

SMALL ELECTRICITY CUSTOMER DISCONNECTION, HARDSHIP AND COMPLAINTS STATISTICS – DECEMBER QUARTER 2012 (Revised)

Introduction

Clause 8.5.1 of the Electricity Industry Code (the Code) requires that the Authority monitor and publish information on the number of small electricity customer¹ disconnections and complaints.

As at 31 December 2012, there were three licensed distributors (Energex, Ergon Energy and Essential Energy) servicing 22 licensed retailers in Queensland², one less retailer than in the previous quarter due to Flinders Operating Services surrendering its retail licence in September 2012. Of the 22 retailers, only 14 supplied electricity to small customers.

Customer disconnections

The Authority defines disconnections to include all instances where the flow of energy to a small customer's premises is terminated. This includes all disconnections initiated by the retailer through the Australian Energy Market Operator's (AEMO) Market Settlement and Transfer Solution (MSATS) system with a service order status of "completed" and "partially completed" as per AEMO's B2B Procedure: *Service Order Process* (version 1.7, section 2.6.5). This measure includes all disconnections irrespective of the method of disconnection.

Retailer initiated disconnections

Clause 8.5.3 of the Code requires that electricity retailers provide information for the previous quarter relating to:

- (a) the total number of small business and residential customers who were disconnected;
- (b) the number of small business and residential customers who were disconnected due to non-payment; and
- (c) the number of pensioners or concession card holders who were disconnected due to non-payment.

Clause 8.5.6 of the Code requires that distributors report quarterly the total number of small customer disconnections and the number of disconnections due to non-payment (separated into business and residential customers) that the distributor performed at the request of each retailer.

Retailer and distributor information on the number of small customers disconnected is provided in **Table 1**.

Overall, retailers reported more disconnections (557 or 1.8%) than did distributors. This small difference is largely due slight timing differences between when retailers and distributors become aware that service order requests for disconnections have been completed.

¹ Small customers are defined as those consuming less than 100MWh of electricity per annum and include small residential customers and small business customers.

² Some retailers hold more than one licence.

The significant variation between the retailer and distributor figures for EnergyAustralia is being investigated.

Table 1: Small customer disconnections

<i>Retail entity</i>	<i>Business customers</i>		<i>Residential customers</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>Retailer data</i>	<i>Distributor data</i>	<i>Retailer data</i>	<i>Distributor data</i>	<i>Retailer data</i>	<i>Distributor data</i>
AGL Sales	325	321	7,933	7,933	8,258	8,254
Aurora Energy	0	0	0	0	0	0
Australian Power and Gas	0	3	841	871	841	874
Click Energy	14	20	499	479	513	499
Cozero	0	0	0	0	0	0
CS Energy	0	0	0	0	0	0
Diamond Energy	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dodo Power and Gas	0	0	0	2	0	2
EnergyAustralia ^a	73	88	2,114	1,662	2,187	1,750
Ergon Energy Queensland	814	814	2,888	2,888	3,702	3,702
ERM Power Retail	0	0	0	0	0	0
Essential Energy ^b	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lumo Energy	36	45	731	781	767	826
Momentum Energy	0	1	0	1	0	2
Origin Energy ^c	799	798	13,455	13,287	14,254	14,085
OzGen Retail	0	0	0	0	0	0
Powerdirect	109	106	140	143	249	249
Qenergy	53	43	43	24	96	67
Red Energy	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sanctuary Energy	0	0	2	2	2	2
Simply Energy	0	0	0	0	0	0
Stanwell ^d	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	2,223	2,239	28,646	28,073	30,869	30,312

a. Combines TRUenergy and EnergyAustralia from 8 October 2012

b. Named Country Energy prior to 1 March 2011.

c. Includes data for Sun Retail and Integral Energy

d. Includes data for Tarong Energy.

Information from retailers and distributors related to disconnections for non-payment is presented in **Table 2**.

Table 2: Small customer disconnections due to non-payment

<i>Retail entity</i>	<i>Business customers</i>		<i>Residential customers</i>				<i>Total</i>	
	<i>Retailer data</i>	<i>Distributor data</i>	<i>Retailer data</i>			<i>Distributor data</i>	<i>Retailer data</i>	<i>Distributor data</i>
			<i>Pensioner/ concession card holders</i>	<i>Others</i>	<i>Total</i>			
AGL Sales	97	102	358	1,209	1,567	1,563	1,664	1,665
Aurora Energy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Australian Power and Gas	0	0	24	68	92	116	92	116
Click Energy	2	3	7	55	62	59	64	62
Cozero	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CS Energy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Diamond Energy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dodo Power and Gas	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
EnergyAustralia ^a	0	35	0	4	4	35	4	70
Ergon Energy Queensland	80	80	300	1,089	1,389	1,389	1,469	1,469
ERM Power Retail	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Essential Energy ^b	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lumo Energy	3	6	5	52	57	99	60	105
Momentum Energy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Origin Energy ^c	146	122	375	1,395	1,770	1,697	1,916	1,819
OzGen Retail	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Powerdirect	22	22	2	13	15	16	37	38
Qenergy	5	3	0	3	3	2	8	5
Red Energy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sanctuary Energy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Simply Energy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Stanwell ^d	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	355	373	1,071	3,888	4,959	4,976	5,314	5,349

a. Combines TRUenergy and EnergyAustralia from 8 October 2012

b. Named Country Energy prior to 1 March 2011.

c. Includes data for Sun Retail and Integral Energy

d. Includes data for Tarong Energy.

Disconnections performed at the instigation of distributors

Clause 8.5.6 of the Code requires that all distributors provide information for the previous quarter relating to:

- (a) the total number of small business and residential customers who were disconnected at the instigation of the distributor; and

- (b) the total number of small business and residential customers who were disconnected at the instigation of the distributor due to non-payment of bills, safety reasons and ‘other’ reasons.

This information is shown in **Table 3**.

Table 3: Small customer disconnections performed at the instigation of the distributor

<i>Distribution entity</i>	<i>Due to non-payment</i>		<i>Safety reasons</i>		<i>Other reasons</i>		<i>Total</i>
	<i>Business customers</i>	<i>Residential customers</i>	<i>Business customers</i>	<i>Residential customers</i>	<i>Business customers</i>	<i>Residential customers</i>	
Energex	0	0	91	614	41	154	900
Ergon Energy	0	0	9	13	0	0	22
Essential Energy ^a	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	0	0	100	627	41	154	922

a. Named Country Energy prior to 1 March 2011.

Customer reconnections

Clause 8.5.3 of the Code requires that all electricity retailers provide information for the previous quarter relating to:

- (a) the total number of small business and residential customers who were reconnected with the same name at the premises after being disconnected due to non-payment;
- (b) the total number of small business and residential customers who were reconnected within seven days with the same name at the premises after being disconnected due to non-payment; and
- (c) the number of pensioner or concession card holders who were reconnected with the same name at the premises after being disconnected due to non-payment for the previous quarter.

Reconnections occur when the flow of electricity to a small customer’s premises has been restored after a disconnection. The measure includes service orders for reconnections completed in the quarter.

This information is shown in **Table 4**.

Table 4: Small customer reconnections, after being disconnected due to non-payment

Retail entity	Reconnections within 7 days			Total reconnections			
	Business customers	Residential customers	Total	Business customers	Residential customers		Total
					Pensioner/ Concession card holders	Others	
AGL Sales	24	705	729	31	155	957	1,143
Aurora Energy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Australian Power and Gas	0	37	37	0	16	23	39
Click Energy	0	28	28	0	2	26	28
Cozero	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CS Energy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Diamond Energy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dodo Power and Gas	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
EnergyAustralia ^a	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ergon Energy Queensland	37	736	773	37	204	593	834
ERM Power Retail	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Essential Energy ^b	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lumo Energy	1	26	27	1	3	23	27
Momentum Energy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Origin Energy ^c	48	519	567	69	54	612	735
OzGen Retail	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Powerdirect	7	9	16	7	1	8	16
Qenergy	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
Red Energy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sanctuary Energy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Simply Energy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Stanwell ^d	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	117	2,060	2,177	145	435	2,244	2,824

a. Combines TRUenergy and EnergyAustralia from 8 October 2012

b. Named Country Energy prior to 1 March 2011.

c. Includes data for Sun Retail and Integral Energy

d. Includes data for Tarong Energy.

Hardship program participation by small residential customers

Clause 8.5.3 of the Code requires that retailers provide information on the level of hardship program participation by small residential customers for the previous quarter. A hardship program allows for a customer with payment difficulties to be removed from a retailer's normal debt collection activity, and allowed extended payment arrangements.

The number of customers participating in a hardship program provides an indication of the level of energy affordability in the electricity market. This measure also reflects the effectiveness of retailers' programs to identify customers experiencing payment difficulties and retailers' general debt collection practices. In this case, "debt" is defined as the dollar amount which has

been outstanding to the retailer for the sale or supply of electricity for a period of 90 days or more.

This information is shown in **Table 5**.

Table 5: Hardship program uptake by small residential customers

<i>Retail entities</i>	<i>Participating in a hardship program (#)</i>	<i>Denied access to a hardship program (#)</i>	<i>Exited a hardship program (#)</i>	<i>Average debt on entry into a hardship program (\$)</i>	<i>Average length of time a customer remained in a hardship program (days)</i>
AGL Sales	789	10	202	479	290
Aurora Energy	0	0	0	0	0
Australian Power and Gas	137	0	46	1,442	249
Click Energy	121	0	18	181	16
Cozero	0	0	0	0	0
CS Energy	0	0	0	0	0
Diamond Energy	0	0	0	0	0
Dodo Power and Gas	12	0	3	755	87
EnergyAustralia ^a	134	0	53	566	201
Ergon Energy Queensland	5,184	0	1,547	768	292
ERM Power Retail	0	0	0	0	0
Essential Energy ^b	0	0	0	0	0
Lumo Energy	56	0	2	1,408	46
Momentum Energy	0	0	0	0	0
Origin Energy ^c	2,498	0	304	378	481
OzGen Retail	0	0	0	0	0
Powerdirect	10	0	2	1,960	145
Qenergy	9	0	0	500	450
Red Energy	0	0	0	0	0
Sanctuary Energy	0	0	0	0	0
Simply Energy	0	0	0	0	0
Stanwell ^d	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	8,950	10	2,177	n/a	n/a

a. Combines TRUenergy and EnergyAustralia from 8 October 2012

b. Named Country Energy prior to 1 March 2011.

c. Includes data for Sun Retail and Integral Energy

d. Includes data for Tarong Energy.

Customer complaints

Clause 8.5.4 of the Code requires that all electricity retailers provide quarterly information on the number of complaints received from their small business and residential customers in respect of their actions or omissions as a retailer for the following categories:

- (a) total complaints;
- (b) billing or account complaints;
- (c) marketing complaints; and

(d) other complaints.

Complaints are defined as a written or verbal expression of dissatisfaction about an action, or a failure to act, or in respect of a product or service offered or provided, by an electricity entity.

This information is shown in **Table 6**.

Table 6: Complaints received from small customers

<i>Retail entity</i>	<i>Billing/ account issues</i>		<i>Marketing issues</i>		<i>'Other' issues</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>Business customers</i>	<i>Residential customers</i>	<i>Business customers</i>	<i>Residential customers</i>	<i>Business customers</i>	<i>Residential customers</i>	<i>Business customers</i>	<i>Residential customers</i>
AGL Sales	298	1,563	21	153	104	1,559	423	3,275
Aurora Energy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Australian Power and Gas	0	33	0	3	0	21	0	57
Click Energy	0	42	1	17	0	57	1	166
COzero Retail	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CS Energy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Diamond Energy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dodo Power and Gas	0	195	0	13	0	65	0	273
EnergyAustralia ^a	5	184	2	123	15	152	22	484
Ergon Energy Queensland	190	718	0	4	21	230	211	952
ERM Power Retail	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Essential Energy ^b	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lumo Energy	2	197	1	35	2	249	5	481
Momentum Energy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Origin Energy ^c	270	5,750	0	16	123	1,218	393	6,984
OzGen Retail	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Powerdirect	13	7	1	0	1	3	15	10
Qenergy	2	2	1	2	0	1	3	5
Red Energy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sanctuary Energy	0	6	0	3	0	5	0	17
Simply Energy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Stanwell ^d	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	780	8,697	27	369	266	3,560	1,073	12,704

a. Combines TRUenergy and EnergyAustralia from 8 October 2012

b. Named Country Energy prior to 1 March 2011.

c. Includes data for Sun Retail and Integral Energy

d. Includes data for Tarong Energy.