

# Energy Advice Pack

## Support and information about your energy use<sup>1</sup>

### Seek assistance from your energy provider

If you are having trouble paying the bill, don't be afraid to call your energy company.

Energy companies must provide assistance programs for households, this includes delivering concessions and assistance for those experiencing payment difficulties – if households are really struggling they also have to provide individually tailored programs.

All companies must provide basic protection for their energy customers. This applies to electricity and gas. Protections include:

- How frequently households can receive a bill;
- Reminder and other notices;
- Minimum disconnection amounts;
- Minimum payment time prior to disconnection;
- The provision of flexible payment arrangements;
- Information on concessions on bills.

If you are assisting somebody having troubles paying their energy bill, remember you can only call on behalf of another person if you have that person with you at the time of the call. The only other alternative is if that person has given you prior authorisation for you to speak to the company on their behalf.

### Standard Contact Details

AGL 131 245	Australian Power & Gas 133 298
Click Energy 1800 775 929	Country Energy 132 356
Dodo Power & Gas 133 636	Momentum Energy 1300 662 778
Lumo Energy 1300 115 866	Powerdirect 1300 307 966
Neighbourhood Energy 1300 764 860	Simply Energy 138 808
Origin Energy 132 461	
Red Energy 131 806	
TRU / Energy Australia 133 466	

<sup>1</sup> This information has been developed jointly between St Vincent de Paul and AGL Energy for all energy users (not just AGL customers) in South Australia to support households struggling to meet their ongoing energy needs.

Note this information is updated 6 monthly and may not be the most up to date at the time of reading.

## State Government support programs

The South Australian energy concession is funded by the South Australian Government to reduce the cost of energy to eligible customers.

A customer may be eligible to receive a concession on their household energy bills, which covers both electricity and gas usage.

However, the concession amount will only be applied to the electricity bill.

The South Australian concessions scheme is administered by the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion (DCSI).

### *Eligibility required:*

Customers should contact the DCSI for information on eligibility and to apply.

- Website: <http://www.sa.gov.au/topics/employment-and-finance/financial-support/concessions-and-benefits/concessions/energy-bill-concessions>  
Phone: 1800 307 758  
Email: [concessions@dfc.sa.gov.au](mailto:concessions@dfc.sa.gov.au)

Once a customer is deemed eligible for an energy concession the DCSI will inform the retailer identified in the customers application and concessions will apply from the customer's next bill.

### *Main types of support available:*

## Cost of living concession

To help with the general cost of living a new state government concession is available to eligible South Australians on low or fixed incomes.

The Cost of Living Concession enables you to put the benefit towards your greatest needs, whether that is electricity, gas and water bills or council rates.

### *Eligibility*

The Cost of Living Concession is payable as a maximum amount per household. You may be eligible for the Cost of Living Concession, for your principal place of residence, if this was your principal place of residence on 1 July of the relevant financial year

### *AND*

On 1 July of the relevant financial year you held one of the following cards:

- a Pensioner Concession Card
- Gold Card from the Department of Veterans' Affairs
  - Totally and Permanently Incapacitated (TPI)
  - Extreme Disablement Adjustment (EDA)
  - War Widow
- Gold Card from the Department of Veterans' Affairs issued to a person with 80 or more overall impairment points under the *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004*
- Low Income Health Care Card
- Commonwealth Seniors Health Card
- State Concession Card

### *OR*

On 1 July of the relevant financial year you received one of the following eligible Centrelink payments:

- Newstart allowance
- Sickness allowance
- Widow allowance
- Youth allowance
- Partner allowance

- Parenting Payment Partnered
- Bereavement allowance
- Special benefit
- Community Development Employment Project (CDEP)
- New Enterprise Incentive Scheme
- ABSTUDY
- Austudy

OR

- You can demonstrate that on 1 July of the relevant financial year you meet **low income provisions** in the low income earners category. These limits can be found here: <http://www.sa.gov.au/topics/employment-and-finance/financial-support/concessions-and-benefits/concessions/low-income-earners-income-limits>

## Energy Concession

If you hold an eligible concession card you may be able to receive a concession of up to \$215 per year on your energy bills for your electricity or gas use (including bottled LPG gas). The concession is applied to your electricity bill.

### Electricity – Medical Heating and Cooling Concession

*Eligibility required:*

- have (or be a parent/guardian of a child with) a qualifying medical condition requiring cooling or heating to prevent a severe exacerbation of their condition;
- provide certification from their medical specialist or General Practitioner that the medical condition is severely exacerbated by hot or cold weather;
- reside at the address on the application form and use an air conditioning unit at that address to meet their medical heating and cooling requirements;
- hold a current eligible concession card
- be financially responsible for the full or part payment of the energy bill.

*Support available:*

This energy concession assists South Australians on a fixed or low income that have a clinically verified medical condition which requires the frequent use of heating or cooling in the home to prevent the severe exacerbation of their condition.

The Medical Heating and Cooling Concession is \$215 a year and is available to eligible applicants in addition to the current energy concession.

### Essential Medical Equipment Payment

*Eligibility required:*

Customers may be eligible for this payment if they or a person in their regular care at home: are covered by a Commonwealth concession card issued by Dept of Human Services or the Department of Veterans' Affairs; or provides proof that the specified equipment, or heating or cooling is medically required, provided as: a certification from a Medical Practitioner, or evidence that the essential medical equipment currently qualifies for assistance under one of the state or territory government schemes, or the Department of Veterans' Rehabilitation Appliance Program.

This option does not apply to medically required heating and cooling. The customer may also need to prove that they, or the person they care for, contributes to the payment of the home energy account.

*Support available:*

The Essential Medical Equipment Payment is an annual \$149 payment to people who experience additional increases in home energy costs from the use of essential medical equipment to manage their disability or medical condition. This payment must be claimed.

Customers can apply for the Essential Medical Equipment Payment online at [my.gov.au](http://my.gov.au).

## Energy Saving Tips

**There are also some really simple things you can do around the home to help save energy and money, these are only suggestions and need to be considered if appropriate to the situation.**



1. Cold wash and natural dry and reduce your energy usage charges by up to \$195 per year.

The easiest way to save is to wash your clothes in cold water and dry them using the sun or natural air.

Use the right water level for the right amount of washing.

Do all your ironing at the same time, not only when items are needed.

Household saving: Up to 9% of annual energy usage bill.

2. Watch how long you have your heating and cooling appliances going and how hot or cold the house is, being mindful of this can reduce your energy costs by up to \$357 per year.

For example in summer, set the thermostat on your cooler to 20°C. Every degree below this could add 10% to home cooling costs and a saving of up to 7% of annual energy usage bill.

Switch the heating or cooling off in rooms you're not using.

Seal gaps around windows and doors and use 'door snakes' to stop cold air flow.

Use extra blankets or jumpers instead of electric blankets or heating.

3. Switch off the TV when not watching it as this adds up if you have a few TVs in your home.

TIP - Did you know in one day, a widescreen TV can use more energy than a dishwasher, washing machine and clothes dryer combined? When you leave the room, it's a good idea to switch off the screen, and then turn off at the power point.

4. If you have a set top box, switch it off when not in use. This applies to other appliances, they cost you money when you are not using them.

TIP - Some simple add on devices add more to your bill. For example a set-top box is usually on stand-by for 40% of the time. If it's not in use, switch it off at the power point and save.

5. Take shorter showers.

Check to see if taps are turned off completely to stop drips.

6. Use a microwave or electric frypan instead of an oven.

Run the dishwasher only when it's full.

Put lids on saucepans for faster cooking.

Using the right-sized saucepan on the right-sized element or burner.

Check your fridge seals and temperature regularly.

7. Replaced incandescent globes with compact fluorescent lights.

Turn off lights when you leave the room.

## Other available support

Sometimes financial hardship can also be related to other challenges faced by your household. Complementary support measures may be of some assistance.

Specific support is available for eligible households and individuals. Below is a list of services provided and where to go for help or more information.



information is available.

One of the key roles of **beyondblue** is to produce and refer people to accurate, up to date, easy to read information on depression, anxiety and related disorders. This includes information relating to: Depression, anxiety disorders, postnatal depression, bipolar disorder, diagnosis, treatment, recovery, young people, men, family and friends, chronic illness. A range of

Call the info line 1300 22 4636 or go to [www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au)



stage of cancer. They can also link you with a range of support services, for the cost of a local call.

**Cancer Council** is a national non-government cancer control organisation with the aim of facilitating prevention, research, support and care. Cancer Council South Australia provide support services to provide you with reliable info and practical advice on any type or

Call the Helpline on 13 11 20 or go to [www.cancersa.org.au](http://www.cancersa.org.au)



Offspring - young people who have an immediate family member (brother, sister, parent or primary carer) who has been diagnosed with cancer; and Bereaved Siblings & Offspring - young people who have had an immediate family member die from cancer.

**CanTeen's** mission is to support, develop and empower young people living with cancer. We do this by providing an Australia-wide peer support network for 12 to 24 year-olds, including: Patients - young people who have been diagnosed with cancer; Siblings &

Contact CanTeen for information - free call 1800 226 883 or go to [www.canteen.org.au](http://www.canteen.org.au)



**Kids Helpline** is Australia's only free, private and confidential telephone and online counselling service specifically for young people aged between 5 and 25. The service aims to empower young people by assisting them to: Develop options; Identify and understand the consequences of a particular course of action; Facilitate more productive relationships with family and friends, and provide information on local support services.

Kids can call the helpline on free call 1800 55 1800 or go to [www.kidshelp.com.au](http://www.kidshelp.com.au)



prison services.

**The Salvation Army** has provided support to those in need in Australia for over 130 years. They provide emergency relief support, family support, homeless and accommodation services, drug and alcohol addiction support programs, problem gambling support, counselling and accommodation for victims of domestic violence and counselling and support through court and

For more information contact 13 72 58 or go to [www.salvationarmy.org.au](http://www.salvationarmy.org.au)



**The Smith Family** is a national, independent children's charity helping disadvantaged Australians to get the most out of their education, so they can create better futures for themselves. The Smith Family works with communities across the country to assist Australians living in hardship. Some of their staff and volunteers are based in schools, others work through community organisations and some have their own Smith Family offices.

For more information go to [www.thesmithfamily.com.au](http://www.thesmithfamily.com.au)