Economic Regulation Authority

2026 electricity and gas data

Debt and disconnections

2025/26 *at a glance*

We license energy utilities and monitor customer bill debt and disconnections in Western Australia. This report presents summary data for small use residential and business customers with non-contestable electricity and gas accounts. It covers bill debt, financial hardship, and disconnections for non-payment.

Electricity

$83.8m
Total bill debt

7,546
Disconnections

Total electricity bill debt has increased 40% since 2025

4.1% of all accounts have bill debt, averaging $1620 per account

Gas

$15.5m
Total bill debt

6,333
Disconnections

Total gas bill debt has increased 4% since 2025

3.1% of all accounts have bill debt, averaging $600 per account

Customer bill debt increased significantly during the COVID-19 pandemic and has remained high.

All customers are entitled to at least 2 fee-free payment extensions and payment plans per year. Most customers can use their online account to extend their bill deadline or enter a payment plan. These supports enable customers to manage short term cash flow problems.

Financial hardship describes a long-term difficulty in paying for basic living expenses.

Residential customers who have bill debt, have been assessed, and offered help by their retailer are considered to be in financial hardship. Retailers support these customers through hardship programs that help them manage their repayments and keep their energy connected.

Residential customers affected by family violence receive extra protections as vulnerable customers.

Retailers must train staff to identify and deal sensitively with vulnerable customers, develop and publish policies to guide customer interactions, implement measures to protect customer privacy, and suspend disconnections for non-payment for at least 9 months.

Bill debt is the amount owed on energy bills that are 90 calendar days or more overdue.

Customers who do not pay a bill by the due date may have their supply disconnected.

Some customers may be disconnected for non-payment more than once a year.

Customers cannot be disconnected if:

- bill debt is less than $300
- life support equipment is registered at the address (electricity)
- the account belongs to a vulnerable customer
- the reason for disconnection is under investigation
- it is after 3pm, on weekends or on public holidays.

Before disconnecting customers, retailers must provide appropriate written notice:

Reminder Notice

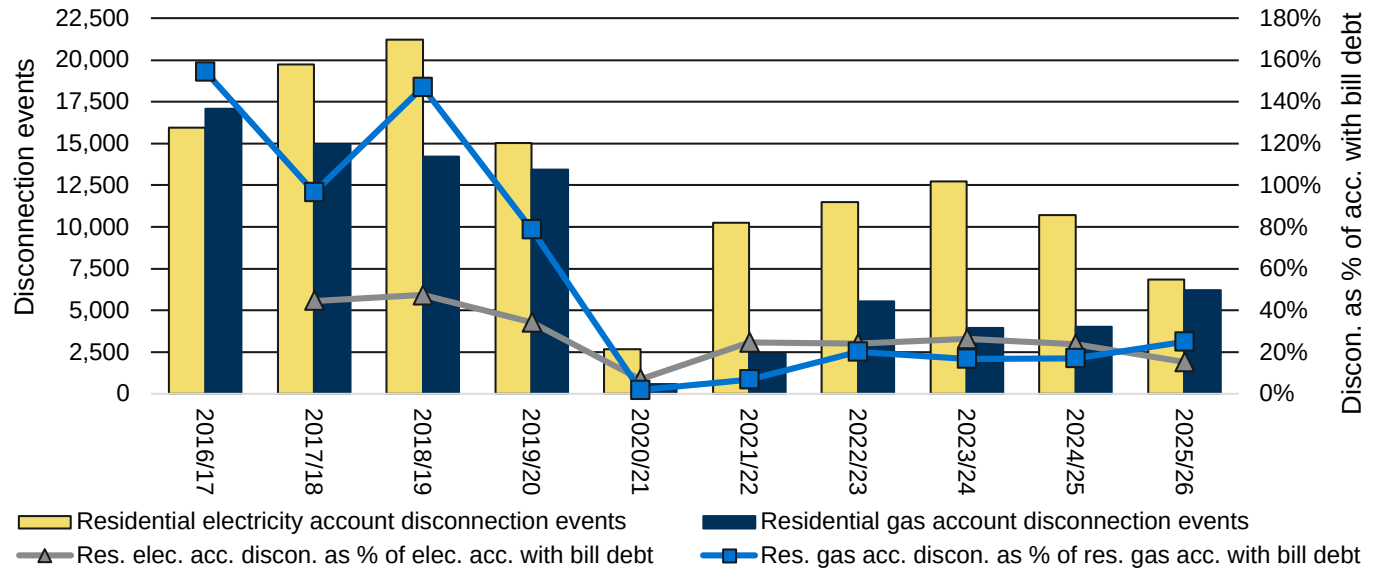
Disconnection Notice

Disconnections – electricity and gas customers

The number of times that residential customers were disconnected for non-payment over the past 9 years is illustrated in Figure 1. As a customer may be disconnected multiple times in one year, each disconnection event does not equal one unique customer. When a customer owes money to the retailer and has not engaged with a payment plan or financial hardship program, the customer may be disconnected. Customers are typically reconnected promptly after payment.

During the pandemic in 2020/21, electricity and gas retailers paused disconnections, allowing customers to remain connected despite bill debt. The likelihood that a customer with bill debt will be disconnected is indicated by the line graph (Figure 1, right axis). A sharp drop in the likelihood of disconnection for customers with bill debt occurred in 2020/21. Figure 1 shows that in 2025/26 gas customer disconnections increased while electricity customer disconnections fell significantly.

Figure 1: Disconnection events for residential electricity and gas customers



Source: Source: disconnection events indicators (CCR40, R33); accounts with bill debt indicators (CCR115, CCR120, R91, R96).

In 2025/26 there were 36 per cent fewer residential electricity accounts disconnected than the previous year (Figure 1, left axis). This is due to the 50 per cent reduction in disconnection events amongst Synergy customers. The reduction was due to the disconnection moratorium Synergy implemented to manage the rollout of its new Customer Relationship Management platform. Customers continued to receive standard notifications about overdue bills and impending disconnections, but were not disconnected. Synergy paused disconnections due to non-payment from March 2026.

There was a notable increase in residential gas disconnections in 2025/26, up 55 per cent to 6,219 (Figure 1, left axis). This increase was driven by Alinta Energy, which recorded a 91 per cent increase in disconnections, and AGL, whose disconnections increased 11 per cent. Alinta attributed this to an increase in resources to identify, raise and complete disconnection service orders.

Business accounts - Disconnections[1]

For electricity customers, business customers with bill debt are more likely to be disconnected than a residential customer with bill debt. In 2025/26 there were 692 electricity business accounts disconnected which equates to 47 per cent of the average number of business accounts with bill debt.

There were 114 gas business account disconnection events in 2025/26, which represents 37 per cent of the average number of gas business accounts with bill debt. This equates to a 46 per cent increase in gas business disconnection events compared to the previous year.

Bill debt – electricity and gas customers

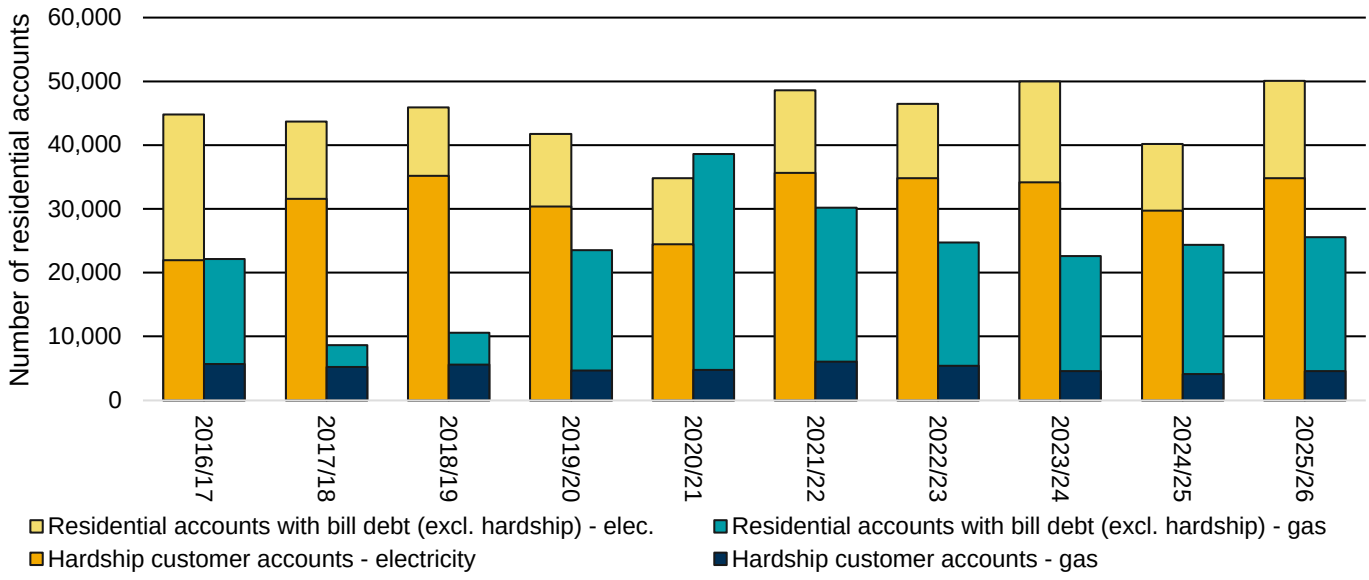
Customers may accrue debt with their retailer when they are having trouble paying their bill. The following figures show changes in the number of electricity and gas residential accounts with bill debt over the past 9 years. A proportion of customers with bill debt are in a retailer's financial hardship program. Electricity retailers have a significantly higher proportion of customers with bill debt in a financial hardship program than gas retailers.

The number of residential customers with gas bill debt has fluctuated more over the past ten years than those with electricity bill debt (Figure 2). Residential gas customers with bill debt has fallen since a dramatic increase in 2020/21, but remains considerably higher than the 10-year low in 2017/18.

The number of residential electricity customers with bill debt increased by 24 per cent during 2025/26 (yellow column, Figure 2). This was driven by a 26% increase in Synergy customers with bill debt from 38,191 customers in 2024/25 to 47,972 in 2025/6. Synergy attributed this increase to its disconnection moratorium which generated higher levels of outstanding customer debt at 30 June 2026. Synergy also considered that the end of government bill credits has contributed to an increase in electricity customers with bill debt. In 2025/26, there was a 5 per cent increase in residential gas customers with bill debt. However, there are still significantly more residential customers owing money on electricity bills than on gas bills (50,015 versus 25,532).

[1] Data sources: accounts with bill debt indicators (CCR115, CCR116, CCR120, R91, R92, R96); accounts indicators (CCR1, CCR2, CCR4, CCR5, R1, R3); average bill debt indicators (CCR118, CCR119, CCR121, R94, R95, R97); disconnection events indicators (CCR40, CCR42, R33, R35).

Figure 2: Residential electricity and gas customers with bill debt



Source: Accounts with bill debt indicators (CCR115, CCR120, R91, R96).

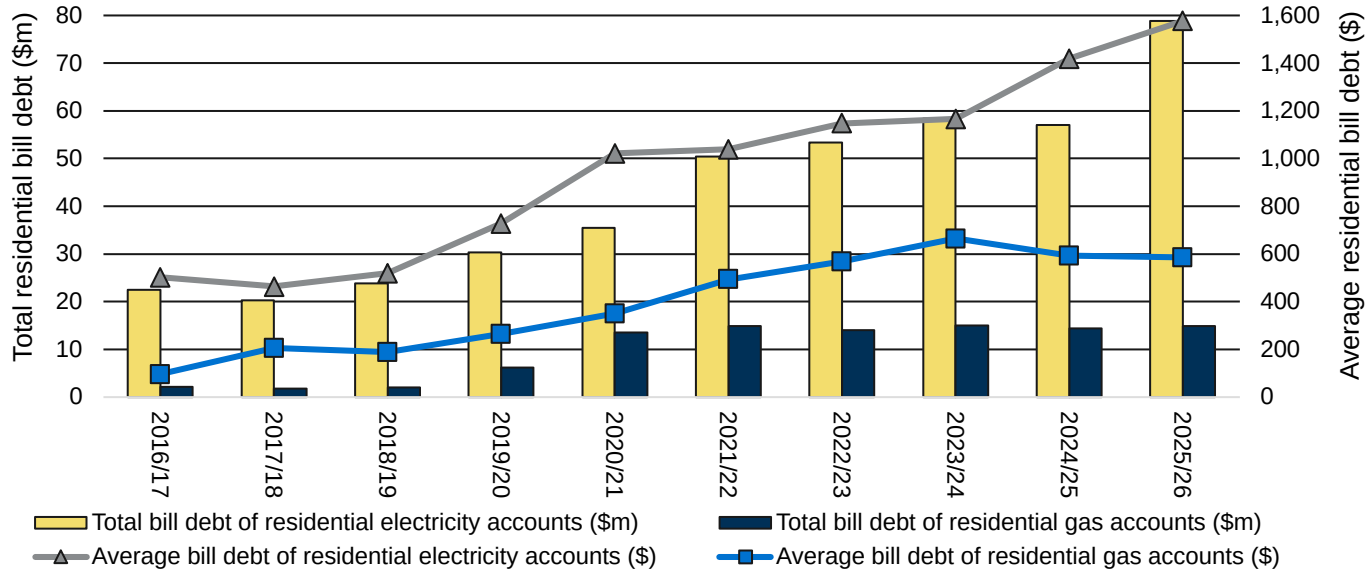
Average bill debt for these customers also increased in 2025/26, growing 11 per cent (grey line, Figure 3, right axis). Both the total and average bill debt for residential electricity customers rose after the State Government paused disconnections for non-payment during the pandemic.

Between 2022 and 2026, the total amount owed on electricity bills by residential customers increased by 57 per cent (Figure 3, left axis), far beyond the 9 per cent increase in the Perth electricity price index from June 2022 to June 2026.[2] Average bill debt during this period increased from $1,038 in 2022 to $1,577 in 2026 (Figure 3, right axis).

For residential gas customers, total bill debt increased 649 per cent from 2019 ($2 million) to $15 million in 2026 (Figure 3, left axis). For the first time in 5 years average bill debt remained relatively stable in 2026, declining only 1 per cent compared to 2025 (blue line, Figure 3).

2 The Australian Bureau of Statistics time series A130392019L from TABLE 10. CPI: Group, Sub-group and Expenditure Class, Index Numbers by Capital City (online) shows that the Perth electricity price index rose from 90.60 for the 2022 June quarter to 100 for the 2026 June quarter. Electricity tariffs for small use customers are regulated by the State Government (online).

Figure 3: Bill debt of residential electricity and gas customers



Source: accounts with bill debt indicators (CCR115, CCR120, R91, R96); average bill debt indicators (CCR118, CCR121, R94, R97).

Both Synergy and Horizon Power reported increases in average residential bill debt in 2026, compared to then previous year. Average residential bill debt for Synergy customers rose 11 per cent to $1,567 in 2026, while bill debt for Horizon customers rose 23 per cent to $1,823 in 2026.

Residential customers owe significantly less debt to gas retailers than to electricity retailers. As at 30 June 2026, the average residential gas bill debt was $595 for Alinta Energy customers, $305 for Kleenheat customers and $431 for AGL customers.

Business accounts - Bill debt

Business accounts make up just 9 per cent of small use electricity accounts and 1 per cent of gas accounts.

As at 30 June 2026 there were 1,739 business accounts with electricity bill debt, and 270 owing money on gas bills. For business customers, average bill debt was $2,848 for electricity and $1,967 for gas.

Detailed data from 2014 to 2026 can be found in the ERA's energy retailer and distributor dashboards.