



Energy & Water
Ombudsman
Queensland

ESSENTIALS FOR
COMMUNITY WORKERS

**Helping someone
with their energy
or water problems?**

LET'S TALK.



Our service is free, fair and independent.

EWOQ is a free, fair and independent dispute resolution service for Queenslanders who have a problem with their energy or water provider.

ombudsman

n. an independent official who helps consumers resolve problems.

WE CAN:

- **Arrange a hold on a disconnection or renegotiate reconnection**
- **Check a retailer has followed the disconnection rules**
- **Investigate high bills**
- **Help negotiate payment plans**
- **Investigate default listings**
- **Provide information on rebates, concessions and hardship assistance**



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Respect

Excellence



Top Tips

1 You are welcome to contact us on your client's behalf – you just need their verbal or written permission first.

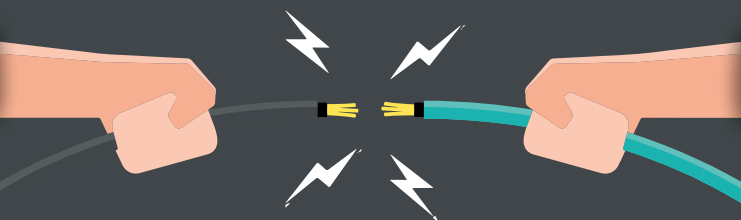
We have an Authority to Act form on our website.

2 Before contacting us, you or your client need to contact the energy or water provider first to let them know about the problem and give them an opportunity to fix it.

3 If your client can't pay a bill, or is facing disconnection, the sooner they contact their provider the better. This will stop their debt getting bigger and ensure they stay connected.

4 It's not essential to reveal the reasons for financial hardship but it may help when negotiating a payment plan.

5 Ask your client to keep copies of any letters, emails and bills and make notes each time you contact the supplier.



Disconnection

Electricity and gas can't be disconnected if:

- someone at the residence is registered for life support equipment
- a customer is adhering to a payment plan established under the National Energy Retail Rules
- the customer has advised their retailer they have formally applied for a rebate, concession, or relief assistance and a decision has not yet been made
- it is Friday, the weekend, a public holiday, the day before a public holiday, between 20–31 December, or before 8am or after 3pm any other day
- the debt is for less than the minimum disconnection amount.

Water can't be disconnected but the flow can be restricted.

DID YOU KNOW?

A customer cannot be disconnected or restricted if they have lodged a complaint with us that is directly related to the reason for the proposed disconnection.



Hardship

Energy and water retailers all have hardship policies and must provide a copy on request. Most hardship programs offer access to:

- Tailored payment plans based on a customer's ability to pay
- Energy saving information and audits
- Information about financial assistance, including the Home Energy Emergency Assistance Scheme (HEEAS).



Default Listings

Under the *Privacy Act 1988*, a payment default may be recorded on a credit report if a customer doesn't pay their utility bill of \$150 or more for at least 60 days after it is due.

Contact us to find out more about when defaults can and can't be listed with the credit reporting body.

Proud supporter of the FCAQ Conference



Contact us



1800 662 837

Calling from a mobile? We can call you back.

WRITE TO US:

PO Box 3640
South Brisbane BC Qld 4101

VISIT US:

Brisbane Level 16,
53 Albert Street

Rockhampton Level 2,
209 Bolsover Street

Cairns Level 1, 15 Lake Street



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