



## Changing electricity plans

When did you last change your energy plan, and why? We asked these questions to our citizen scientists, in an effort to learn more about how and why Australian households search for better energy deals. In this survey snapshot, you can read about what they had to say...

### Switching energy deals

In the past decade, power prices have noticeably increased. While a range of factors can contribute to rising energy costs, the good news is that in many parts of Australia, shopping around for a better deal still has the potential to save us money on household electricity and gas bills.

But switching energy deals does take some time and effort, and not everyone has the same amount of choice and control when it comes to picking a preferred plan. Our ability and motivation to shop around for better deals can therefore vary depending on individual circumstances.

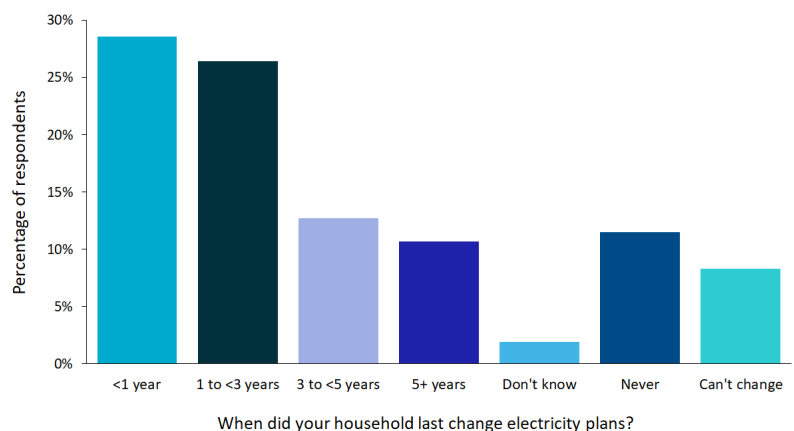
To better understand the diverse experiences of households across Australia, we asked our citizen scientists to tell us about when they last changed electricity plans, why they did so, and what impact they thought it had on their bills. Here's what they had to say...



### How often do we switch?

Of the citizen scientists who completed our survey, 29% said they had changed electricity plans in the past year, with more than half (55%) changing sometime in the past three years. Just over 11% of people reported that they had never changed electricity plans.

A small proportion of our citizen scientists (about 8%) reported they could not change plans, even if they wanted to. For example, in some parts of Australia there is only one electricity retailer available, so customers have limited choice over their provider and plan.



Along similar lines, some apartment blocks, retirement villages and caravan parks are part of 'embedded networks', where the electrical wiring is configured to allow the owner or manager of the site to buy electricity from a retailer and 'on-sell' it to the tenants or residents who live there. So the people living at such sites might have limited choice or control over what energy deal they are on.

## Why do we switch?

To understand what motivates people to change electricity plans, we asked our citizen scientists about their reasons for switching. Among those who changed plans within the past five years, it seemed that seeking a better deal (e.g. a desire to save money, get a cheaper rate etc.) was by far the most common reason, cited by about 65% of respondents. About a quarter said that moving homes was a reason for changing plans. Much smaller numbers reported that they were dissatisfied with their previous electricity plan or retailer, or had switched because of a recommendation from family, friends or colleagues.

## What do we consider when switching?

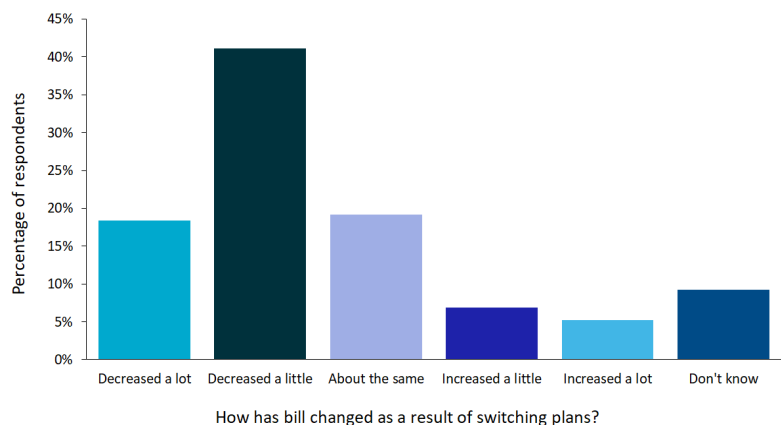
We also asked our citizen scientists what information they considered before changing electricity plans. About 45% reported using electricity retailer websites, with many also using price comparison sites. For example, 41% reported using a government comparison website like 'Energy Made Easy', while a quarter used commercial price comparison or switching sites.

Some people considered information from other sources, such as retailer advertising or advice, news articles, word of mouth, and customer reviews. However, these sources of information seemed to be far less popular than electricity retailer and price comparison websites.

## How do we think it impacts our bills?

So does changing electricity plans save us money? While our survey didn't measure actual bill savings, we did ask our citizen scientists about the perceived impact of switching on their household electricity bill.

Among those who changed plans in the past five years, the majority (around 60%) thought that their bill had decreased either a little or a lot as a result of switching plans. Just under 20% thought that their bill had remained about the same. Far fewer people felt that their bills had increased as a result of changing electricity plans.



## Looking for a better deal?

If you're shopping around for new electricity plan, the good news is that you don't have to do it alone! There are a range of price comparison websites that can help with finding an energy plan to suit your household. On some sites, you can also get help with understanding your energy bills and learning about your consumer rights. For more information, head to:

- The Australian Energy Regulator's tips for comparing offers: <https://www.aer.gov.au/consumers/switching-retailers/comparing-offers>
- The Australian Government's 'Energy Made Easy' website: <https://www.energymadeeasy.gov.au/>

Survey snapshots provide a quick look at some of the results provided so far by our citizen scientists

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