

SEQ retail electricity market in 2023-24

QCA market monitoring results for assisted customers

What is an assisted customer?

Assisted customers are customers who receive assistance with their electricity bills in the form of retailer hardship programs, the Queensland Government's electricity rebate and/or the Home Energy Emergency Assistance Scheme (HEEAS).

7 categories of assistance

In the December quarter of 2023, around 92.3% of all the SEQ customers who received assistance with their electricity bills were on a market offer.

Among the 7 categories of assistance (see table on the right), the vast majority of assisted customers only received the Queensland Government's electricity rebate.

The number of assisted customers who were on a standing offer decreased between the December quarters of 2022 and 2023.

Total number of assisted customers by assistance category and offer, December quarter 2023

Assistance category	Number of customers on standing offers	Number of customers on market offers	Percent of customers on market offers
1. Hardship program only	97	7,759	98.8%
2. Electricity rebate only	30,352	344,528	91.9%
3. HEEAS support only	17	234	93.2%
4. Hardship program and receiving the electricity rebate	63	9,977	99.4%
5. Hardship program and receiving HEEAS support	11	473	97.7%
6. Electricity rebate and HEEAS support	16	674	97.7%
7. Hardship program, receiving the electricity rebate and HEEAS support	9	774	98.9%
Total	30,565	364,419	92.3%

Assisted customers paid more

The prices paid by assisted customers on standing and market offers increased substantially from 2022-23 to 2023-24 across all assistance categories and the 3 common residential tariffs and tariff combinations we analysed.



Active customers are likely to pay less than inactive or disengaged customers. However, some customers – including customers experiencing vulnerability – may find it difficult to navigate the market, compare plans and switch when a better plan becomes available. This suggests that competition might not be working as effectively as it should for all customers.

Advice for assisted customers

It pays to be active and engaged. We encourage assisted customers to:

- check the 'better offer' statement on their bill, which shows the best plan their retailer can offer them
- check on [Energy Made Easy](#) if a better plan may be available from any retailer in the market
- consider if they are benefiting from conditional discounts – a plan without discounts attached may result in a lower bill, especially if the discount conditions cannot always be met.



Bills that assisted customers paid

The table on the right shows the average annual bills paid by assisted customers on the 3 common tariffs and tariff combinations in the December quarter of 2023.

Comparing these bills to the bills based on offers available in the December quarter of 2023, we found that customers in various assistance categories could have saved money by switching to one of the cheaper plans that were available in the market.

Average annual bills by tariff/tariff combination and assistance category, December quarter 2023

Tariff/tariff combination, by customer assistance category	Standing offer (\$)	Market offer (\$)
Hardship only		
Flat rate	1,775	1,578
Flat rate with controlled load super economy	2,080	1,872
Flat rate with controlled load economy	2,072	1,862
Electricity rebate only		
Flat rate	1,763	1,739
Flat rate with controlled load super economy	2,104	2,046
Flat rate with controlled load economy	2,221	2,040
HEEAS only		
Flat rate	1,655	1,817
Flat rate with controlled load super economy	n/a	1,851
Flat rate with controlled load economy	1,908	2,149
Hardship and rebate		
Flat rate	1,787	1,536
Flat rate with controlled load super economy	2,072	1,804
Flat rate with controlled load economy	2,065	1,799
Hardship and HEEAS support		
Flat rate	1,655	1,656
Flat rate with controlled load super economy	2,070	1,961
Flat rate with controlled load economy	1,988	1,934
Electricity rebate and HEEAS support		
Flat rate	1,704	1,729
Flat rate with controlled load super economy	2,263	1,957
Flat rate with controlled load economy	2,068	2,000
Hardship, electricity rebate and HEEAS support		
Flat rate	1,689	1,605
Flat rate with controlled load super economy	n/a	1,862
Flat rate with controlled load economy	2,068	1,876

Note: n/a means that no retailer reported having any assisted customers in this category.

Trends in bills that assisted customers paid

Between 2017-18 and 2021-22, standing and market offer prices paid by assisted customers (in nominal dollars) decreased across most tariffs and tariff combinations and assistance categories.

In 2022-23 and 2023-24, the prices paid by assisted customers increased across all 3 tariffs and tariff combinations and assistance categories.

Assisted customers' bills could have been lower

Most assisted customers were on market offers that resulted in higher bills than the cheapest market offer their retailer had available, and some were higher than the most expensive market offer that was available in the December quarter of 2023.

More information

Our SEQ retail electricity market monitoring report for 2023-24 is available on our [market monitoring web page](#).

Average bills paid by assisted customers compared to available market offers by retailer – residential flat rate offers only, December 2023

