

NSW Electricity Information Paper No 1

Retail businesses' performance against customer service indicators

For the period 1 July 2000 to 30 June 2005

A series of information papers on the performance of NSW electricity businesses

Overview

This information paper focuses on the level of customer service provided by electricity retailers in NSW, particularly the four standard retail suppliers – Australian Inland, Country Energy, EnergyAustralia and Integral Energy. It is one of a series of information papers published by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal of NSW (the Tribunal), which aim to ensure that all stakeholders, including customers, have ready access to information about electricity distribution and retail businesses.

Under the current regulatory regime, all electricity retailers licensed to operate in NSW are required to report annually on a set of customer service indicators, which provide some indication of the affordability of and access to electricity services, and of customers' satisfaction with the quality of service they receive. The Tribunal monitors and assesses the retailers' performance against these indicators. This information paper provides an overview of its assessment for the period 1 July 2000 to 30 June 2005 against the indicators related to:

- ▼ disconnections due to non-payment of bills and reconnections in the same name
- ▼ use of alternative payment methods by customers having difficulty paying bills
- ▼ number of security deposits being held by retailers at 30 June, and held longer than 12 months (residential customers) or 24 months (non-residential customers)
- ▼ provision of telephone services
- ▼ customer complaints.

The bulk of small retail electricity customers in NSW are supplied by the four standard suppliers, and therefore most of the data and analysis in this information paper relates to these retailers. However, where significant data on other retailers¹ was available, it has been included.² Data on Victorian and South Australian retailers' performance has also been included where relevant for comparison.³

Overall, the data suggests that the number of NSW customers who were disconnected due to non-payment of bills increased over the reporting period, although these customers still represent less than one per cent of all NSW small retail customers. The number of customers using instalment plans to pay off bills in arrears and CentreLink's Centrepay bill payment facility increased between 2003/04 and 2004/05, but both numbers are still low.

In relation to telephone services, there has been significant improvement in retailers' responsiveness to account inquiries between 2003/04 and 2004/05. The number of calls answered by a human operator increased by 47 per cent across all retailers, and the number of calls that dropped out or were abandoned by the caller before being answered by a human operator decreased by 35 per cent. In relation to complaints, the total number of customers who complained to their retailer about their retail service remained low throughout the reporting period, representing 0.4 per cent of all customers.

Disconnections due to non-payment of bills

Disconnection of essential services such as electricity is expensive for both the consumer and the provider. It creates further hardship for consumers who are already facing financial difficulties. As a consequence, most electricity retail suppliers have adopted or are in the process of developing "hardship policies" to assist customers experiencing financial difficulties.

Table 1 shows that despite the development of these hardship policies, the rate of residential customers being disconnected for non-payment has increased by 26 per cent in 2004/05. This increase is mainly due to debt recovery action taken by one retailer. Integral Energy's disconnections increased from 7,674 in 2003/04 to 13,044 in 2004/05.

Table 1 Residential & non residential disconnections for non-payment of bills in NSW

Type of Customer	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05
Residential	20,206	25,141	18,153	21,394	26,931
As a per cent of residential customers	0.77	0.98	0.68	0.80	0.98
Non residential	588	1,406	902	1,122	1,384
As a per cent of non residential customers	0.20	0.44	0.32	0.39	0.50

In response to disconnection increases, the Minister for Energy announced in September 2005 the establishment of a Working Group to provide advice on reducing the number of customers being disconnected for not paying their bill. This group is chaired by the Department of Energy, Utilities and Sustainability (DEUS) and has representatives from the Energy and Water Ombudsman, the Energy Retailers Association, community groups, NSW Treasury and the Tribunal. The Minister has recently published the Working Group's report.

¹ Other retail suppliers refer to any other NSW retailer other than EnergyAustralia, Integral Energy, Country Energy and Australian Inland.

² Please note that data from these other retailers only started to be supplied from 1 January 2002 (commencement of full retail competition in NSW).

³ Sourced from Energy Retail Businesses Comparative Performance Report for the 2004-05 Financial Year (Essential Services Commission, Victoria) and Annual Performance Report (Essential Services Commission, South Australia).

Figures 1 and 2 show the numbers of disconnections for non-payment of bills for each standard retail supplier as a percentage of its total residential and non-residential customers (its disconnection rate).

Figure 1 Residential disconnections for non-payment of bills in NSW, by retailer

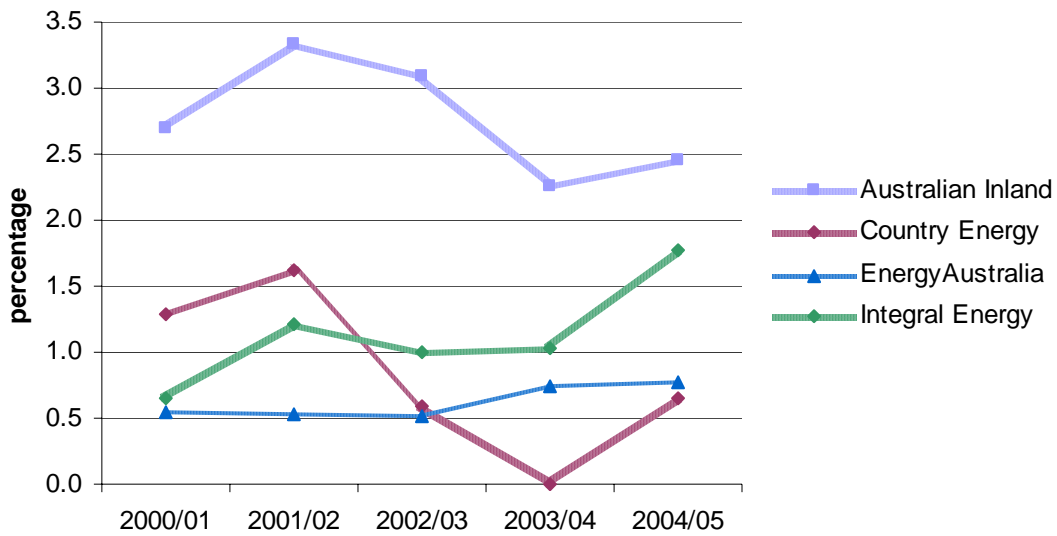
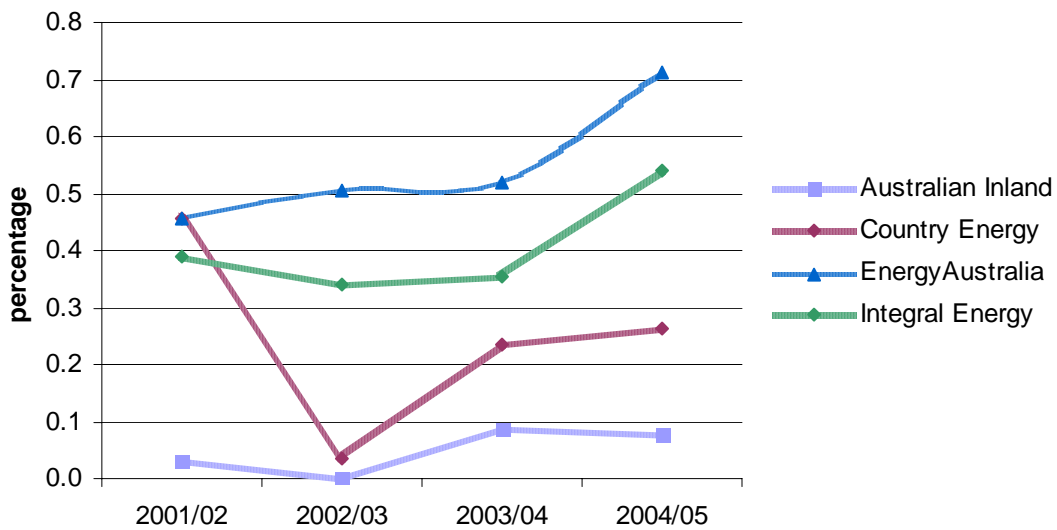


Figure 2 Non-residential disconnections for non-payment of bills in NSW, by retailer



These figures indicate that Integral Energy’s residential disconnection rate grew significantly in 2004/05 (by approximately 70 per cent). According to Integral Energy, there is an increased emphasis by the business to intervene earlier to recover aged debt. Integral Energy reports that 80 per cent of those customers were reconnected within 24 hours after making payments towards their outstanding accounts. Integral Energy is putting in place a range of measures, including a significant expansion of its Hardship Program (INpower), to hopefully trend these numbers down in 2005/06.

Figures 1 and 2 also indicate that Country Energy’s disconnection rate fell significantly between 2001/02 and 2002/03. Country Energy reports that this was due to its adoption of a much more proactive and integrated hardship policy to deal with customers experiencing financial difficulties.

In addition, Country Energy and EnergyAustralia report that the slight increases in their disconnection rates in 2003/04 were largely due to their correction of a data consistency issue. Their data for previous years excluded disconnections for non-payment of bills where the retailers believed the premises had been vacated. All energy companies have now been asked to include *all* disconnections for non-payment of bills, regardless of whether the property concerned has been vacated.

Figures 3 and 4 compare the statewide rates of disconnection for non-payment of bills for residential and non-residential customers in NSW, Victoria and South Australia. These figures show that the disconnection rate for residential customers in NSW and Victoria was less than one per cent throughout the reporting period, while the rate in South Australia was slightly higher.

Both residential and non-residential disconnections rates in South Australia increased significantly in 2003/04, then decreased in 2004/05. The Essential Services Commission of South Australia's (ESCOSA) 2004-05 Annual Performance Report suggests that this decrease was due to retailers making an effort to better identify and monitor customers in hardship, in an attempt to avoid disconnections occurring. The residential disconnection rate in Victoria also decreased in 2004/05. This decrease was largely attributed to retailers' temporarily suspending disconnections while reviewing their disconnection procedures in light of new regulatory requirements in that State.

Figure 3 Residential disconnections for non-payment of bills in NSW, Victoria and South Australia

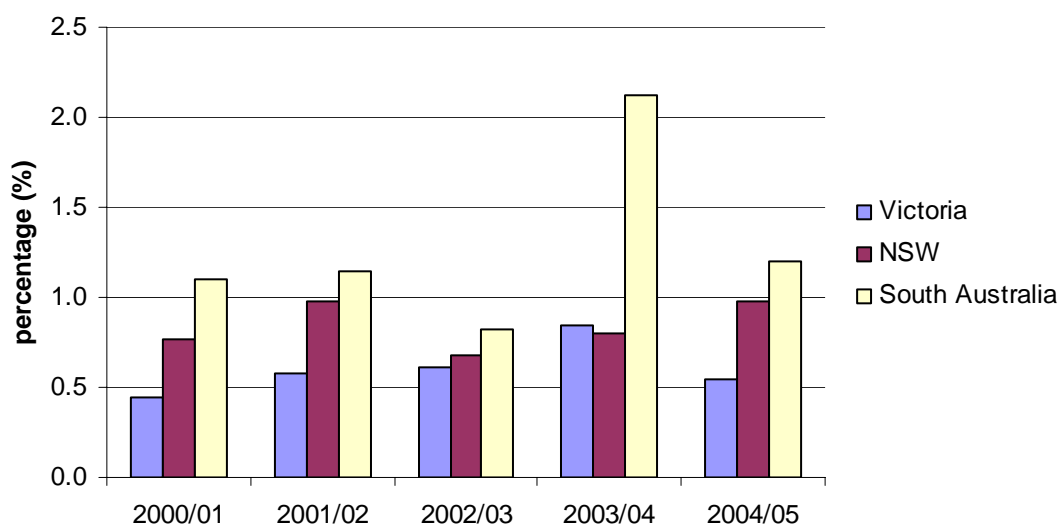
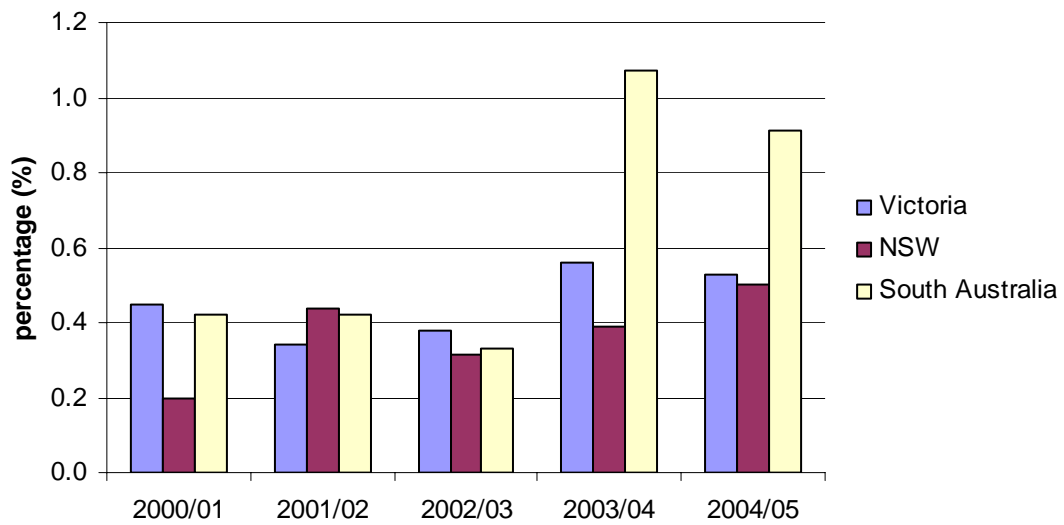


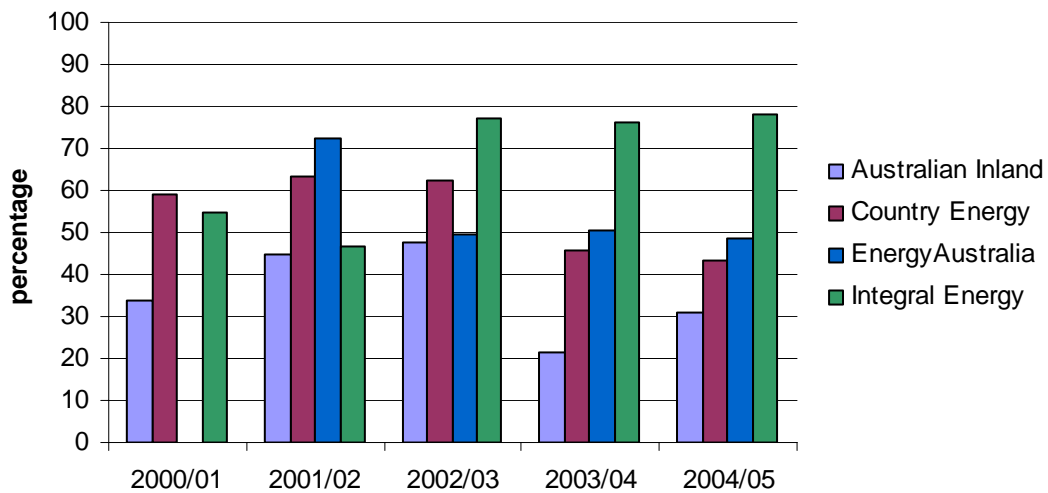
Figure 4 Non-residential disconnections for non-payment of bills in NSW, Victoria and South Australia



Reconnections in the same name

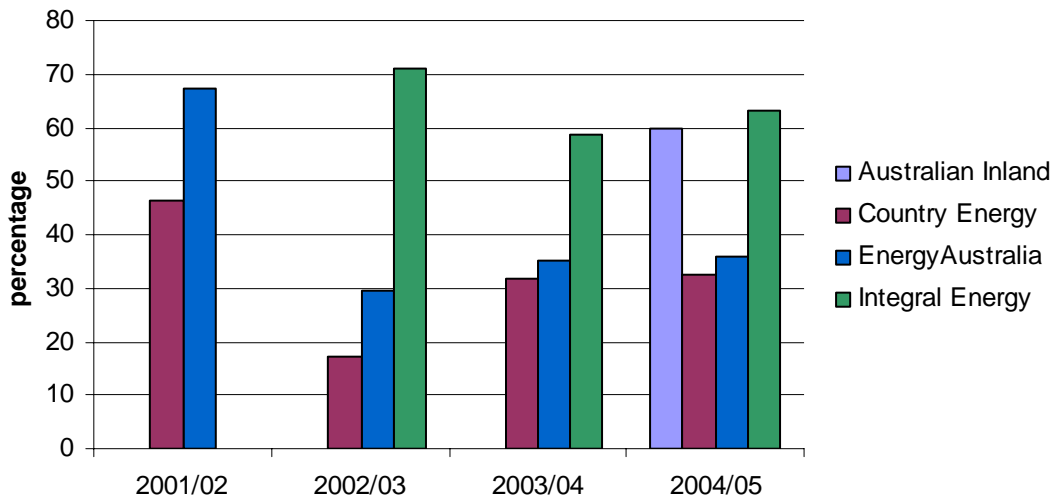
Figures 5 and 6 show the per cent of residential and non-residential small retail customers disconnected for non-payment of bills whose supply was subsequently reconnected in the same name, for each standard retail supplier.⁴

Figure 5 Percentage of NSW residential customers disconnected for non-payment of bills whose supply was reconnected in same name



⁴ Reconnection figures were not reported by EnergyAustralia in 2000/01.

Figure 6 Percentage of non-residential customers disconnected for non-payment of bills whose supply was reconnected in same name



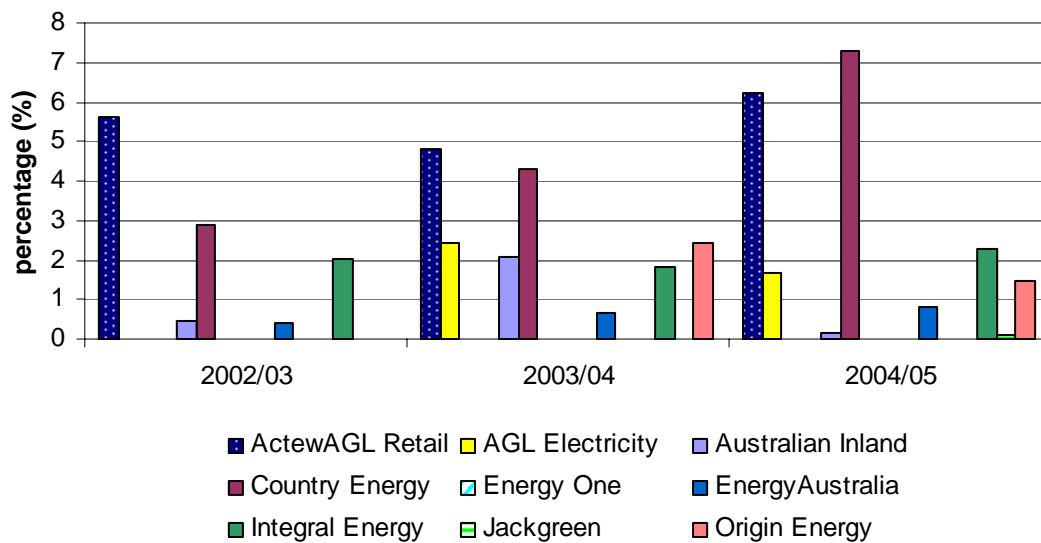
It is not currently possible to compare the per cent of customers disconnected for non-payment then reconnected in the same name in NSW, Victoria and South Australia because of a difference in the way this indicator is defined in these states. In NSW, all residential and non-residential customers disconnected for non-payment then reconnected in the same name are included, whereas in the other states, only those reconnected within seven days of being disconnected are included. The Tribunal has recommended to the Minister that the NSW definition be changed so it is consistent with the definition used in Victoria and South Australia.

Use of alternative payment methods

All retailers in NSW offer, to varying degrees, assistance to customers who are having difficulty paying their electricity bills, including giving them the option of paying bills in instalments, extending the due date on their bills, referring them to a financial relief agency or financial counsellor, or checking their meter for accuracy.

Depending on the policies of each individual retailer, a customer experiencing financial hardship should be offered the option of using a payment instalment plan. By making it possible for these customers to pay their outstanding accounts over time, these plans can reduce the rate of disconnections. Figure 7 shows the per cent of each standard retail supplier's residential small retail customer base paying off billing arrears under an instalment payment plan on regulated contracts. It also shows this data for a range of other retailers, for comparison.

Figure 7 Percentage of NSW residential small retail customers using instalment plans



This figure indicates that there was an overall increase in the per cent of customers using instalment plans. Country Energy’s per cent increased in each year of the reporting period, and in 2004/05 it had the largest per cent of customers using instalment plans (7 per cent). Country Energy states that it promotes the use of instalment plans through its support service whenever possible, to help customers in financial difficulties continue to receive supply. It also tries to facilitate the use of Centrepay for eligible customers as often as possible (discussed further below). Country Energy believes that its low disconnection rate is a direct result of this practice.

Table 2 shows the per cent of total small retail customers using instalment plans in NSW, Victoria and South Australia. It is interesting to note that Victoria has the highest number of residential customers on instalment plans, while it also has the lowest number of residential customers that have been disconnected for non-payment of bills.⁵

The Tribunal expects that the use of instalment plans in NSW will rise in next few years as retailers’ hardship policies are further developed.

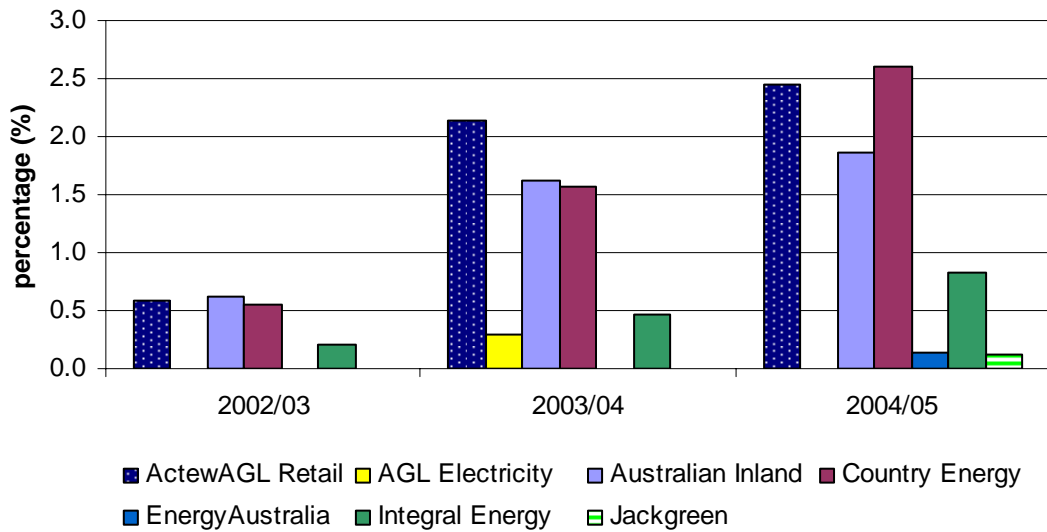
Table 2 Percentage of residential small retail customers using instalment plans in NSW, Victoria and South Australia, 2004/05

	Victoria	NSW	SA
Percentage of all residential small retail customers	5.07	2.78	1.50

Figure 8 shows the per cent of small retail customers using Centrelink’s Centrepay bill payment facility. Centrepay is a free service that allows Centrelink clients to pay for essential living expenses (such as electricity, gas, rent and water) through a direct bill payment facility before the Centrelink payment is made to the customer’s bank account. By encouraging customers that are having difficulty paying their electricity bills to use Centrepay, retailers are providing customers with an option that can help them manage and budget for their bills and thus avoid disconnection.

⁵ Energy Retail Businesses Comparative Performance Report for the 2004-05 Financial Year (Essential Services Commission, Victoria) and Annual Performance Report (Essential Services Commission, South Australia).

Figure 8 Percentage of NSW residential small retail customers using Centrelink's Centrepay bill payment facility

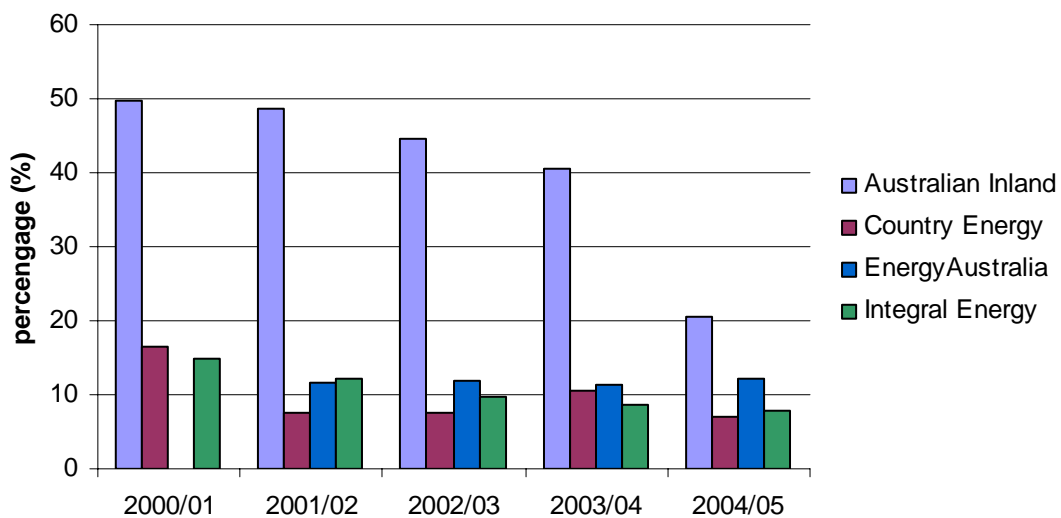


While the overall use of Centrelink's Centrepay Bill Payment Facility is low, the per cent of customers using this service increased in each year of the reporting period. In 2004/05, Country Energy had the highest per cent of customers using the service.

Security deposits held

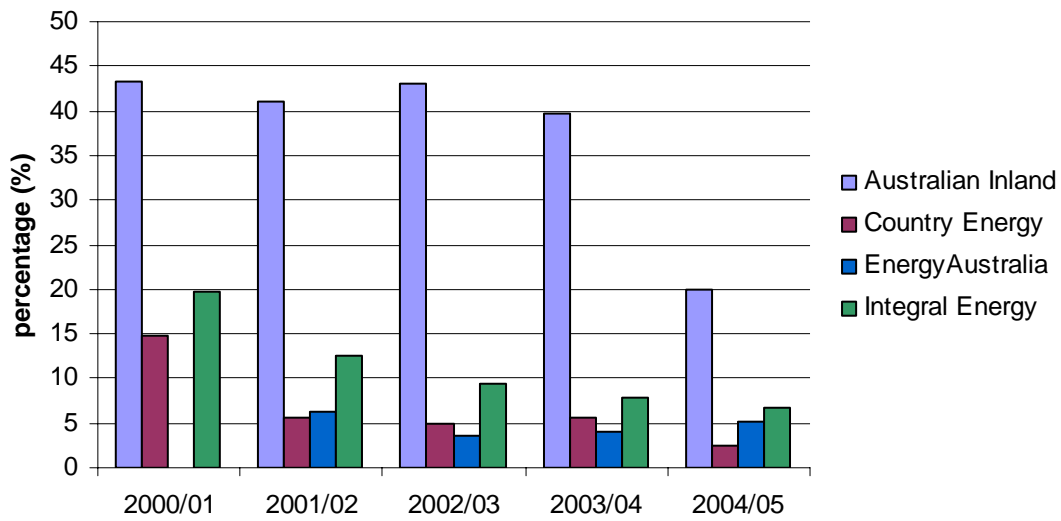
Figures 9 and 11 show the percentages of residential and non-residential small retail customers who had security deposits held by their retailer on 30 June of each year of the reporting period. Figures 10 and 12 show the percentages of security deposits from residential customers held longer than twelve months, and from non-residential customers held longer than twenty-four months.⁶

Figure 9 Percentage of NSW residential customers who had security deposits held by their retailer on 30 June



⁶ These indicators do not reflect the total number of security deposits required to secure connection or reconnection to supply within the period as they do not include those deposits held during the period but released prior to 30 June.

Figure 10 Percentage of security deposits from residential small retail customers held by retailers for longer than 12 months



Historically, Australian Inland has held security deposits for a higher percentage of its residential small retail customers, and has held these deposits for a longer period of time, because its billing system was unable to produce reports on security deposits due to be refunded. With the implementation of a new billing system, both the percentage of its customers for whom it held security deposits and the percentage of security deposits held for longer than 12 months decreased significantly over the reporting period.

Figure 11 Percentage of non-residential small retail customers who had security deposits held by their retailer on 30 June

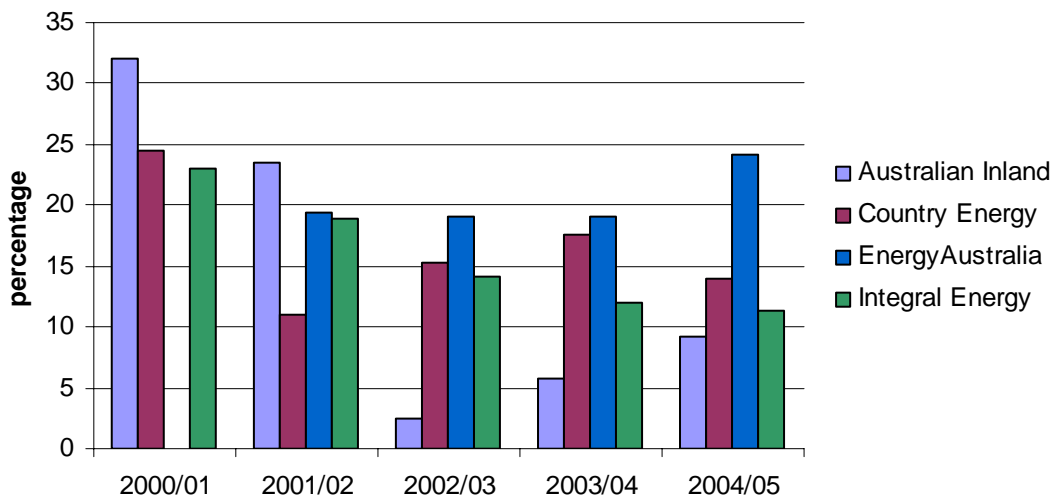
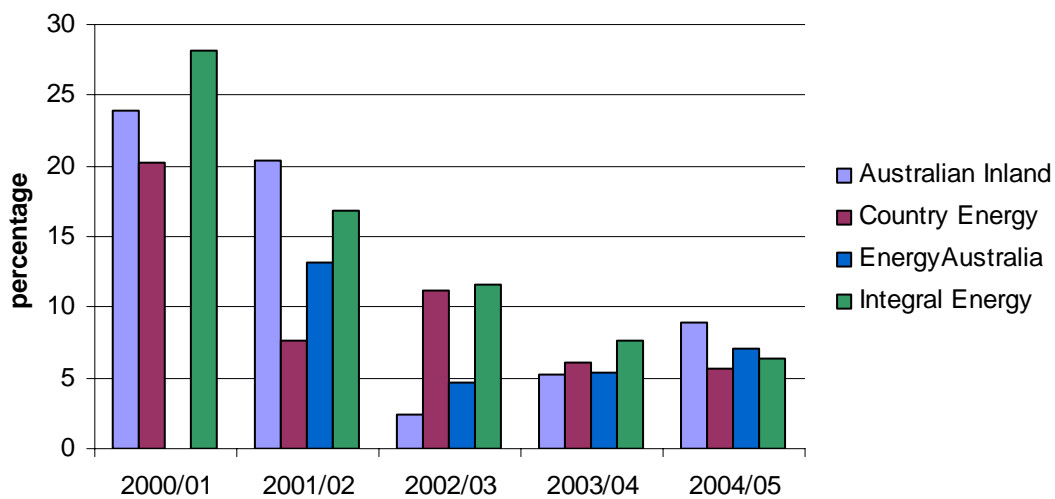


Figure 12 Percentage of security deposits from non-residential small retail customers held by retailers for longer than 24 months

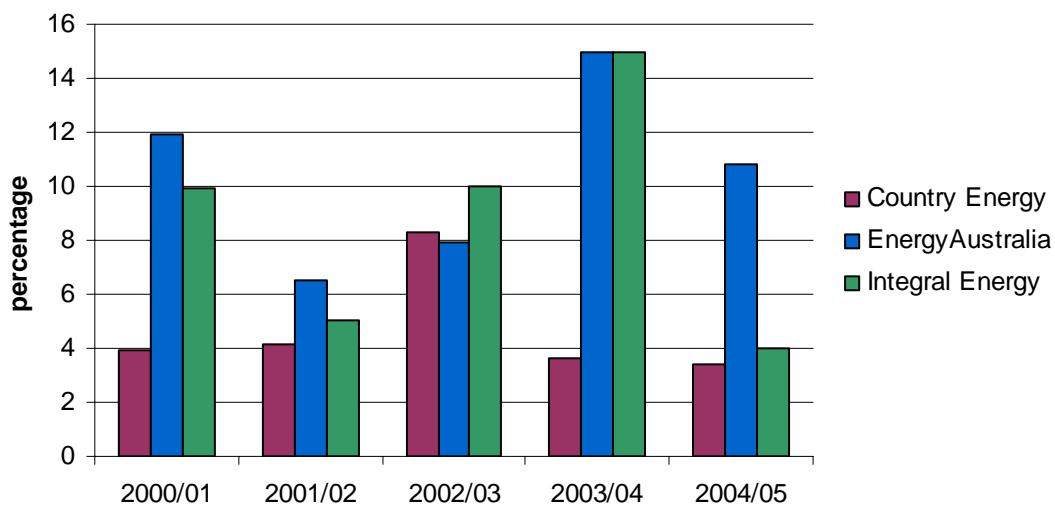


Call Centre Responsiveness

All electricity retailers are required, as a guaranteed customer service standard, to provide a telephone service that operates during business hours to which a person can be connected for not more than the price of a local telephone call.⁷ In addition, the telephone service must be able to receive notice of and give information about customers' bills and customer connections arranged by the supplier.

Figure 13 shows for three of the four standard retail suppliers, the percentage of calls to this telephone service that dropped out or were abandoned by the caller before being answered by a human operator. Australian Inland's telephone system did not have the capacity to record this statistic. (Data on the performance of other retailers against this indicator is provided in Appendix 1.)

Figure 13 Percentage of calls that were abandoned or dropped out before being answered by a human operator



⁷ Established under clause 40 and Schedule 2, part 2, clause 10(2) of the *Electricity Supply (General) Regulation 2001*.

EnergyAustralia's performance fluctuated over the reporting period, and it recorded the highest percentage of calls that dropped out or were abandoned in 2004/05 (11 per cent). It reports that its performance in that year for the two call centre responsiveness indicators was affected by higher than usual demands on its telephone service, due to substantial growth in its negotiated contract residential customer base. It also reports that since the first quarter of 2005, additional staff resources and training have helped to address this issue.⁸

Integral Energy's performance improved significantly in 2004/05, with just 4 per cent of calls to its telephone service dropped out or was abandoned before being answered by a human operator. It advises that this improvement was due to a reduction in the average handling time per call. The reduction in average handling time was the result of increased coaching and development of call centre staff through quality assurance programs and technical training.

Figure 14 shows for three of the four standard retail suppliers, the percentage of calls that were answered by a human operator within 30 seconds. This data includes calls to complaint and enquiry lines, including lines that are initially answered by an automated interactive voice response system but make provision for the caller to be transferred to a human operator. Where this is the case, the data includes calls answered within 30 seconds of the caller selecting the option to be transferred to a human operator.

Figure 14 Percentage of calls answered by a human operator within 30 seconds

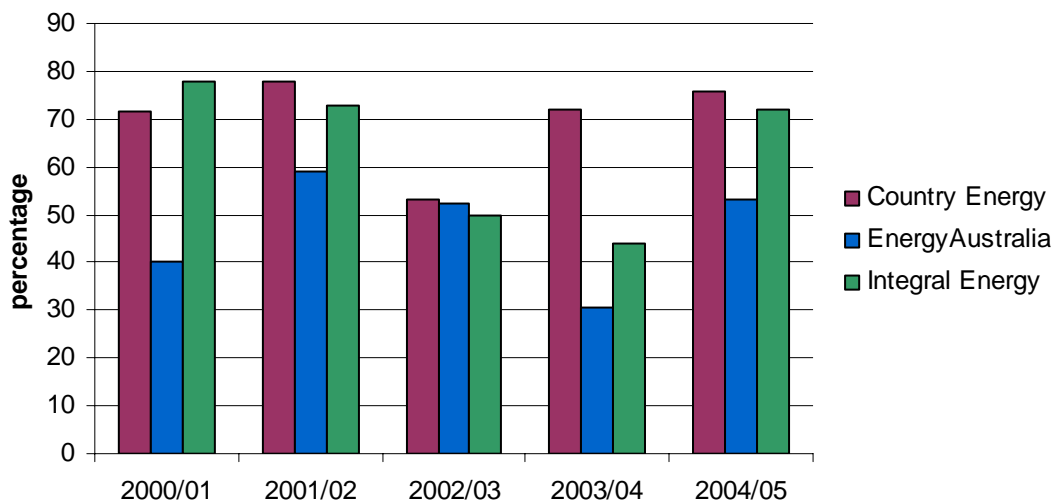
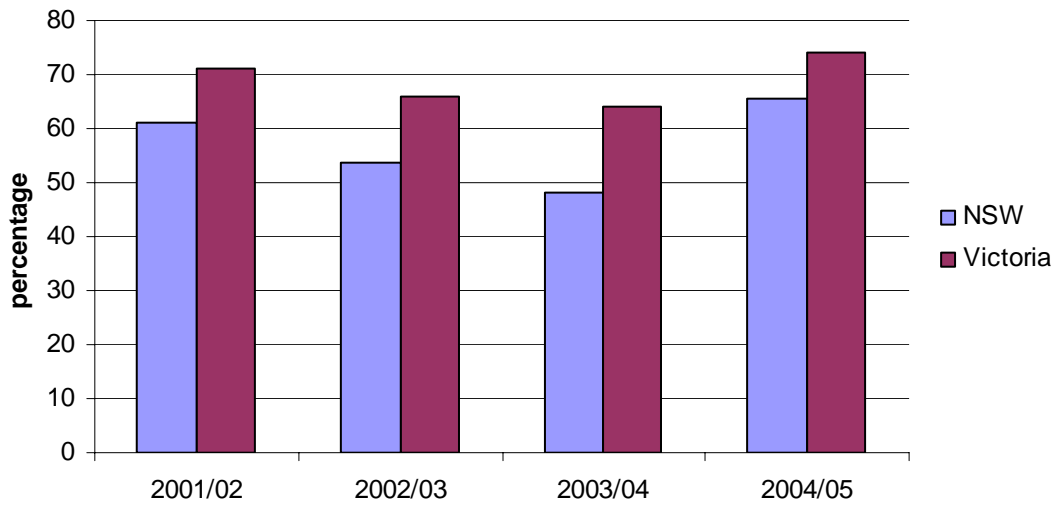


Figure 15 compares the state-wide percentages of calls to retailers' telephone services answered by a human operator within 30 seconds in NSW and Victoria.

⁸ EnergyAustralia states that improvements are reflected in the first half of 2005/06 results (ie. call abandonment rate of 5 per cent; calls answered within 30 seconds rate of 71 per cent). EnergyAustralia also advises that its own monthly customer satisfaction surveys rated its call centre performance highly at the end of 2004/05 (ie. 73 per cent rated the service Very Good or Excellent; 94 per cent of calls resolved at first point of contact).

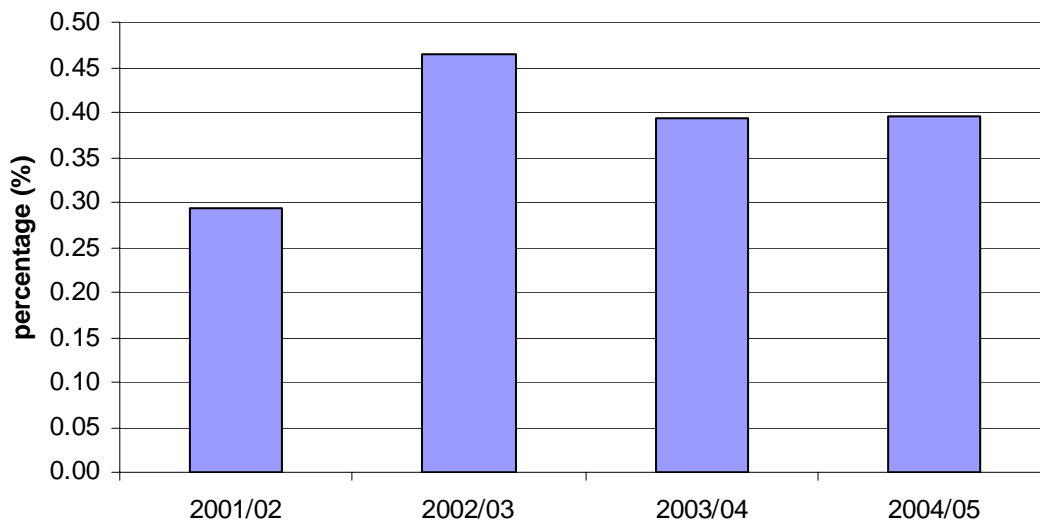
Figure 15 Percentage of customer calls answered by a human operator within 30 seconds in NSW and Victoria⁹



Customer complaints

Figure 16 shows the total number of customer complaints¹⁰ received by retailers about their services as a percentage of total retail electricity customers in NSW. This indicator includes customer complaints to the retailer about its failure to observe its procedures, but does not include complaints made about the retailer to any other body.

Figure 16 Customer complaints as a percentage of total customers in NSW



⁹ NSW and Victoria report on telephone line responsiveness in a similar way. South Australia covers all calls that include the IVR system, both directed to a human operator and where a non-operator selection has been made and therefore cannot be used for comparative purposes.

¹⁰ The NSW definition of a 'complaint' is broadly based on the SCNRRR definition and is consistent with appropriate Australian Standard Complaints Management AS 4269-1995.

This figure indicates that the overall level of complaints were low throughout the reporting period. This level of complaints is slightly lower than the levels recorded in Victoria and South Australia. For example, in 2004/05 the level of complaints in these states increased slightly this year and was at 0.6 and 0.7 per cent compared to just 0.4 per cent in NSW.¹¹

Figure 17 shows the customer complaints received by individual retailers, as a percentage of their total number of customers. In 2004/05, Energy One had the highest percentage of customer complaints. However, as this company has a very low customer base in NSW the total number of complaints was not significant. The four standard retailer suppliers had a low percentage of customer complaints in most years of the reporting period.

Figure 17 Customer complaints as a percentage of the retailer’s total customers

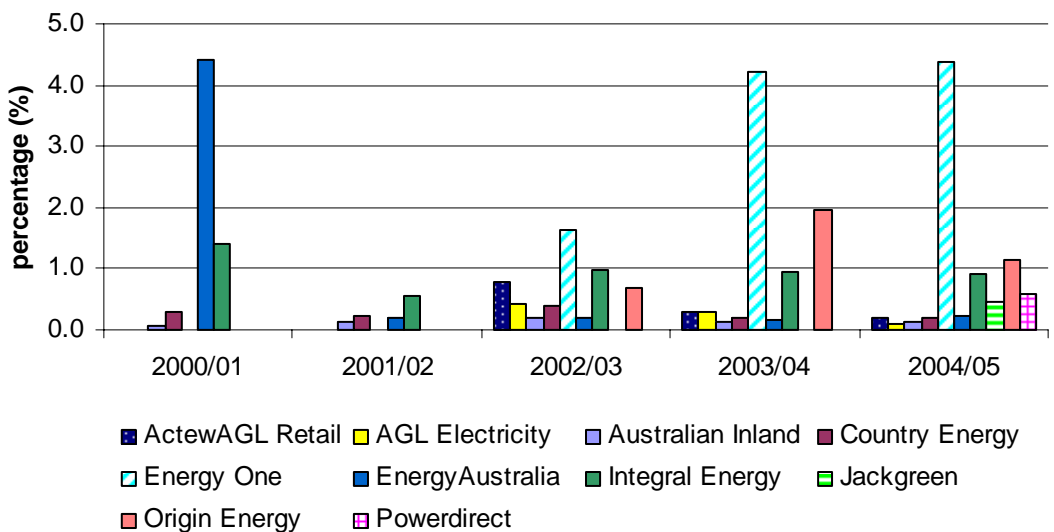


Figure 18 shows what per cent of the complaints received by each retailer can be categorised as either a marketing, billing or other type of complaint in 2004/05. This was the first year in which retailers were required to report on marketing complaints. The marketing complaints reported by some of the retailers represent a significant per cent of the total complaints received, particularly for some of the smaller ones.

¹¹ Energy Retail Businesses Comparative Performance Report for the 2004-05 Financial Year (Essential Services Commission, Victoria) and Annual Performance Report (Essential Services Commission, South Australia).

Figure 18 Types of customer complaints received by individual retailers in NSW, 2004/05

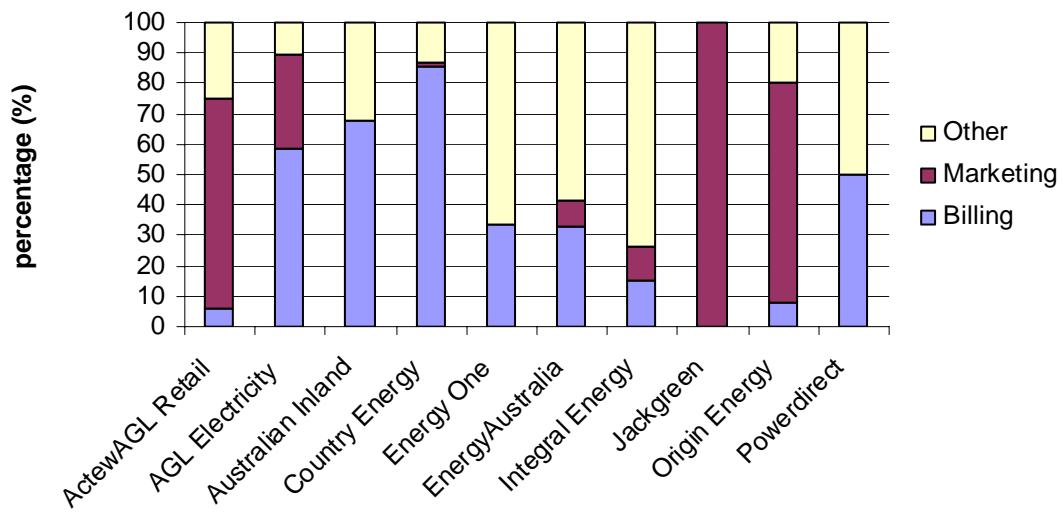
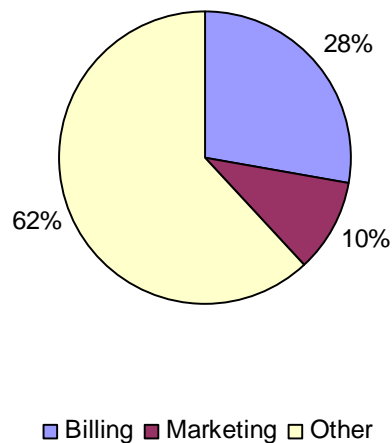


Figure 19 shows what per cent of the total number of customer complaints received by NSW retailers in 2004/05 and each type of complaint. 'Other' complaints make up the largest per cent of all customer complaints. This is because most of the complaints received by EnergyAustralia and Integral Energy – the two largest retailers – fell into this category.

Figure 19 Types of customer complaints received by all NSW retailers, 2004/05



APPENDIX 1 COMPARATIVE PERFORMANCE DATA TABLES

Customer service performance data for all retailers in 2004/05 (percentage)

	CALLS ANSWERED IN 30 SECONDS	CALLS ABANDONED OR DROPPED OUT	TOTAL COMPLAINTS	BILLING COMPLAINTS	MARKETING COMPLAINTS	OTHER COMPLAINTS
ActewAGL Retail ¹²	81.00	2.20	0.18	5.88	64.71	29.41
AGL Electricity	86.24	1.80	0.08	58.41	30.97	10.62
Australian Inland	NA	NA	0.15	67.86	0.00	32.14
Country Energy	75.97	3.41	0.18	85.59	1.11	13.30
Energex Retail	97.94	2.06	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Energy One	95.00	0.00	4.38	33.33	0.00	66.67
EnergyAustralia	53.34	10.85	0.22	32.57	9.08	58.35
Integral Energy	72.00	4.00	0.93	14.95	11.32	73.73
Jackgreen	79.60	7.45	0.47	0.00	100.00	0.00
Origin Energy	63.50	3.30	1.13	7.96	72.57	19.47
Powerdirect	71.88	4.69	0.60	50.00	0.00	50.00
TRUenergy	85.04	2.19	NA	NA	NA	NA
Total	65.71	6.67	0.40	27.69	10.42	61.88

	RESIDENTIAL DISCONNECTIONS	NON-RESIDENTIAL DISCONNECTIONS	RESIDENTIAL RECONNECTIONS	NON-RESIDENTIAL RECONNECTION
ActewAGL Retail	0.38	NA	46.88	NA
AGL Electricity	0.01	NA	62.50	NA
Australian Inland	2.46	0.08	30.87	60.00
Country Energy	0.65	0.26	43.10	32.63
Energex Retail	NA	NA	NA	NA
Energy One	2.78	2.46	100	94.12
EnergyAustralia	0.78	0.71	48.71	35.97
Integral Energy	1.77	0.54	77.89	63.22
Jackgreen	NA	NA	NA	NA
Origin Energy	0.23	NA	50.00	NA
Powerdirect	NA	NA	NA	NA
TRUenergy	NA	NA	NA	NA
Total	0.98	0.50	61.77	43.42

	INSTALMENT PLAN CUSTOMERS	CENTREPAY CUSTOMERS
ActewAGL Retail	6.25	2.45
AGL Electricity	1.66	0.00
Australian Inland	0.15	1.87
Country Energy	7.29	2.61
Energex Retail	NA	NA
Energy One	0.00	NA
EnergyAustralia	0.81	0.14
Integral Energy	2.26	0.82
Jackgreen	0.12	0.12
Origin Energy	1.49	NA
Powerdirect	0.00	NA
TRUenergy	0.00	NA
Total	2.78	0.91

¹² ActewAGL has set a minimum service standard to answer its calls within 20 seconds as opposed to the industry standard of 30 seconds.

Retailer customer service performance data, 2000/01 to 2004/05

Residential disconnections due to non-payment of bills in NSW (% of all residential customers)					
	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05
Australian Inland	2.7	3.3	3.1	2.3	2.5
Country Energy	1.3	1.6	0.6	0.7	0.7
EnergyAustralia	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.8	0.8
Integral Energy	0.7	1.2	1.0	1.0	1.8

Non-residential disconnections due to non-payment of bills in NSW (% of all non-residential customers)					
	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05
Australian Inland	0.06	0.03	0.00	0.09	0.08
Country Energy	0.62	0.46	0.03	0.24	0.26
EnergyAustralia	0.00	0.46	0.51	0.52	0.71
Integral Energy	0.00	0.39	0.34	0.35	0.54

Residential disconnections due to non-payment of bills in NSW, Victoria and South Australia (% of all residential customers)					
	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05
NSW	0.8	1.0	0.7	0.8	1.0
Victoria	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.5
South Australia	1.1	1.1	0.8	2.2	1.2

Non-residential disconnections due to non-payment of bills in NSW, Victoria and South Australia (% of all residential customers)					
	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05
NSW	0.2	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.5
Victoria	0.5	0.3	0.4	0.6	0.5
South Australia	0.4	0.4	0.3	1.1	0.9

Percentage of NSW residential small retail customers disconnected for non-payment of bills and subsequently reconnected in same name					
	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05
Australian Inland	33.6	44.6	47.6	21.7	30.9
Country Energy	59.2	63.1	62.2	45.7	43.1
EnergyAustralia	-	72.4	49.7	50.4	48.7
Integral Energy	54.8	46.8	77.3	76.3	77.9

Percentage of NSW non-residential small retail customers disconnected for non-payment of bills and subsequently reconnected in same name					
	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	
Australian Inland	0.0	0.0	0.0	60.0	
Country Energy	46.2	17.2	31.8	32.6	
EnergyAustralia	67.2	29.6	35.0	36.0	
Integral Energy	0.0	71.1	58.7	63.2	

Percentage of NSW customers using instalment plans				
	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05
ActewAGL Retail	-	5.64	4.81	6.25
AGL Electricity	-	-	2.44	1.66
Australian Inland	0.52	0.47	2.06	0.15
Country Energy	0.68	2.89	4.29	7.29
EnergyAustralia	0.31	0.41	0.66	0.81
Integral Energy	0.00	2.00	1.82	2.26
Jackgreen		-	-	0.12
Origin Energy		-	2.45	1.49

Percentage of residential small retail customers using instalment plans in NSW, Victoria and South Australia				
	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05
NSW	0.3	1.4	1.9	2.8
Victoria	4.9	5.0	4.9	5.1
South Australia	-	-	-	1.5

Percentage of NSW residential small retail customers using Centerlink's Centrepay Bill Payment facility				
		2002/03	2003/04	2004/05
Australian Inland		0.6	1.6	1.9
Country Energy		0.5	1.6	2.6
EnergyAustralia		-	-	0.1
Integral Energy		0.2	0.5	0.8

Percentage of NSW residential small retail customers who had security deposits held by their retailers					
	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05
Australian Inland	49.8	48.6	44.6	40.6	20.5
Country Energy	16.4	7.5	7.5	10.7	7.1
EnergyAustralia	-	11.7	12.0	11.4	12.1
Integral Energy	13.4	10.6	8.5	8.5	7.9

Percentage of security deposits from NSW residential small retail customers held by retailers for longer than 12 months					
	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05
Australian Inland	43.3	40.9	43.1	39.8	20.0
Country Energy	14.9	5.6	4.9	5.7	2.5
EnergyAustralia	0.0	6.2	3.6	4.1	5.2
Integral Energy	20.1	12.7	9.3	7.8	6.8

Percentage of NSW non-residential small retail customers who had security deposits held by their retailers					
	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05
Australian Inland	32.0	23.5	2.5	5.7	9.3
Country Energy	24.6	11.1	15.2	17.6	13.9
EnergyAustralia	-	19.4	19.0	19.1	24.1
Integral Energy	17.6	15.0	11.8	12.0	11.4

Percentage of security deposits from NSW non-residential small retail customers held by retailers for longer than 24 months

	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05
Australian Inland	23.9	20.4	2.5	5.3	8.9
Country Energy	20.3	7.7	11.2	6.1	5.7
EnergyAustralia	0.0	13.2	4.6	5.3	7.0
Integral Energy	0.0	12.1	8.4	7.6	6.4

Percentage of security deposits held for residential small retail customers in NSW and Victoria

	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05
NSW	10.65	10.04	10.31	9.17
Victoria	0.03	0.02	0.01	0.01

Percentage of customer calls answered by a human operator within 30 seconds by retailers in NSW

	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05
ActewAGL Retail	-	-	85	84.6	81.00
AGL Electricity	-	81.1	62	76	86.24
Australian Inland	-	-	-	-	-
Country Energy	71.7	77.7	53	72.1	75.97
Energex Retail	-	-	-	95.4	97.94
Energy One	-	-	90	88.5	95.00
EnergyAustralia	40.27	58.85	52.26	30.61	53.34
Integral Energy	78	73	50	44	72.00
Jackgreen	-	-	-	79.60	79.60
Origin Energy	-	-	-	-	63.50
Powerdirect	-	-	-	-	71.88
TRUenergy	-	-	-	-	85.04
TRUenergy Yallourn	-	-	-	97.50	-

Percentages of customer calls answered by a human operator within 30 seconds in NSW and Victoria

	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05
NSW	61.1	53.8	48.2	63.8
Victoria	77.0	64.0	69.0	65.0

Percentage of calls that were abandoned or dropped out before being answered by a human operator by retailers in NSW

	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05
ActewAGL Retail	0	0	3	2.3	2.20
AGL Electricity	0	0.6	6.7	5.6	1.80
Australian Inland	-	-	-	-	-
Country Energy	3.9	4.1	8.3	3.6	3.41
Energy One	-	-	-	-	0
Energex Retail	0	0	0	4.6	2.06
EnergyAustralia	11.9	6.5	7.9	14.9	12.43
Integral Energy	9.9	5	10	15	4.00
Jackgreen	-	-	-	7.45	7.45
Origin Energy	-	-	-	-	3.30
Powerdirect	-	-	-	-	4.69
TRUenergy	-	-	-	-	2.19

Customer complaints in NSW as a percentage of retailer's total small retail customers				
	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05
ActewAGL Retail	-	-	0.28	0.20
AGL Electricity	-	0.43	0.28	0.08
Australian Inland	0.14	0.21	0.15	0.15
Country Energy	0.23	0.4	0.2	0.18
Energex Retail	-	-	-	-
Energy One	-	1.64	4.23	4.38
EnergyAustralia	0.19	0.2	0.17	0.22
Integral Energy	0.55	0.98	0.92	0.93
Jackgreen	-	-	0.47	0.47
Origin Energy	-	0.69	1.96	1.13
Powerdirect	-	-	-	0.60
TRUenergy	-	-	-	-

Percentage of each type of customer complaints received by NSW retailers				
	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05
Billing	45.8	58.6	56.5	27.7
Marketing	-	-	-	10.4
Other	54.2	41.4	44.7	61.9

NSW percentage of customer complaints that related to billing matters by NSW retailers				
	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05
ActewAGL Retail	-	36.5	20.0	5.9
AGL Electricity	-	60.6	66.0	58.4
Australian Inland	74.1	35.9	85.7	67.9
Country Energy	69.8	72.1	85.6	85.6
Energex Retail	-	-	-	-
Energy One	-	66.7	73.8	33.3
EnergyAustralia	57.0	37.5	53.9	32.6
Integral Energy	29.2	61.5	51.6	15.0
Jackgreen	-	-	0.0	0.00
Origin Energy	-	11.1	26.3	8.0
Powerdirect	-	-	-	50.0
TRUenergy	-	-	-	-

Percentage of customer complaints in 2004/05 that related to billing, marketing, or "other" by NSW retailers				
	Billing	Marketing	Other	
ActewAGL Retail	5.9	64.7	23.5	
AGL Electricity	58.4	31.0	10.6	
Australian Inland	67.9	0.0	32.1	
Country Energy	85.6	1.1	13.3	
Energy One	33.3	0.0	66.7	
EnergyAustralia	32.6	9.1	58.3	
Integral Energy	15.0	11.3	73.7	
Jackgreen	0.0	100.0	0.0	
Origin Energy	8.0	72.6	19.5	
Powerdirect	50.0	0.0	50.0	
Total	27.7	10.4	61.9	

Customer complaints as a percentage of total small retail customers in NSW and Victoria				
	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05
NSW	0.3	0.5	0.4	0.4
Victoria	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.7

APPENDIX 2 NOTES AND DEFINITIONS

Customers

'Customer' means the person in whose name an electricity account is held under one supply contract.

'Small retail customer' means a customer whose electricity consumption in NSW is no more than 160 megawatt hours per annum.

'Residential small retail customer' means a small retail customer who uses their premises primarily for residential purposes.

'Non-residential small retail customer' means a small retail customer who uses their premises primarily for non-residential purposes.

Disconnection due to non-payment of bills

Retailers must record each instance where a customer's supply is discontinued for failing to pay an amount due to the retailer, including discontinuing supply to vacant premises. For example, if a customer's supply has been discontinued twice in the reporting year, two supply discontinuances must be reported.

Complaints

'Complaint' means a written or verbal expression of dissatisfaction about an action, a proposed action, or a failure to act by a retailer, its employees, agents or contractors. This includes failure by a retailer to observe its published or agreed practices or procedures. It does not include a complaint made about the retailer to any other body.

However, the Tribunal seeks information from EWON on the number of small retail customers who took their complaint about a retailer's service to EWON.