and consistent information displayed on all bills.

"There's a confusing array of plans on offer. To make it simpler, power bills should feature a prominent notice letting consumers know if there's a better plan for them, based on their annual electricity use, and how much they could then save. Our research found 87% of consumers wanted this information on their bills.

"The Electricity Price Review findings showed retailers could be earning millions of dollars extra every year because customers weren't on the cheapest plan for their power use. That's money that should be in consumers' wallets, not fattening the profits of retailers.

"If, for example, 10% of households could save \$100 a year by switching to a better plan, that would amount to \$20 million transferring from the profits of electricity retailers to the pockets of consumers.

"In a cost of living crisis, it's even more important this happens as we know 65% of consumers are worried about the impact of power bills on their household budget.

“Australian electricity retailers must display a Best Plan Notice and it should happen here too.

“Right now, retailers are only encouraged to provide this information under the voluntary Consumer Care Guidelines, but they are not required to. There needs to be an explicit rule that forces all companies to provide a Best Plan Notice every 3 months - and penalties if they don't.”

The Council's model power bill sets out key features that should be prominently displayed, including:

- Best Plan Notice - bills should include a prominent notice letting customers know if they could reduce their bill by switching to another plan
- the customer's name and the address of the premises where electricity is supplied
- the name of the customer's electricity plan
- the customer's account number
- the property's installation control point (ICP) number. Every residence has a unique ICP number. This number is useful when consumers want to switch power company, so their property isn't confused with another
- the amount due and when it's due
- the date the bill was issued
- information about ways to pay the bill
- contact information for the retailer
- a phone number to report faults and emergencies
- contact information for Utilities Disputes, the free dispute resolution scheme for consumers
- a link to the Powerswitch price comparison website.

[Utilities Disputes\(external link\)](#)

[Powerswitch\(external link\)](#)

“All this information helps consumers better understand their bill and so makes it easier for them to make decisions about switching plans or choosing another retailer. It shouldn't be confused with other less important information.

“Some retailers are doing a better job than others in presenting the right information to their customers. But there needs to be consistency as to what a basic bill should display. The Electricity Authority should require this.

“This will help consumers make better decisions, save them money and help competition work better for consumers and retailers.” said Hart.