



Energy & Water
Ombudsman NSW

Natural disaster support



If you or your business has been impacted by flooding, bush fires or other natural disasters there's support available from government and community agencies.

There may also be extra support to manage problems with your energy and water accounts, including:

- additional time to pay your bills
- pausing a payment plan
- help reconnecting supply or replacing a meter.

How EWON can help

Residential customers, small business operators and government or community workers assisting those affected by natural disasters, can contact us at any time for advice – even if it's months or years later. If you have already contacted your energy or water provider and are not satisfied with its response, you can [contact us to lodge a complaint](#).

Loss of supply

After a natural disaster, distributors will often de-energise a large area to safely work to restore power. We assist by providing information on timeframes. Information about outages and reconnection is available on distributors' websites:



Endeavour Energy - Sydney's Greater West, Blue Mountains, Southern Highlands, Illawarra and South Coast

Ausgrid - Sydney, Newcastle, Central Coast and Hunter regions

Essential Energy - All other areas of regional NSW

Electricity meter replacement

If your meter has been damaged or destroyed, a new meter will need to be installed by your electricity provider. This may take longer than usual due to technician availability, equipment, site conditions or even access to the area. If you are experiencing delays, we can liaise with your provider to identify the steps, including any work required at the property, to have the meter installed.

Estimated billing

Bills after a natural disaster can often be estimated because the meter was damaged, destroyed, or is inaccessible. Providers may send bills showing estimated usage even if there was no supply at the property. Keep a note of the dates you were unable to reside or operate your business at the property. EWON investigates these complaints by looking at the historical usage and what is fair and reasonable. We may need a photo of your meter if it is still operating, but not accessible to be read by the distributor.



Provider assistance

All energy retailers and distributors have [customer assistance programs](#) that are designed to support you if you're having problems paying your bills. Water providers may also offer payment extensions and other assistance. Contact your energy or water provider directly to find out what support they offer.



Outreach assistance

We can provide targeted outreach to affected communities. Government and community workers who feel their community could benefit from face-to-face assistance should email community@ewon.com.au



Support for small business

Service NSW have information on [Disaster and emergency assistance for business](#). You can also find support links from the [Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman](#) and the [Small Business Commissioner](#).

High bills

High bills can be a result of damage to the meter or appliances, or increased usage when restoring the property. If you've been unable to resolve the complaint, we can investigate and negotiate a fair outcome.

Loss of records

Loss of records can make communicating or obtaining information from your energy or water provider difficult. EWON can facilitate discussions with your providers specialist dispute resolution teams to assist in obtaining information. Any details your provider may have will be available in their privacy policy, you can request a copy from them directly. Service NSW and Services Australia can also assist in loss of government records such as Centrelink information and NSW identification documents.

Government and community support

- [Recovery Connect](#) can help you find support near you from government, charities, and community organisations.
- The [Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment](#) is available if you've been adversely affected by a natural disaster event and you live in one of the eligible local government areas.
- Service NSW provide support services for people and businesses through the [Disaster Customer Care Service](#), call 13 77 88 for assistance.
- The Australian Financial Complaints Authority can help to resolve [complaints about your insurance company](#).
- Legal Aid's [Disaster Response Legal Service](#) can help you with everyday legal problems including insurance claims and disputes, financial hardship, tenancy and Centrelink.
- If you need urgent help with living expenses, including electricity and gas bills, there are [community organisations that can help](#).
- If you speak a language other than English, the Rural Fire Service has translated [factsheets with information about bush fires](#).



Unplanned power outages and life support customers

Customers, family members and carers reliant on home-based life support equipment should [register as a life support customer](#) to receive advice about establishing a life support action plan to follow when an unplanned electricity outage occurs. Use our [Life support action checklist](#) to help plan and prepare for supply interruptions.

Make a complaint or enquiry

Freecall	1800 246 545* Mon – Fri, 9am – 5pm
Freepost	Reply Paid 86550 Sydney South NSW 1234
Interpreter	131 450
TTY/Voice	133 677
Online	ewon.com.au
In person	Level 11, 133 Castlereagh St, Sydney, NSW 2000

* If you are calling from a mobile phone, let us know and we will call you back.