



Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal

Electricity retail businesses' performance against customer service indicators in NSW

For the period 1 July 2003 to 30 June 2008

Electricity — Information Paper
March 2009

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1 Introduction

This information paper discusses the level of customer service provided by electricity retailers in NSW. It is one in a series of information papers published by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal of NSW (IPART) which aims to ensure that all stakeholders, including customers, have ready access to information about electricity distribution and retail businesses.

As at 30 June 2008, there were 26 companies holding electricity retail supplier licences in NSW. Of these, 13 supplied electricity to small retail customers in 2007/08. Under the current regulatory regime, all electricity retailers licensed to operate in NSW are required to report annually on a series of customer service indicators that provide some indication of the affordability and accessibility of electricity services and of customers' satisfaction with the quality of service they receive. IPART monitors and assesses the retailers' performance against these indicators each year and compares their current performance with performance in previous years.

IPART assesses electricity retailers' performance against the following indicators:

- ▼ disconnections due to non-payment of bills (including disconnection of those on payment plans, pensions and the number of customers who are disconnected more than once in the same year)
- ▼ reconnections in the same name
- ▼ use of alternative payment methods by customers having difficulty paying bills
- ▼ the 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)
- ▼ call centre responsiveness
- ▼ the number of customer complaints.

1.1 Overview of electricity retailers' performance

IPART has analysed all NSW electricity retailers' current and historical data to identify trends and to compare the retailers' performance. The key findings for 2007/08 are:

- ▼ There were 18,162 disconnections of residential small retail customers due to non payment of bills in 2007/08, representing 0.6 per cent of all NSW small retail residential electricity customers. This figure is slightly lower than the 18,339 disconnections reported in 2006/07.
- ▼ Of these customer disconnections, 31.5 per cent were on payment plans prior to disconnection, 14.5 per cent were on pensions and 9.8 per cent had been disconnected more than once in the same year.

- ▼ There were 1,398 non-residential customer disconnections in both 2007/08 and 2006/07 representing 0.5 per cent of all NSW non-residential small retail customers in both years respectively.
- ▼ Approximately 3.3 per cent of all NSW small retail customers use instalment plans (a slight increase on 2006/07 levels of 3.1 per cent).
- ▼ The use of Centrelink's Centrepay increased slightly with 4.1 per cent of NSW small retail customers reportedly using it compared with 3.9 per cent in 2006/07 and 1.7 per cent in 2005/06.
- ▼ The percentage of security deposits held from residential small retail customers by retailers continues to decrease with 4.9 per cent held in 2007/08 compared to 6.1 per cent in 2006/07 and 7.4 per cent in 2005/06. In line with this trend, the percentage of security deposits held by retailers for more than 12 months is also decreasing at 2.2 per cent in 2007/08 compared with 3.7 per cent in 2006/07 and 4.3 per cent in 2005/06.
- ▼ There was some improvement in retailers' call centre performance in 2007/08 with only 4.2 per cent of calls being abandoned or dropped out before being answered by a human operator compared to 6.0 per cent in 2006/07. Likewise, the percentage of calls answered by a human operator within 30 seconds improved with 75.3 per cent in 2007/08 compared to 65.5 per cent in 2006/07.
- ▼ Complaints about retail supply matters have decreased slightly in 2007/08, representing 0.4 per cent of total small retail customers as compared to 0.5 per cent in 2006/07. However, as a proportion of this figure, billing complaints have increased from 22.6 per cent in 2006/07 to 48.9 per cent in 2007/08. IPART notes that several large retailers undertook major IT system upgrades during the year resulting in transitional implementation issues and billing problems.

The sections below provide more detail on each indicator with a comparison of retailers' performance over the five year period to 30 June 2008.

Note:

When looking at the data presented in sections below, it is important to note that:

- ▼ The bulk of small retail customers in NSW are supplied by the three standard retail suppliers, which supply approximately 83 per cent of the total NSW customer base.¹
 - ▼ Country Energy and Australian Inland Energy merged on 1 July 2005. Their statistics for previous years have been combined for comparative purposes.
 - ▼ AGL Electricity's retail customers were transferred to AGL sales in March 2006. AGL's previous statistics have been combined for comparative purposes.
-

¹ The standard retail suppliers are EnergyAustralia, Integral Energy and Country Energy.

2 Disconnections due to non-payment of bills

Disconnection of essential services is expensive for both the consumer and the provider. It creates further hardship for consumers who are already facing financial difficulties. Most electricity retail suppliers have adopted or are in the process of adopting hardship policies to better protect and assist vulnerable customers who are having difficulties paying their bills.

In response to a significant increase in the disconnection rate in 2004/05, the Minister for Energy established a disconnections working group. As a consequence of this group's work, the government amended *the Electricity Supply (General) Regulation 2001*. A new regulation came into effect on 1 July 2007, requiring all electricity retail suppliers to operate a payment plan with respect to customers facing financial difficulties and to offer this plan to those customers before taking any action to discontinue their energy supply.

Table 2.1 Total residential and non-residential disconnections for non-payment of electricity bills in NSW

Type of Customer	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Residential	21,394	26,931	24,056	18,339	18,162
As a per cent of residential customers	0.8	1.0%	0.9%	0.7%	0.6%
Non-residential	1,122	1,384	1,572	1,398	1,398 ^a
As a per cent of non-residential customers	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5

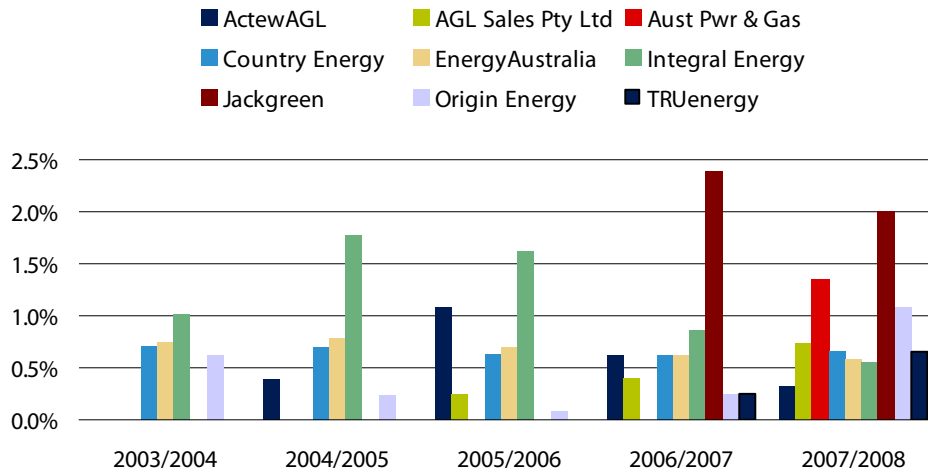
^a Coincidentally, there were 1,398 non-residential customer disconnections reported for both years 2006/07 and 2007/08.

These initiatives appear to have led to a small reduction in the disconnection rate among electricity small retail residential customers. In 2007/08 this rate was 0.6 per cent compared to 0.7 per cent in 2006/07 and 0.9 per cent in 2005/06. Disconnection rates for non-residential small retail customers are low and have remained steady at 0.5 per cent over the last four years.

2.1 Disconnections of residential small retail customers

Figure 2.1 shows the number of disconnections of residential small retail customers for non-payment of bills for each retail supplier as a percentage of its total residential small retail customer base (its residential disconnection rate).

Figure 2.1 Percentage of residential disconnections for non-payment of bills in NSW, by retailer



Jackgreen recorded the highest residential disconnection rate of all NSW retail suppliers at 2.0 per cent. However, this rate is lower than the 2.4 per cent recorded by Jackgreen in 2006/07. Jackgreen has advised that until 2006/07, it did not disconnect any customers. This resulted in a backlog of customers that had a long history of default on payments. Jackgreen advises that despite implementing appropriate payment plan procedures, many customers have simply not paid their bills. Jackgreen has advised that they have implemented a more comprehensive credit checking policy before signing up customers which should reduce its disconnection rate in future.

Australian Power and Gas recorded the next highest disconnection rate (1.3 per cent). However, this company has only a small customer base with less than 50 customers disconnected.

Origin Energy's disconnection rate increased from 0.2 per cent in 2006/07, to 1.1 per cent in 2007/08. Origin has indicated that in the past it had a very conservative disconnection policy and only disconnected customers as a last resort. Previously, its disconnection rate was much lower than the NSW average (see Figure 2.1). Origin advises that during the year, it began to 'catch up' with legitimate customer disconnections. Origin advises that it maintains hardship policies for customers facing financial difficulties and will monitor its disconnection rate going forward.

In its Annual Report for 2007/08, the Energy and Water Ombudsman of NSW (EWON) reported a 32 per cent increase of complaints from customers facing disconnection or who have been disconnected.² Although this statistic appears to be inconsistent with disconnection figures reported to IPART, it should be noted that EWON complaints in this area do not necessarily equate to the number of customer disconnections. What is more of a concern to IPART is that EWON has also noted

² Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW, *Annual Report 2007/08*, p 2.

some cases where retailers may not be applying disconnection procedures in line with approved regulations and licence conditions. IPART intends to conduct audits of all retailers early in 2009 to investigate their compliance with disconnection procedures as well as with other licence obligations and reporting requirements.

2.2 Disconnections of residential small retail customers on payment plans, pensions and more than once at the same address

For the first time commencing this year, retailers have been required to provide additional statistics on disconnections affecting residential small retail customers if they were:

- ▼ on payment plans prior to disconnection
- ▼ pensioners
- ▼ disconnected at the same address on more than one occasion.

Table 2.2 Categories of residential small retail customers prior to disconnection in 2007/08

	On payment plans	Who were on pensions	Disconnected more than once at same address
Number of residential small retail customers	5,712	2642	1779
As a percentage of residential small retail disconnections	31.5	14.5	9.8

Table 2.2 shows the total number of residential small retail customers in each of these categories in 2007/08 and as a percentage of total residential small retail customer disconnections.

Figure 2.2 NSW customers on payment plans prior to disconnection as percentage of residential small retail disconnections, by retailer

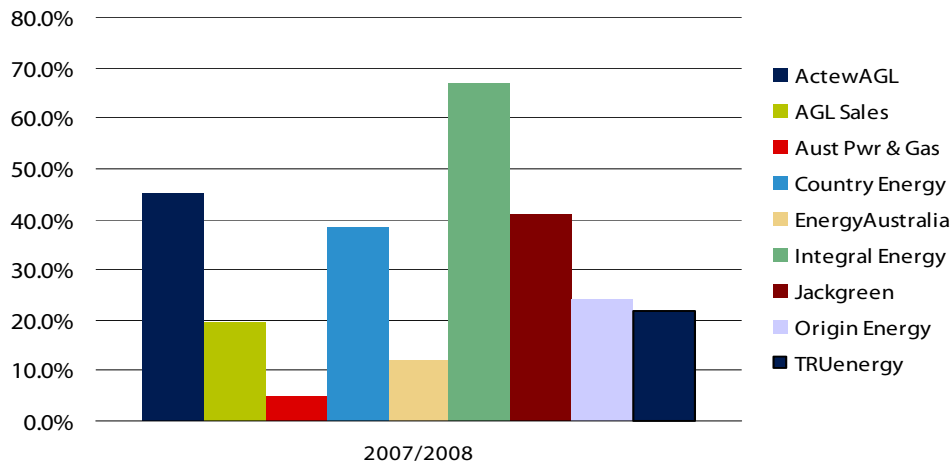


Figure 2.2 compares the percentage of customers on payment plans prior to disconnection for individual retailers. Overall, 31.5 per cent of residential small retail customers were on payment plans prior to disconnection. However, individual retailers have reported varying levels of customers on payment plans prior to disconnection. The statistics were collected for the first time this year and are difficult to interpret. Retailers with high levels of customers on payment plans appear to have provided access to payment plans for customers facing payment difficulty as required. However, whether these payment plans were set at affordable levels is difficult to determine. IPART’s proposed audits of all retailers in 2009 will assist in determining whether disconnection requirements are being met.

Figure 2.3 Pensioners disconnected as a percentage of residential customers disconnections – by retailer

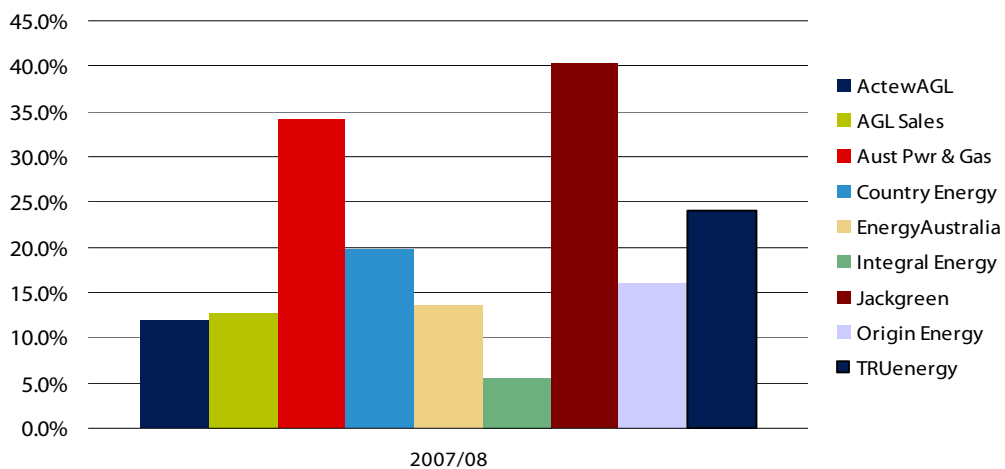


Figure 2.3 compares the percentage of customers disconnected that were also pensioners³ for each retailer. Customers on pensions made up 14.5 per cent of total residential small retail disconnections.

Figure 2.4 Percentage of residential customers disconnected more than once in same year - by retailer

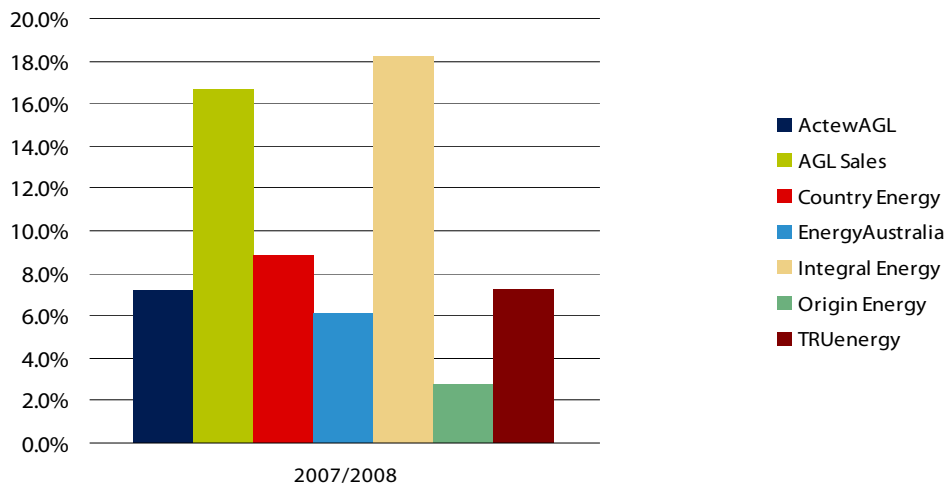


Figure 2.4 compares the percentage of residential customers disconnected more than once at the same address for each retailer respectively. Overall, 9.8 per cent of total residential small retail disconnections were of customers disconnected more than once in the same year.

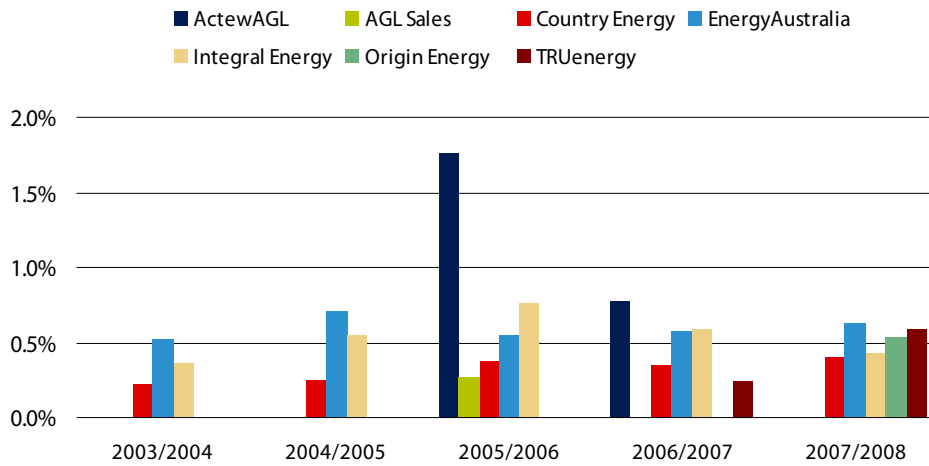
2.3 Disconnections of non-residential small retail customers

The overall number (1,398) and percentage (0.5) of non-residential small retail customer disconnections remained stable in 2007/08.

Figure 2.5 shows the number of disconnections of non-residential small retail customers for non-payment of bills for each retailer as a percentage of its total non-residential small retail customers (its non-residential disconnection rate).

³ Pensioners are defined as customers receiving a pensioner energy rebate.

Figure 2.5 Percentage of non-residential disconnections for non-payment of bills in NSW by retailer



A small number of retailers' reported slightly higher non-residential disconnection rates in 2007/08 (EnergyAustralia, Origin Energy and TRUenergy), however these rates are still well below 1 per cent when measured against their total non-residential small retail customer base.

3 Reconnections in the same name

Figure 3.1 Percentage of NSW residential customers disconnected for non-payment of bills whose supply was reconnected in the same name, by retailer

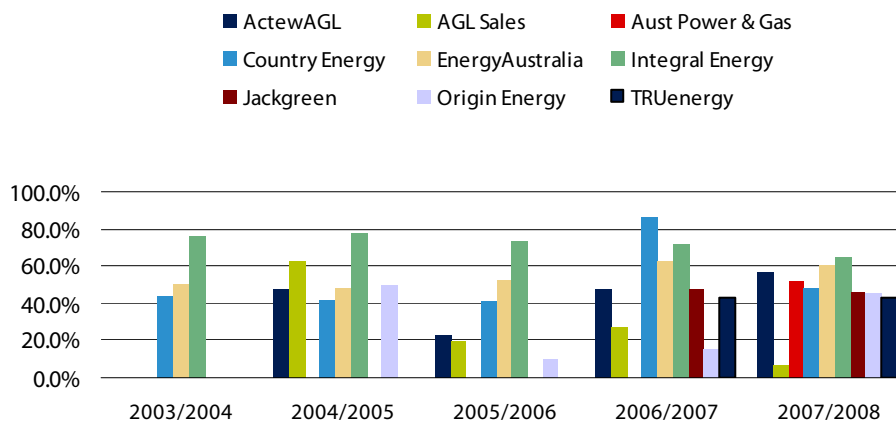


Figure 3.1 shows the percentage of residential small retail customers disconnected for non-payment of bills in NSW whose supply was subsequently reconnected in the same name.⁴ The overall number of residential customers disconnected and then reconnected in the same name decreased by approximately 26 per cent in 2007/08 as compared to 2006/07.

Figure 3.2 Percentage of non-residential customers disconnected for non-payment of bills whose supply was reconnected in the same name, by retailer

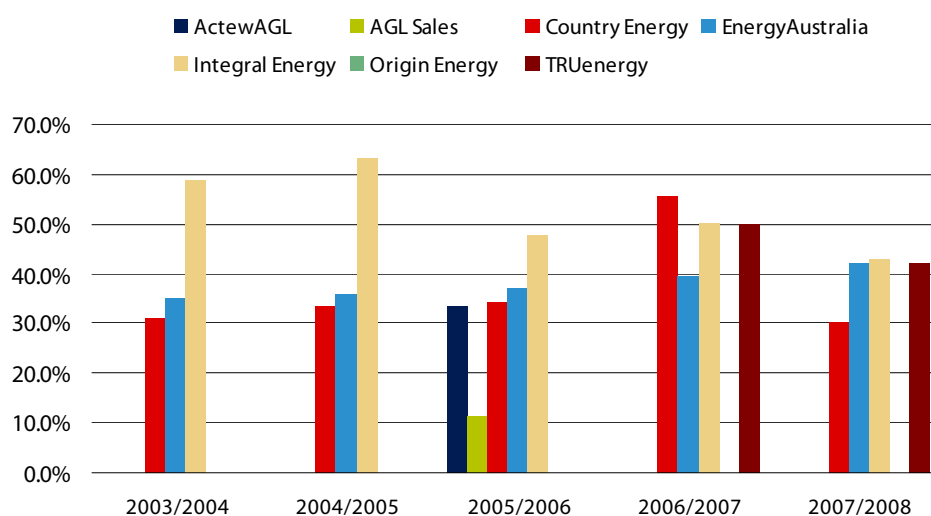


Figure 3.2 shows the percentage of non-residential small retail customers disconnected for non-payment of bills in NSW whose supply was subsequently reconnected in the same name. The overall number of non-residential customers disconnected and then reconnected in the same name decreased by approximately 13 per cent in 2007/08 as compared to 2006/07.

4 Use of alternative payment methods

In various degrees, retailers in NSW offer 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, protecting customers from disconnection while they participate in programs, referring them to a financial relief agency or financial counsellor, and checking their meter for accuracy.

⁴ IPART considers this affordability indicator (both residential and non-residential) should be amended for consistency with data collected in Victoria and South Australia, where the indicator is limited to reconnections within seven days of disconnection. IPART considers this would make the indicator more useful, and allow comparison of the performance of NSW retailers to other jurisdictions. Performance indicators are not set by IPART but are established by the Minister for Energy.

From 1 July 2007, a new regulation made it a requirement that all retailers offer payment plans to customers experiencing financial difficulties before they take any action to discontinue their supply. Payment plans make it possible for customers to pay their outstanding accounts over time and manage their consumption better. As a result they can help retailers reduce their disconnection rate.

In 2007/08, 93,072 NSW customers were using instalment plans, representing a 6.3 per cent increase compared to 2006/07.

Figure 4.1 Percentage of NSW residential small retail customers using instalment plans, by retailer

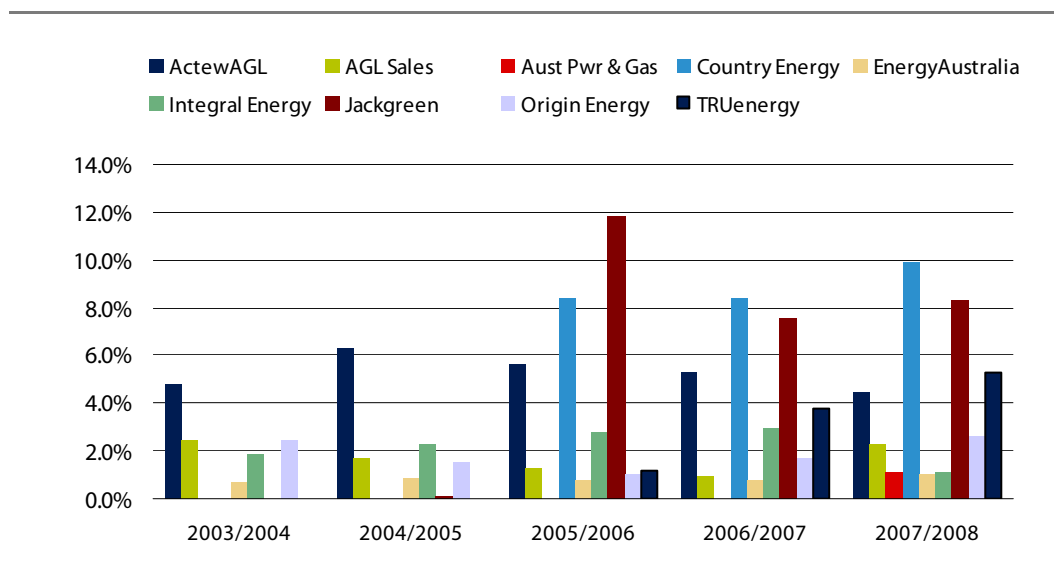


Figure 4.1 shows the percentage of small retail residential customers paying off outstanding accounts under an instalment payment plan for each retailer. Overall, approximately 3.3 per cent of all NSW customers use instalment plans, compared to 3.1 per cent in 2006/07. Country Energy had the highest percentage of customers on instalment plans in 2007/08 at close to 10 per cent. Jackgreen had over 8 per cent of its customers using payment plans.

Figure 4.2 Percentage of NSW customers using Centrelink's Centrepay, by retailer

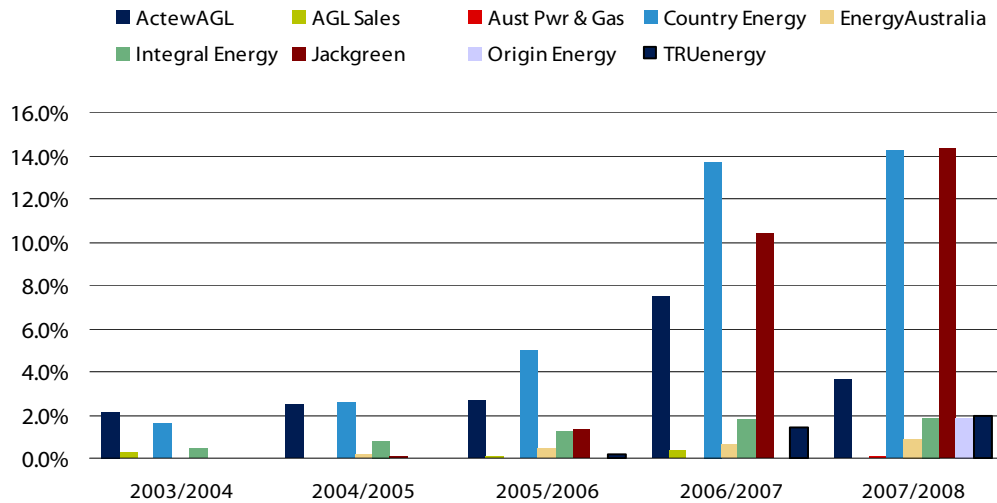


Figure 4.2 shows the percentage of small retail customers using Centrelink's Centrepay bill payment facility for each retailer. Centrepay is a free service that allows Centrelink clients to pay for essential living expenses such as electricity, gas, water and rent) through a direct bill payment facility before their Centrelink payment is deposited into their bank account. By encouraging customers having difficulty paying their electricity bills to use Centrepay, retailers provide customers with an option that can help manage and budget for their bills and thus avoid disconnection. Overall, the use of Centrelink's Centrepay has increased from 1.7 per cent in 2005/06, to 3.9 per cent in 2006/07, and 4.1 per cent in 2007/08.

5 Security deposits held

A small retail customer supplied under a standard form customer supply contract by a standard retailer has certain rights in respect to security deposits under IPART's current retail pricing determination.⁵ A small retail customer who is required to pay a security deposit, and who pays in the form of cash, cheque or credit card, is eligible for that deposit to be refunded when they have completed:

- a) for residential small retail customers, on-time payment of bills for 12 months from the date of the first bill, or
- b) for business small retail customers, on-time payment of bills for 24 months from the date of the first bill and the maintenance of a satisfactory credit rating in the reasonable opinion of the standard retail supplier.

⁵ IPART, *NSW electricity regulated retail tariffs and charges 2007 to 2010*, June 2007, Determination No. 1, 2007.

Figure 5.1 Percentage of NSW residential customers who had security deposits held by their retailer on 30 June

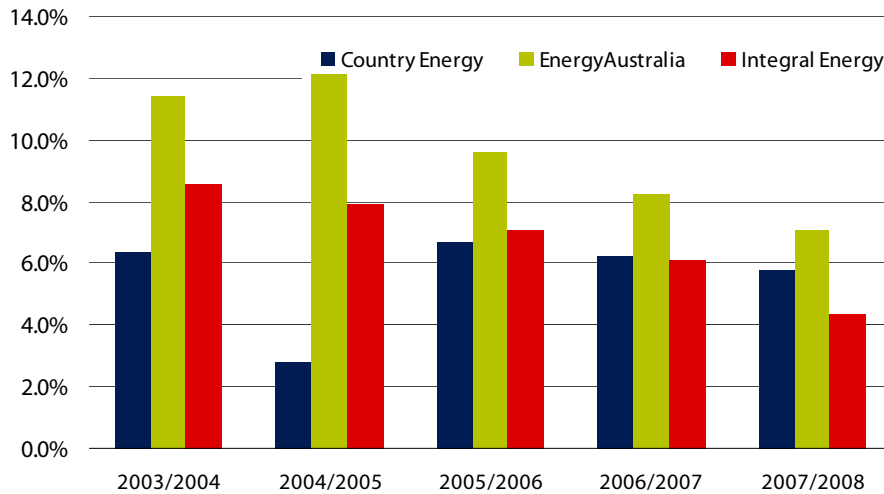


Figure 5.1 shows the percentage of small retail residential customers who had security deposits held by their retailer on 30 June and compares these percentages to previous years. The proportion of residential customers who had security deposits held by their standard retailer continues to decline in 2007/08 at 4.9 per cent compared to 6.1 per cent in 2006/07 and 7.4 per cent in 2005/06.

Figure 5.2 Percentage of security deposits from residential small retail customers held by retailers for longer than 12 months

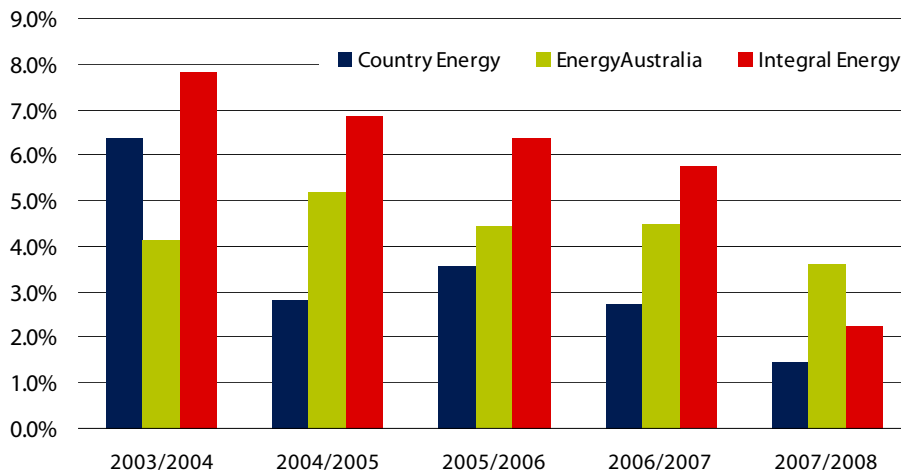


Figure 5.2 shows the percentage of security deposits from residential customers held longer than 12 months.⁶ The proportion of customers whose deposits were held longer than 12 months has also declined for each standard retailer.

Figure 5.3 Percentage of non-residential small retail customers who had security deposits held by their retailer on 30 June

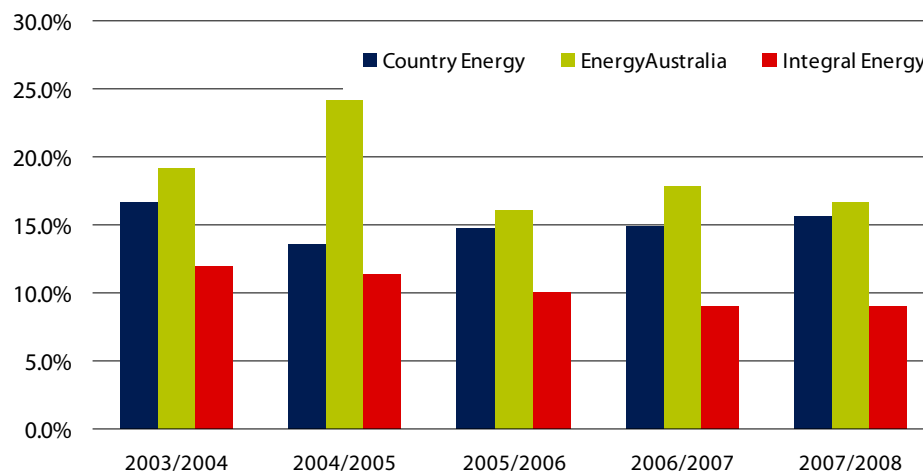


Figure 5.3 shows the percentage of small retail non-residential customers who had security deposits held by their retailer on 30 June 2008 and compares these percentages to previous years. The proportion of non-residential customers who had security deposits held by their retailer increased for Country Energy, declined for EnergyAustralia and remained the same for Integral Energy.

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

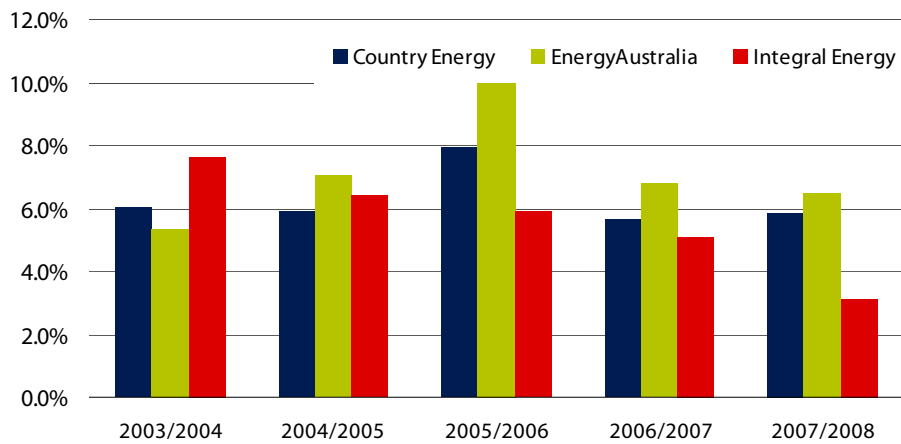


Figure 5.4 shows the percentage of security deposits from non-residential customers held longer than 24 months. The proportion of these customers whose deposits were held longer than 24 months increased slightly for Country Energy, but decreased for both EnergyAustralia and Integral Energy.

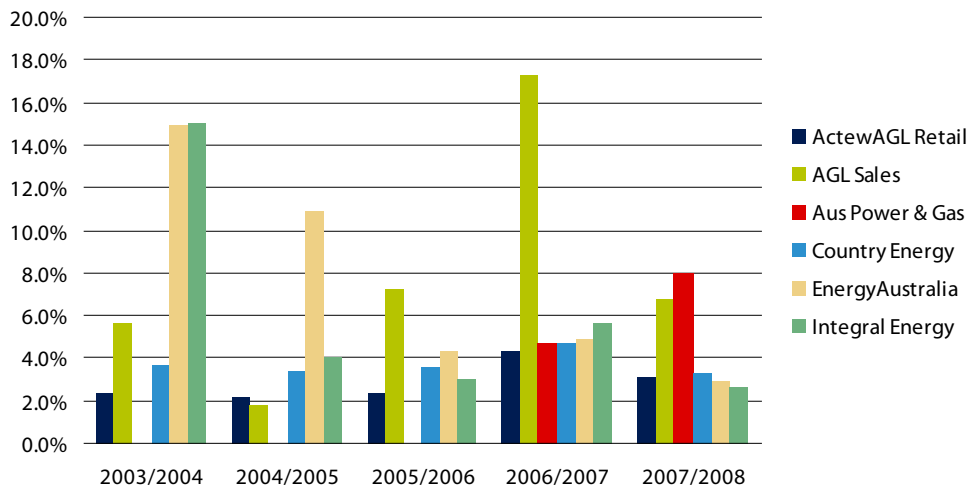
6 Call centre responsiveness

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 This telephone service must be able to receive notice of, and give information about, customers' bills and customer connections arranged by the supplier.

This data includes calls to complaint and enquiry lines, including lines that are initially answered by an automated interactive voice response system that makes 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.

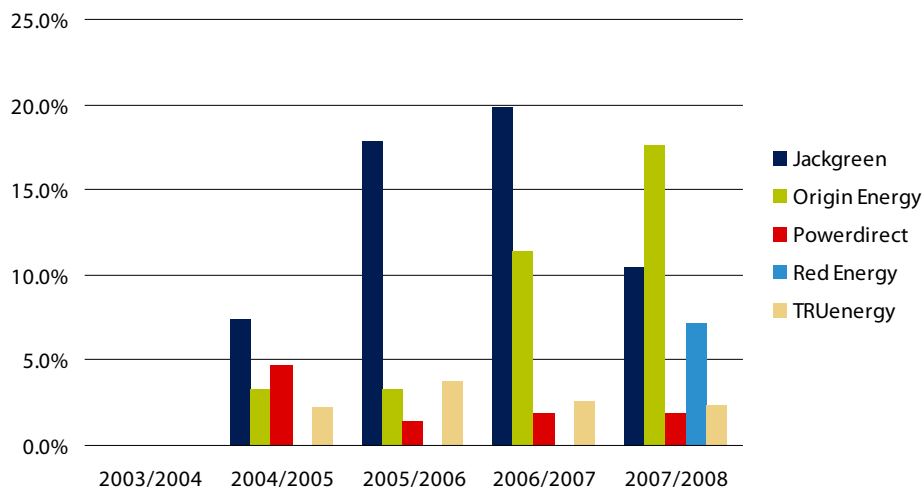
⁷ Established under clause 40 and Schedule 2, part 2, clause 10(2) of the *Electricity Supply (General) Regulation 2001*, (Appendix 2).

Figure 6.1 Percentage of calls that were abandoned or dropped out before being answered by a human operator



Figures 6.1 and 6.2 show the percentage of calls to retailers' telephone services that were abandoned or dropped out before being answered by a human operator.⁸

Figure 6.2 Percentage of calls that were abandoned or dropped out before being answered by a human operator

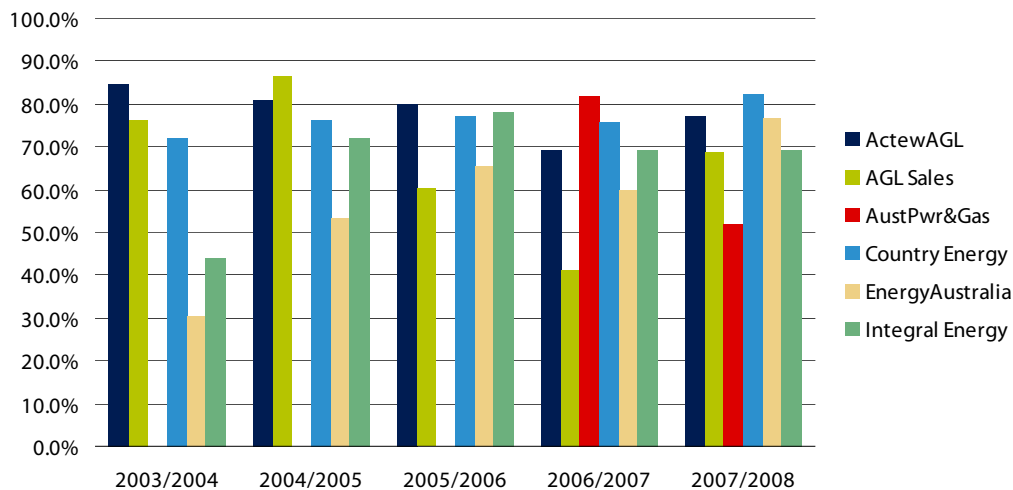


Overall, call centre performance improved in 2007/08 with only 4.2 per cent of calls being abandoned or dropping out before being answered by a human operator compared to 6 per cent in 2006/07. One exception was Origin Energy whose call centre performance deteriorated in 2007/08. Origin Energy advised that it encountered technical problems during the year while implementing its new billing

⁸ In Figures 14 and 15, as there are 11 retailers represented, they have been split into two charts for ease of presentation.

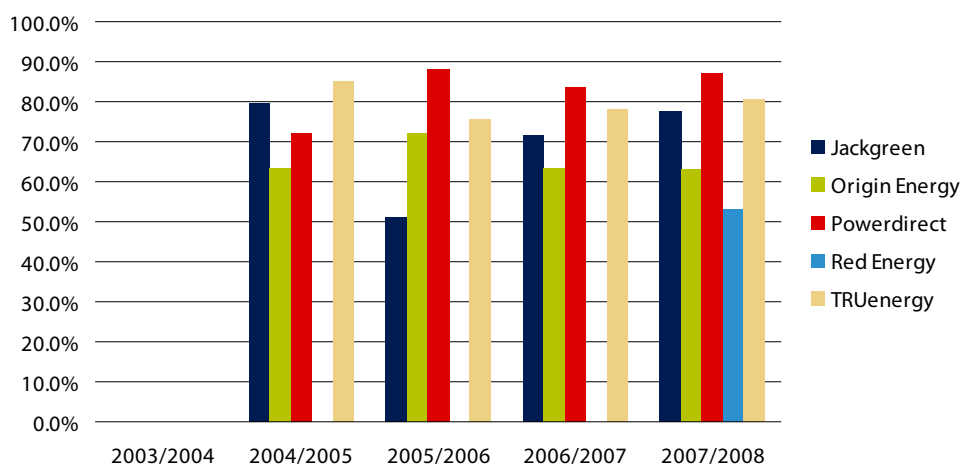
and customer relationship management system. This impacted its call centre performance. Origin believes that its performance should improve now that its new systems are in place.

Figure 6.3 Percentage of calls answered by a human operator within 30 seconds



Figures 6.3 and 6.4 show the percentage of calls that were answered by a human operator within 30 seconds.⁹ Most retailers reported a lower percentage of calls being abandoned or dropping out before being answered by a human operator compared to last year. Overall in NSW 75.3 per cent of calls were answered by a human operator within 30 seconds in 2007/08, compared to 65.5 per cent in 2006/07.

Figure 6.4 Percentage of calls answered by a human operator within 30 seconds



⁹ In Figures 16 and 17, the retailers have been split into two charts for ease of presentation.

7 Customer complaints

Table 7.1 shows the total number of customer complaints about electricity retail supply matters in NSW. This performance measure is defined as the number of customers who have contacted their retailer to express dissatisfaction with some aspect of the service and seek a resolution. The indicator includes customer complaints to the retailer about retail supply matters and its failure to observe its procedures, but does not include complaints made about the retailer to any other body (such as EWON).

Table 7.1 Number of small retail customer complaints about retail supply matters in NSW

	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Number of complaints related to marketing	NA	1,255	3,816	3,225	1,570
Number of complaints related to billing	6,576	3,334	5,184	3,273	6,276
Number of complaints about other matters	5,203	7,449	7,349	8,003	4,982
Total number of complaints	11,779	12,038	16,349	14,501	12,828
Total complaints as a percentage of customers	0.4%	0.4%	0.5%	0.5%	0.4%

The overall number of customer complaints about retail supply matters decreased in 2007/08 representing 0.4 per cent when expressed as a proportion of the number of NSW small retail customers. Marketing complaints represented only 12.2 per cent of total complaints in 2007/08 compared to 22.2 per cent in 2006/07. This appears to reflect a downturn in marketing activity during the reporting period. However, the proportion of complaints related to billing increased in 2007/08 to 48.9 per cent compared to 22.6 in 2006/07. This could in part be attributed to two large retailers that undertook major information technology and customer service system upgrades during the period, resulting in some transitional implementation issues including billing problems.

Figure 7.1 Types of electricity complaints reported to EWON 2007/08¹⁰

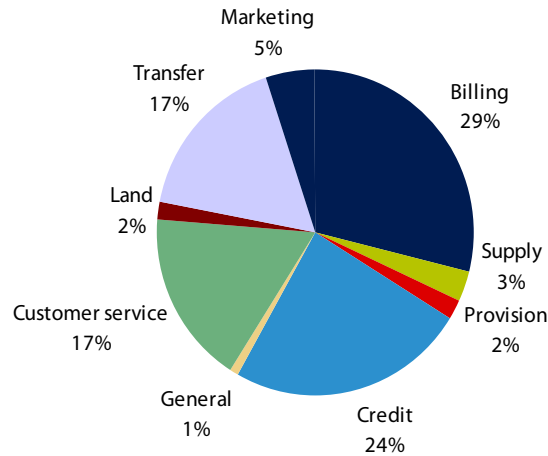
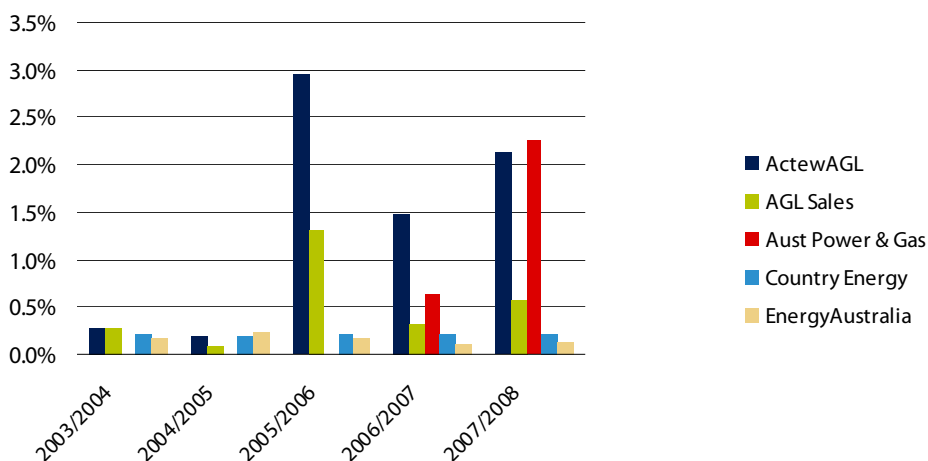


Figure 7.1 charts the complaints statistics published in EWON’s annual report in order to compare these with data provided by the retailers to IPART. Please note that EWON categorises customer complaints differently to the data reported by the electricity retailers to IPART. Also the complaints made to EWON represent only a small subset of the complaints made to the retailers themselves. Nevertheless, consistent with IPART’s statistics, EWON’s report shows that billing was the largest area of customer complaints and noted a downturn in marketing complaints.

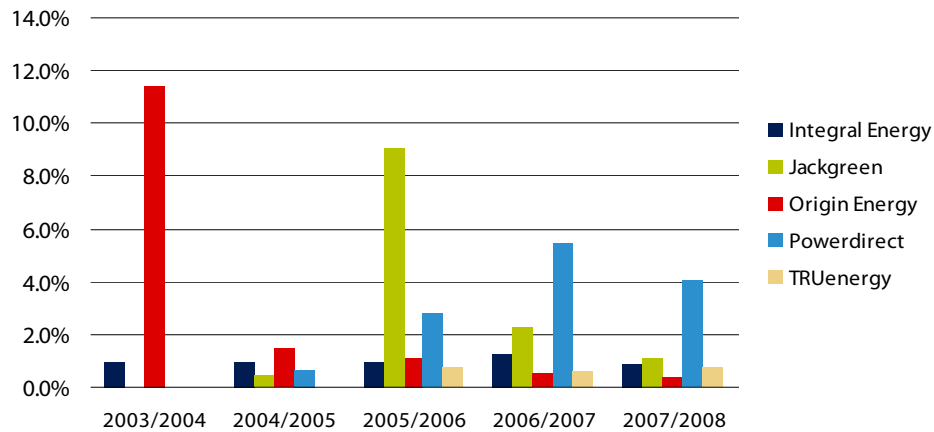
Figure 7.2 Customer complaints as a percentage of retailers’ total small retail customers



¹⁰ Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW; *Annual Report 2007/08*, p 14.

Figures 7.2 and 7.3 show customer complaints received by individual retailers as a percentage of their total number of small retail customers. Overall, complaints as a percentage of total small retail customers in NSW remained low at 0.4 per cent.

Figure 7.3 Customer complaints as a percentage of retailers' total small retail customers



As seen in Figure 7.3, Powerdirect had the highest percentage of customer complaints in 2007/08 representing 4.1 per cent of total small retail customers. However this is a decrease from 2006/07 at 5.4 per cent.



Appendices

A Retailer customer service performance 2003/04 to 2007/08

Table A.1 Percentage residential small retail customers disconnected

	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
ActewAGL	0.0%	0.4%	1.1%	0.6%	0.3%
AGL Sales Pty Ltd	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	0.4%	0.7%
Aust Power & Gas	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.3%
Country Energy	0.7%	0.7%	0.6%	0.6%	0.7%
EnergyAustralia	0.7%	0.8%	0.7%	0.6%	0.6%
Integral Energy	1.0%	1.8%	1.6%	0.9%	0.6%
Jackgreen	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.4%	2.0%
Origin Energy	0.6%	0.2%	0.1%	0.2%	1.1%
TRUenergy	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.7%
Total NSW residential small retail disconnections	21,394	26,931	24,056	18,339	18,162
Residential disconnections as % of total residential customers	0.8%	1.0%	0.9%	0.7%	0.6%

Table A.2 Percentage non-residential small retail customers disconnected

	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07
ActewAGL	0.0%	0.0%	1.8%	0.8%
AGL Sales	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%
Country Energy	0.2%	0.3%	0.4%	0.3%
EnergyAustralia	0.5%	0.7%	0.5%	0.6%
Integral Energy	0.4%	0.5%	0.8%	0.6%
Origin Energy	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
TRUenergy	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%
Total NSW non-residential small retail disconnections				
Non-residential disconnections as % of total non-residential customers	0.4%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%

Table A.3 Customers on payment plans prior to disconnection as percentage of residential small retail disconnections

	2007/08
ActewAGL	45.2%
AGL Sales	19.4%
Aust Power & Gas	4.9%
Country Energy	38.4%
EnergyAustralia	12.2%
Integral Energy	66.9%
Jackgreen	41.1%
Origin Energy	24.2%
TRUenergy	21.9%
Total customers on payment plans prior to disconnection	5,712
Customers on payment plans prior to disconnection as % of total disconnections	31.5%

Table A.4 Pensioners disconnected as a percentage of residential customer disconnections

	2007/08
ActewAGL	11.9%
AGL Sales	12.8%
Aust Power & Gas	34.1%
Country Energy	19.7%
EnergyAustralia	13.7%
Integral Energy	5.6%
Jackgreen	40.4%
Origin Energy	16.0%
TRUenergy	24.0%
Total customers on pensions prior to disconnection	2,642
Customers on pensions prior to disconnection as % of total disconnections	14.5%

Table A.5 Percentage of residential customers disconnected more than once in the same year

	2007/08
ActewAGL	7.1%
AGL Sales	16.6%
Aust Power & Gas	0%
Country Energy	8.9%
EnergyAustralia	6.1%
Integral Energy	18.2%
Jackgreen	0%
Origin Energy	2.8%
TRUenergy	7.3%
Total customers disconnected more than once in the year	1,779
Customers disconnected more than once in the same year as % of total disconnections	9.8%

Table A.6 Percentage residential small retail customers disconnected whose supply was reconnected in the same name

	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
ActewAGL	0.0%	46.9%	22.5%	47.4%	57.1%
AGL Sales	0.0%	62.5%	19.2%	27.2%	6.1%
Aust Power & Gas	NA	NA	NA	0.0%	51.2%
Country Energy	44.2%	42.3%	40.6%	85.6%	48.2%
EnergyAustralia	50.4%	48.7%	52.8%	62.2%	60.4%
Integral Energy	76.3%	77.9%	73.2%	72.2%	64.4%
Jackgreen	NA	0.0%	0.0%	47.0%	46.3%
Origin Energy	0.0%	50.0%	9.7%	15.1%	45.2%
TRUenergy	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	42.9%	43.1%
Grand Total	58.4%	61.8%	59.6%	67.4%	50.4%

Table A.7 Percentage non-residential small retail customers disconnected and reconnected in the same name

	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
ActewAGL	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%
AGL Sales	0.0%	0.0%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Country Energy	30.9%	33.2%	34.2%	55.6%	30.1%
EnergyAustralia	35.0%	36.0%	37.0%	39.5%	42.1%
Integral Energy	58.7%	63.2%	48.0%	50.1%	43.2%
Origin Energy	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
TRUenergy	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	42.1%
Grand Total	39.3%	42.3%	38.9%	45.4%	39.6%

Table A.8 Percentage residential small retail customers using instalment plans

	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
ActewAGL	4.8%	6.3%	5.6%	5.3%	4.5%
AGL Sales	2.4%	1.7%	1.3%	0.9%	2.3%
Aust Power & Gas	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.1%
Country Energy	0.0%	0.0%	8.4%	8.3%	9.9%
EnergyAustralia	0.7%	0.8%	0.7%	0.8%	1.0%
Integral Energy	1.8%	2.3%	2.8%	2.9%	1.1%
Jackgreen	0.0%	0.1%	11.8%	7.5%	8.3%
Origin Energy	2.5%	1.5%	1.0%	1.7%	2.6%
TRUenergy	0.0%	0.0%	1.2%	3.8%	5.3%
Grand Total	1.90%	2.80%	3.20%	3.10%	3.30%

Table A.9 Percentage residential small retail customers using Centrelink's Centrepay

	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
ActewAGL	2.1%	2.5%	2.6%	7.5%	3.7%
AGL Sales	0.3%	0.0%	0.1%	0.4%	0.0%
Aust Pwr & Gas	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%
Country Energy	1.6%	2.6%	5.0%	13.7%	14.2%
EnergyAustralia	0.0%	0.1%	0.5%	0.7%	0.9%
Integral Energy	0.5%	0.8%	1.3%	1.7%	1.8%
Jackgreen	0.0%	0.1%	1.3%	10.4%	14.3%
Origin Energy	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.9%
TRUenergy	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	1.4%	2.0%
Grand Total	0.5%	0.9%	1.7%	3.9%	4.1%

Table A.10 Percentage residential small retail customer security deposits held as at 30 June

	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Country Energy	6.4%	2.8%	6.7%	6.2%	5.8%
EnergyAustralia	11.4%	12.1%	9.6%	8.2%	7.0%
Integral Energy	8.5%	7.9%	7.1%	6.1%	4.4%
Grand Total	10.3%	9.2%	7.4%	6.1%	4.9%

Table A.11 Percentage of residential small retail customer security deposits held for longer than 12 months

	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Country Energy	6.4%	2.8%	3.5%	2.7%	1.4%
EnergyAustralia	4.1%	5.2%	4.4%	4.5%	3.6%
Integral Energy	7.8%	6.8%	6.4%	5.8%	2.2%
Grand Total	5.6%	4.8%	4.3%	3.7%	2.2%

Table A.12 Percentage of non-residential small retail customer security deposits held as at June 30

	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Country Energy	16.7%	13.6%	14.7%	14.8%	15.7%
EnergyAustralia	19.1%	24.1%	16.0%	17.8%	16.6%
Integral Energy	12.0%	11.4%	10.1%	9.0%	9.0%
Grand Total	16.5%	16.9%	13.0%	13.2%	12.9%

Table A.13 Percentage non-residential small retail customer security deposits held longer than 24 months

	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Country Energy	6.1%	5.9%	8.0%	5.7%	5.8%
EnergyAustralia	5.3%	7.0%	9.9%	6.8%	6.5%
Integral Energy	7.6%	6.4%	5.9%	5.1%	3.1%
Grand Total	6.1%	6.4%	7.7%	5.4%	4.9%

Table A.14 Percentage of calls abandoned or dropped out

	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
ActewAGL Retail	2.3%	2.2%	2.4%	4.3%	3.1%
AGL Sales	5.6%	1.8%	7.3%	17.3%	6.8%
Aus Power & Gas	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	4.7%	8.0%
Country Energy	3.6%	3.4%	3.6%	4.7%	3.3%
EnergyAustralia	14.9%	10.8%	4.3%	4.9%	2.9%
Integral Energy	15.0%	4.0%	3.0%	5.6%	2.6%
Jackgreen	0.0%	7.5%	17.8%	19.9%	10.5%
Origin Energy	0.0%	3.3%	3.3%	11.4%	17.6%
Powerdirect	0.0%	4.7%	1.4%	1.9%	1.8%
Red Energy	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	7.2%
TRUenergy	0.0%	2.2%	3.8%	2.6%	2.3%
Grand Total	11.1%	6.7%	3.9%	6.0%	4.2%

Table A.15 Percentage of calls answered by a human operator within 30 seconds

	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
ActewAGL	84.6%	81.0%	80.0%	69.0%	77.0%
AGL Sales	76.0%	86.2%	60.1%	40.9%	68.6%
Aust Power & Gas	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	82.0%	52.0%
Country Energy	72.1%	76.0%	77.1%	75.7%	82.5%
EnergyAustralia	30.6%	53.3%	65.4%	60.0%	76.5%
Integral Energy	44.0%	72.0%	78.2%	69.0%	69.0%
Jackgreen	0.0%	79.6%	51.0%	71.6%	77.3%
Origin Energy	0.0%	63.5%	72.1%	63.6%	63.2%
Powerdirect	0.0%	71.9%	88.2%	83.6%	87.1%
Red Energy	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	53.2%
TRUenergy	0.0%	85.0%	75.4%	78.2%	80.5%
Grand Total	48.2%	65.7%	71.7%	65.5%	75.3%

Table A.16 Percentage of complaints from small retail customers about retail supply matters

	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
ActewAGL	0.3%	0.2%	3.0%	1.5%	2.1%
AGL Sales	0.3%	0.1%	1.3%	0.3%	0.6%
Aust Power & Gas	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.6%	2.3%
Country Energy	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%
EnergyAustralia	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%
Integral Energy	0.9%	0.9%	1.0%	1.2%	0.9%
Jackgreen	0.0%	0.5%	9.0%	2.3%	1.1%
Origin Energy	11.4%	1.5%	1.1%	0.5%	0.4%
Powerdirect	0.0%	0.6%	2.8%	5.4%	4.1%
TRUenergy	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%	0.6%	0.7%
Grand Total	0.4%	0.4%	0.5%	0.5%	0.4%

Table A.17 Number and percentage of customer complaints by type

	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Number of complaints related to marketing	NA	1,255	3,816	3,225	1,570
Marketing complaints as % of total complaints	0.0%	10.4%	23.3%	22.2%	12.2%
Number of complaints related to billing	6,576	3,334	5,184	3,273	6,276
Billing complaints as % of total complaints	55.8%	27.7%	31.7%	22.6%	48.9%
Number of complaints about other matters	5,203	7,449	7,349	8,003	4,982
'Other matter' complaints as % of total complaints	44.2%	61.9%	45.0%	55.2%	38.8%
Total number of complaints	11,779	12,038	16,349	14,501	12,828
Total complaints as a % of small retail customers	0.4%	0.4%	0.5%	0.5%	0.4%

B Notes and Definitions

B.1 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.

The customer statistics collected here are used in conjunction with the other statistics in this schedule to derive operating measures (eg, percentages). The customer numbers are not published without the Licence Holder's permission.

B.2 Telephone service for account inquiries

Only retailers who supplied small retail customers during the period are asked to report on their telephone service for account inquiries.

The resulting measures that may be used in IPART's compliance report are:

- ▼ Percentage of calls answered within 30 seconds.
- ▼ Percentage of calls that dropped out or were abandoned by the caller.

These measures are based upon a guaranteed customer service standard established under clause 40 and Schedule 2, Part 2, clause 10(2) of the *Electricity Supply (General) Regulation 2001*. A supply contract between a retail supplier and a small retail customer must require a supplier to provide a telephone service that operates during business hours on which a person can be connected for not less than the price of a local telephone call and that can receive notice of, and give information concerning, customers' bills and customer connection services arranged by the supplier. An automated answering service satisfies this requirement only if it makes provision for the transfer of calls to a human operator.

B.3 Supply discontinuance

Only retailers who supplied small retail customers during the period are asked to report on supply discontinuances. Each instance that supply is discontinued for failing to pay an amount due to the licence holder must be reported, 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.

The resulting measures that may be used in IPART's compliance report are:

- ▼ Proportion of residential small retail customers whose supply was discontinued during the year for failing to pay an amount due.
- ▼ Proportion of non-residential small retail customers whose supply was discontinued during the year for failing to pay an amount due.
- ▼ Number and proportion of small retail customers whose supply was discontinued during the year at a prohibited time or on a prohibited day for failing to pay an amount due.

B.4 Supply recontinuance

Only retailers who supplied small retail customers during the period are asked to report on supply recontinuances.

The resulting measures that may be used in IPART's compliance report are:

- ▼ Proportion of residential small retail customers whose supply was recontinued in the same name after being discontinued during the year for failing to pay an amount due.
- ▼ Proportion of non-residential small retail customers whose supply was recontinued in the same name after being discontinued for failing to pay an amount due.

B.5 Complaints

Only retailers who supplied small retail customers during the period are asked to report on customer complaints.

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

The complaint sub-categories (i.e. 'billing', 'marketing' and 'other matters') are to be reported using the Energy and Water Ombudsman NSW's methodology for allocating issues into categories.

Marketing has been added as a complaint sub-category from 2004/05. This data is collected to assist in monitoring the competitive retail market.

The following measures may be published by IPART are:

- ▼ Proportion of residential small retail customers that complained about retail supply matters.
- ▼ Proportion of non-residential small retail customers that complained about retail supply matters.
- ▼ Percentage of complaints from residential small retail customers that were related to billing, marketing and other matters.
- ▼ Percentage of complaints from non-residential small retail customers that were related to billing, marketing and other matters.

IPART will seek information from EWON on the number of small retail customers who took their complaint about a retailer's service to EWON.

B.6 Security deposits

Only retailers who supplied small retail customers during the period are asked to report on security deposits.

The resulting measures that may be used in IPART's compliance report are:

- ▼ Percentage of residential small retail customers that lodged security deposits.
- ▼ Percentage of non-residential small retail customers that lodged security deposits.
- ▼ Average dollar value of security deposits held from residential small retail customers.
- ▼ Average dollar value of security deposits held from non-residential small retail customers.
- ▼ Number and percentage of security deposits held from residential and non-residential small retail customers that have been held for longer than 12 months and 24 months respectively.

B.7 Payment methods

Only retailers who supplied small retail customers during the period are asked to report on payment methods.

Direct debits from a customer's bank account are to include direct debits from any financial institution, including a customer's credit card.

The resulting measures that may be used in IPART's compliance report are:

- ▼ Percentage of residential small retail customers using direct debit arrangements to pay their bills.
- ▼ Percentage of residential small retail customers paying off billing arrears under an instalment payment plan.
- ▼ Percentage of residential small retail customers using Centrelink's Centrepay bill payment facility.

