

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?

Websites can be confusing to navigate and making a direct comparison between two companies can be hard. It becomes harder when it isn't clear as to whether a company does both power and gas or them together.

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, these are some great ideas! I am supportive of all these steps the EA wants to take to make things easier for consumers.

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

Yes. Finding all the information on all the power company plans is a massive endeavour, which those who have the least resources in terms of time and money will have the hardest time undertaking. For the sake of justice I support it.

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

Current power switching websites like Powerswitch are great, but are not known about enough. I'd love to see them promoted more. I also think the website would be more accurate and able to provide better info if people were able to input their own power usage.

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 absolutely companies should regularly tell customers which plan would be best. This should happen every 2-3 months. As a student, I am still learning about utilities and domestic financial administration and how to run a household. Regular reminders would encourage and equip me to be more active.

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.)

That is an excellent idea. Especially for students^{or anyone} who don't have the time to work all this out, automatically doing it makes sense. It makes no sense to allow a company to knowingly extract extra money from people when it could put them on a cheaper plan. That seems very disingenuous and greedy.

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

Yes definitely.

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