

SMALL ELECTRICITY CUSTOMER DISCONNECTION, HARDSHIP AND COMPLAINTS STATISTICS – MARCH QUARTER 2012

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 March 2011, there were three licensed distributors (Energex, Ergon Energy and Essential Energy) servicing 23 licensed retailers in Queensland², unchanged from the previous quarter. Of the 23 retailers, only 12 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.

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 license.

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 (1,370 or 4.4%) than did distributors. This difference is largely due to the discrepancy between the retailer and distributor reported data for TRUenergy. The Authority is currently investigating this issue further. Other more minor differences may be due partly to slight timing differences between when retailers and distributors become aware that service order requests for disconnections have been completed.

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	350	313	6,485	6,929	6,835	7,242
Aurora Energy	0	0	0	0	0	0
Australian Power and Gas	0	4	1,113	1,145	1,113	1,149
Click Energy	3	7	320	316	323	323
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	19	11	19	11
Ergon Energy Queensland	898	898	4,142	4,142	5,040	5,040
ERM Power Retail	0	0	0	0	0	0
Essential Energy ^a	0	0	0	0	0	0
Flinders Operating Services	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lumo Energy	35	35	882	895	917	930
Momentum Energy	0	0	0	1	0	1
Origin Energy ^b	691	745	13,054	13,134	13,745	13,879
OzGen Retail	0	0	0	0	0	0
Powerdirect	89	87	133	136	222	223
Qenergy	21	20	13	13	34	33
Red Energy	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sanctuary Energy	0	0	0	0	0	0
Simply Energy	0	0	0	0	0	0
Stanwell ^c	0	0	0	0	0	0
TRUenergy	134	133	4,058	2,106	4,192	2,239
TOTAL	2,221	2,242	30,219	28,828	32,440	31,070

a. Named Country Energy prior to 1 March 2011.

b. Includes data for Sun Retail and Integral Energy

c. 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	48	52	165	1042	1,207	1,206	1,255	1,258
Aurora Energy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Australian Power and Gas	0	2	58	126	184	207	184	209
Click Energy	0	0	4	28	32	32	32	32
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
Ergon Energy Queensland	96	96	543	1,758	2,301	2,301	2,397	2,397
ERM Power Retail	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Essential Energy ^a	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Flinders Operating Services	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lumo Energy	10	11	13	155	168	173	178	184
Momentum Energy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Origin Energy ^b	90	90	162	747	909	904	999	994
OzGen Retail	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Powerdirect	5	6	0	1	1	1	6	7
Qenergy	0	4	0	2	2	1	2	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 ^c	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TRUenergy	27	84	40	143	183	339	210	423
TOTAL	276	345	985	4,002	4,987	5,164	5,263	5,509

a. Named Country Energy prior to 1 March 2011.

b. Includes data for Sun Retail and Integral Energy

c. 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	105	536	33	129	803
Ergon Energy	0	0	26	33	0	0	59
Essential Energy ^a	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	0	0	131	569	33	129	862

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	8	493	501	14	80	565	659
Aurora Energy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Australian Power and Gas	0	64	64	0	26	39	65
Click Energy	0	19	19	0	4	16	20
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
Ergon Energy Queensland	48	1,467	1,515	50	390	1,138	1,578
ERM Power Retail	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Essential Energy ^a	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Flinders Operating Services	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lumo Energy	3	61	64	3	5	58	66
Momentum Energy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Origin Energy ^b	29	460	489	31	108	382	521
OzGen Retail	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Powerdirect	2	0	2	2	0	0	2
Qenergy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
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 ^c	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TRUenergy	16	86	102	17	21	70	108
TOTAL	106	2,650	2,756	117	634	2,268	3,019

a. Named Country Energy prior to 1 March 2011.

b. Includes data for Sun Retail and Integral Energy

c. 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	692	4	119	500	280
Aurora Energy	0	0	0	0	0
Australian Power and Gas	111	0	2	675	89
Click Energy	29	0	0	132	98
Cozero	0	0	0	0	0
CS Energy	0	0	0	0	0
Diamond Energy	0	0	0	0	0
Dodo Power and Gas	0	0	0	0	0
Ergon Energy Queensland	5,301	1	1,199	724	243
ERM Power Retail	0	0	0	0	0
Essential Energy ^a	0	0	0	0	0
Flinders Operating Services	0	0	0	0	0
Lumo Energy	10	0	2	1,157	119
Momentum Energy	0	0	0	0	0
Origin Energy ^b	2,526	0	568	652	303
OzGen Retail	0	0	0	0	0
Powerdirect	3	0	0	1,042	180
Qenergy	1	0	0	660	365
Red Energy	0	0	0	0	0
Sanctuary Energy	0	0	0	0	0
Simply Energy	0	0	0	0	0
Stanwell ^c	0	0	0	0	0
TRUenergy	117	0	43	1,317	312
TOTAL	8,790	5	1,933	n/a	n/a

a. Named Country Energy prior to 1 March 2011.

b. Includes data for Sun Retail and Integral Energy

c. 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	42	678	2	91	25	542	69	1,311
Aurora Energy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Australian Power and Gas	0	30	0	11	0	11	0	52
Click Energy	1	22	0	1	0	22	1	45
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	54	0	6	0	14	0	74
Ergon Energy Queensland	196	954	0	19	16	302	212	1,275
ERM Power Retail	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Essential Energy ^a	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Flinders Operating Services	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lumo Energy	4	462	13	62	16	506	33	1,030
Momentum Energy	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
Origin Energy ^b	86	1,883	10	58	39	686	135	2,627
OzGen Retail	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Powerdirect	22	22	1	0	23	23	46	45
Qenergy	7	1	0	0	6	6	13	7
Red Energy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sanctuary Energy	0	15	0	0	0	6	0	21
Simply Energy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Stanwell ^c	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TRUenergy	13	163	4	21	2	35	19	219
Total	371	4,284	30	269	127	2,155	528	6,708

a. Named Country Energy prior to 1 March 2011.

b. Includes data for Sun Retail and Integral Energy

c. Includes data for Tarong Energy.