

Submission form: 'Comparing and switching electricity plans'

Common Grace Aotearoa made this form. If you prefer, use the Electricity Authority's [short survey](#), or long [form](#) (p. 49).

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Questions

1. What barriers have you experienced when comparing electricity companies? What would make it easier for you to compare and switch?

Not much info out there so hard to really compare. End up staying with the same one which might not be my best option. I would like easy to understand communication about the options regularly so I can make informed choices.

2. The Electricity Authority is proposing:

- To support an existing or new, externally run, website(s).
- To require retailers to provide their existing consumers with best plan information.
- Community advisers to support comparison and switching.
- Promotional activity and campaigns for comparison and switching services.

Do you support their approach?

~~Yes~~ ~~No~~ I do support this approach, but think it is incomplete.

~~Yes~~ ~~No~~ I would like to see the requirement of companies to inform customers of their best plan for usage, at least every 3 months to reflect the variability in usage during the year. I would love to see customers automatically switched to the best plan for their usage. I think this is an equity approach as those ~~most~~ ~~with~~ ~~the~~ ~~most~~ ~~usage~~ who would benefit most from cost savings on electricity are also time poor. I would like to see PowerSwitch work better by allowing people to input their own actual electricity use data. Also a requirement for companies to include standard info on all electricity ~~use~~ ~~data~~ bills. Please investigate ways to ensure all people can access affordable electricity, including a range of post-pay plans.

3. Do you think it's important for the Authority to fund and support a comparison and switching website? Why?

Yes this will enable this info to be easily accessed by all New Zealanders to make an informed choice.

4. What problems, if any, do you see with current comparison and switching websites, such as Powerswitch?

People should be able to input their own data on electricity use while protecting privacy. This will better enable comparisons rather than using estimates.

5. Do you support the proposal that companies must regularly tell customers which plan would be best for them? How often should they do this?

Yes, I think at least every 3 months to reflect the wide variation in electricity use throughout the year. eg Seasonal (heating) & income changes.

6. What do you think about the idea of requiring companies to automatically switch customers to the best plan? (The customers could then switch back to the old plan if they preferred.)

I think this is a great idea. People are very busy ~~or~~ or have less understanding of how to switch. I think this would be a equitable approach as it removes time or understanding of switching as barriers to being on the best plan for ~~the~~ New Zealanders.

7. Do you think companies should be required to include standard information on power bills, so customers can compare easily? Best Plan for ~~the~~ New Zealanders

Yes! It makes it easy which is what we need and is a suggestion from the Consumer Advocacy Council.

8. How else could the Electricity Authority support people to compare and switch power plans?

Investigate other pathways such as including a range of post-pay plans. And investigate prepay prices to ensure those without options are not penalised ~~eg~~ eg. disconnection & reconnection fees