

Reduce energy costs in 4 easy steps



Step 1. Make sure your concessions are applied

If you have a Pensioner Concession Card, Health Care Card or Veteran Affairs Gold Card, you can claim a concession on your energy bills and save money today.

Check your bill to see if your concession/s are applied, or call your energy provider and ask. Because some concession cards expire, it is important to check that they are still listed. If you've missed out on claiming any concessions, your energy company can back-date them for the last 12 months.

Look over the page for the different types of concessions you may be eligible for.



Step 2. If you're struggling to pay your bill, there are supports that can help

There are different ways that energy providers can help you with your energy costs. The best thing to do is call your provider to explain your situation and request help.

By law, electricity providers have to offer you help, like:

- a payment extension or a 6-month freeze on your account
- an affordable payment plan,
- use of Centrepay,
- access to a Utility Relief Grant,
- a review of your energy costs (like accessing your Best Offer), and
- information on how to reduce your energy usage

Ask to speak with their financial hardship team, as they often know more about these supports and can help you.

Utility Relief Grants

The Grants give you up to \$650 for electricity and \$650 for gas every two years (or \$1,300 if you only have electricity).

To apply for the grant, you must have:

- your name on the energy bill, and
- a concession card (or a low-income), and
- unexpected increases in costs or decreases in income, see over for more on the eligibility criteria.

Call your energy provider and tell them you want to apply for the Utility Relief Grant Scheme. They can help you complete the application over the phone.



Step 3. Know your rights

Not being able to pay a bill is challenging. But your energy provider must help you find a solution. So, the best thing to do is contact your energy provider and explain your situation.

If you have an energy debt and stay in contact with your provider, they can't disconnect you. However, you must genuinely attempt to stay in contact and reduce the debt.

You have a right to support. If you do not get the help you need, contact the Energy Ombudsman for advice and assistance. Free call 1800 500 509 on weekdays from 8.30 am - 5 pm.



Step 4. Consider changes you can make

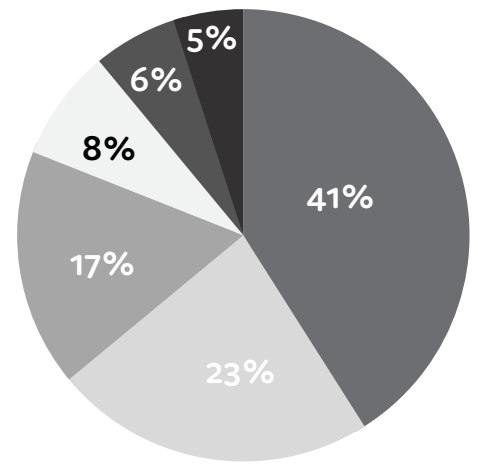
Consider where you are spending your energy dollars and make small changes that can make a big change to your bills.

Focusing on the areas that are the biggest energy users in your home can give you the biggest impact. Heating and cooling are a big part of your overall bill. The good news is that you can save without compromising on comfort.

It's more cost-effective to maintain a comfortable temperature, like 20°C and go and put a jumper on. Or, setting your aircon to 26°C.

Other things that can help include reducing drafts, shrinking the area you are heating or cooling, using electric blankets and fans in summer.

For more tips on how and where to save on your energy usage, speak with your energy provider. Or visit <https://www.energy.vic.gov.au/for-households/save-energy-and-money/top-10-energy-saving-tips>



Where energy is used in the home

*41% Heating & Cooling 8% Refrigeration
 23% Hot Water 6% Cooking
 17% Appliances 5% Lighting

Concessions Types

With a Health Care Card, Pensioners Concessions Card or Veteran Affairs Gold Card.

Annual Electricity - 17.5% off every electricity bill

Winter Gas - 17.5% off gas bills over winter May-Oct

Medical Cooling - An additional 17.5% off summer electricity bills for medical condition that affects the body's ability to self-regulate temperature

Life Support - Electricity & water concession for concession holders using approved life support machine.

Non-mains Energy - A concession to help cover yearly energy costs for those who use non-mains energy for their heating, cooking and hot water (e.g., embedded network).

Visit <https://services.dffh.vic.gov.au/energy> for more information or other concessions.

Utility Relief Grants (URG) Criteria

You must show that you have no way of paying the account without assistance and are at risk of disconnection, and you must meet one of the following criteria:

- You or someone in your house has experienced family violence.
- You have had a recent decrease in income, for example, lost your job.
- You have had high unexpected costs for essential items.
- Your cost of shelter is more than 30% of your household income.

To qualify for a low-income household, your income should be:

- \$52,000 for single-income households
- \$78,988 for dual income households

You cannot be disconnected while a URG application is being processed. They are also available for non-mains energy.

*Percentages according to Origin Energy. Retrieved 26/10/2023 from <https://www.originenergy.com.au/blog/how-do-you-do-a-home-energy-audit/>