



Buying energy from an exempt seller – your rights and protections as a residential customer

- In some sites (typically caravan parks, retirement villages or apartment blocks) the electrical wiring is designed to enable the owner of the site (for example, the landlord, body corporate or caravan park owner) to sell energy to their residents based there. This is known as an embedded network.
- The owner of a site with an embedded network usually buys energy from an authorised energy retailer and then ‘onsells’ the energy to the different customers at the site.
- In these circumstances the owner is an exempt seller because they are exempt from the requirement to be authorised by the AER as an energy retailer. Exempt sellers need to hold a valid exemption from the AER and must meet the conditions of their exemption(s) designed to protect their customers.
- If you buy energy from an exempt seller, you are an exempt customer and you have protections under the law.

How should I be billed?

You should expect clear and transparent bills, which include:

- details of all tariffs, fees and charges that will apply
- a regular bill at least every three months that shows the costs and how much energy you have used
- bills that clearly state when an estimated meter reading is used (when the exempt seller cannot reasonably or reliably base the bill on an actual meter reading).

How much should I be charged for my energy?

When purchasing from an exempt seller you can expect:

- no charges or fees that are more than your local area retailer would charge under their standing offer
- to be notified of any price change as soon as practicable, and not later than your next bill
- to be given at least 13 business days to pay your bill
- to be provided information at the start of your tenancy or residency on relevant government or non-government support that is available to help you, including concessions, rebates, or relief schemes.

What should I do if I am having difficulties paying my bill?

- Your exempt seller must have a hardship policy that outlines their processes when someone is having difficulty paying their bill. You should be provided with a copy of this policy at the start of your tenancy or residency and if you inform the exempt seller that you are experiencing payment difficulties. You can also request to see this policy and the exempt seller must provide you with a copy as soon as practicable
- You may be eligible to go on a payment plan. You should ask your exempt seller about your options. If you inform the exempt seller you are experiencing payment difficulties, they must offer you a payment plan and give you other information about assistance with paying your bill.

What are my rights if I am facing disconnection?

- You cannot be disconnected if you have informed the exempt seller that you are experiencing financial difficulties and have not yet agreed to a payment plan, or if you are on a payment plan and are keeping to it
- You can be disconnected for non-payment if you have not paid a bill by the pay by date or not followed the terms of a payment plan. However, before you can be disconnected the exempt seller must send you a bill reminder notice and a disconnection warning notice
- You cannot be disconnected at certain times of the day (for example, before 8.00 am or after 3.00 pm) or on certain days of the year (such as weekends and public holidays)
- You cannot be disconnected if you rely on life support equipment such as oxygen concentrators or dialysis machines. If you use life support equipment, it is important that you tell your exempt seller
- You cannot be disconnected for issues unrelated to energy, for example, not paying rent or maintenance problems (unless allowed by jurisdictional legislation).

How do I change who I buy energy from?

- If you live in an embedded network, you can buy your electricity from either an authorised energy retailer or from the exempt seller. However, you may have difficulty buying electricity from an authorised energy retailer
- This is because of the way the network wiring is usually designed which means an authorised energy retailer may not want to sell to an embedded network customer
- Authorised energy retailers are not obliged to supply you energy if you live in an embedded network
- Your exempt seller must provide you with a factsheet which provides further information on how you may be able to buy your energy directly from an authorised retailer, instead of the exempt seller. You can find this on the [AER's website](#).

What if I have a complaint about my energy service?

- You should try and resolve any issues with the exempt seller first
- In the event that a dispute can't be resolved, you can go to the energy ombudsman for help and advice
- Energy ombudsman schemes receive, investigate, and assist in the resolution of consumer complaints
- Your exempt seller must be a member of the ombudsman scheme in the state or territory in which it sells energy, which means you can access this free, independent dispute resolution service
- You can find more information about the ombudsman on our [website](#).

Please see the [Retail Exempt Selling Guideline](#) for more information.

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