

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?
The current options available for comparing power companies require the provision of data that make them difficult to access and utilize for those in our communities most vulnerable - those without literacy, non-English speakers and those who struggle with digital interfaces such as the elderly. Our Society has a duty to ensure that all electricity consumers have equal opportunity for choice in this market.
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.

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

Yes, because transparency and ethical integrity cannot be assured by companies or brokers, for whom recommendations for the cheapest plans are not good for 'profits' or may not be regarded as convenient or easy to market.

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

No guarantee of transparency, lack of flexibility in packages offered, inaccessibility for most vulnerable members of our community.

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 support this proposal. Customers should regularly inform users quarterly.

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.)

Companies should at least recommend a plan switch or provide an 'opt out' option for the better plan, rather (preferably) than an 'opt in' shift.

7. Do you think companies should be required to include standard information on power bills, so customers can compare easily?

Yes.

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

Use real usage data for accuracy in cost estimates.