

# Government assistance for energy customers

## Rebates and concessions

In addition to the regulated consumer protection measures for electricity and natural gas customers, the Queensland Government provides direct assistance to pensioners and other lower income or vulnerable energy customers in the form of rebates and concessions, as well as funding other initiatives.

### Queensland Government Electricity (Pensioner) Rebate

A Queensland Government Electricity Rebate, which increased to \$165 a year (including GST) from 1 July 2008, is available to **eligible pensioners, seniors and other concession card holders**.

Electricity retailers deliver the rebate on behalf of the State. Customers should contact their electricity retailer if they believe they are eligible for the rebate.

Further details, including the **conditions and eligibility criteria**, are available on the Department of Mines and Energy website at [www.dme.qld.gov.au/energy/electricity\\_retail\\_prices.cfm](http://www.dme.qld.gov.au/energy/electricity_retail_prices.cfm)

### Reticulated Natural Gas (Pensioner) Rebate

In October 2007, the Queensland Government announced the Reticulated Natural Gas Rebate for **eligible pensioners, seniors and other concession card holders** using reticulated natural gas.

The rebate (then \$55 per year, including GST) was backdated to 1 July 2007, to assist pensioners, seniors and other concession card holders to meet the increased supply costs of reticulated natural gas.

The rebate increased to \$57.65 a year (including GST) from 1 July 2008 in line with movements in the Consumer Price Index.

Gas retailers deliver the rebate on behalf of the State. Customers should contact their gas retailer if they believe they are eligible for the rebate.

Further details, including the **conditions and eligibility criteria**, are available on the Department of Mines and Energy website at [www.dme.qld.gov.au/energy/gas\\_pensioner\\_rebate.cfm](http://www.dme.qld.gov.au/energy/gas_pensioner_rebate.cfm)



### Electricity Life Support Concession

The Queensland Government also provides an Electricity Life Support Concession (of up to \$84 per quarter from 1 July 2008) directly to eligible persons who are seriously ill and use an electrical home-based life support machine, for example an oxygen concentrator or kidney dialysis machine, supplied by Queensland Health.

Further details of the concession, including the **conditions, eligibility criteria and application forms**, are available from the Concessions Unit of the Department of Communities on telephone 3247 5941 or visit [www.communities.qld.gov.au/community/concessions](http://www.communities.qld.gov.au/community/concessions)

## Drought relief for electricity customers

Drought relief, in the form of waiving or reimbursing fixed electricity charges such as minimum payments, service fees and annual fixed charges, is available to **farmers in drought declared areas** who have no water to pump and who are on a standard electricity contract (that is, a non-market customer).

Customers of Ergon Energy seeking drought relief from electricity charges should contact Ergon Energy on 13 10 46.

Non-market customers of retail entities other than Ergon Energy who meet the eligibility criteria, can apply directly to the Department of Mines and Energy for reimbursement of the fixed charge component of their electricity account. Further details including an **application form** are available on the Department of Mines and Energy website at [www.dme.qld.gov.au/energy/drought\\_relief.cfm](http://www.dme.qld.gov.au/energy/drought_relief.cfm)

## Home Energy Emergency Assistance Scheme

Through the Home Energy Emergency Assistance Scheme which commenced in December 2007, the Queensland Government is providing \$3 million to assist people who are experiencing difficulty paying their home energy bills as a result of an unforeseen emergency. Up to \$360 per household over two years is available. It is expected that around 15,000 Queensland households will be supported by this scheme each year.

Customers should contact their energy retailer if they believe they are eligible for assistance. For further details, including conditions and eligibility criteria, visit [www.communities.qld.gov.au/community/concessions](http://www.communities.qld.gov.au/community/concessions)

## Electricity subsidy for regional Queenslanders

The Queensland Government is making sure electricity supply remains affordable for regional customers by continuing to subsidise regional electricity prices. The subsidy, paid to Ergon Energy for regional customers, guarantees regional Queenslanders get their electricity at the regulated state-wide uniform tariff. The subsidy for 2007–08 was more than \$600 million.

## Energy consumer advocacy funding

The Queensland Government is providing \$450,000 over three years to fund a consumer advocacy service through the Queensland Council of Social Service, to conduct energy consumer research and to take the views of pensioners and people in financial hardship directly to the body that determines regulated electricity prices, the Queensland Competition Authority.

### EnergyWise kits

Home EnergyWise kits are now available to help families on fixed budgets reduce their household energy use and costs. The Department of Mines and Energy has 40,000 free kits to give away to Queensland households.

The new kit contains everything a household needs to start finding out if and where their energy is being wasted, and what steps to take to start conserving energy and saving money.

The kit includes simple, free and low-cost energy-saving tips and practical activities that help households identify which appliances are using the most energy.

This is another initiative the Queensland Government is employing to help low-income households alleviate the cost of electricity and other pressures on the family budget.

To request a free Home EnergyWise Kit, telephone the Department of Mines and Energy on 07 3224 7527 or complete the online request form at [www.energywise.qld.gov.au](http://www.energywise.qld.gov.au)

Kits will also be available from Queensland Government Agency Program offices, Department of Mines and Energy regional offices, and Brisbane City Council CitySmart vans from early August 2008.

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