

**Submission  
No 1**

**INQUIRY INTO ELECTRICITY SUPPLY, DEMAND AND  
PRICES IN NEW SOUTH WALES**

**Name:** Mr Ronald Cross  
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To Committee Members For your consideration , I advise outline of my unsatisfactory experiences with recent dealings with Origin and AGL energy retailers and how the costs of my energy supplies are spiralling beyond my control unless of course I turn off my supply and threaten my health and basic living comforts . My last quarterly bill for electricity supplied by retailer Origin for period 89 days from 13 May 2017 to 9 August 2017 included increases to my tariff rates charged of approx 21.5 % effective 1 July 2017. I have no idea how an increase by this huge amount can be justified by the Energy Retailers other than solely to price gouge and push retailer's profits to extraordinary levels on top of similar price increase in last two previous years 1/7/2016 and 1/7/2015 To a lesser degree but still at 4 times the rate of inflation , gas tariff rates increased 8 % also on 1/7/2017. Both Origin and AGL offered similar tariff usage rates however daily supply / connection fees which are not discounted at all by either company, where higher at AGL . I have recently negotiated a new plan with AGL for both Gas and Electricity but only after speaking with 3 different AGL consultants and firmly pointing out that the meeting with the PM Malcolm Turnbull on 31 August 2017 with Retail Energy industry leaders , the PM received verbal assurances, the retailers would offer everyone their best prices and plan offers , was I offered a plan that was the best one on offer and each time I contacted them I was able to squeeze a little more each time, finally resulting in a small saving of an extra 4 % discount on Electricity and 3 % discount on Gas charges . At first I was advised they could not increase the discounts from their initial discount offers ,but they did after I referred to their offers to a close relative .. It has taken me 2 days to negotiate these discounts and numerous phone calls with many consultants and the net increase in electricity costs are reduced from 21.5% to about 17.5 % after the 4 % increase in Discount plan from 21 % to 25 % . Similarly Gas increase of 8% is reduced to 5 % after extra Discount increase from 16% to 19 % . Inshort, the Energy Retailers ratchet up their tariffs by 17 % to 20 % in July each year and then only increase the Discounts to potential new customers by a minor portion and much lesser degree which is not transparent and totally misleading. Many consumers do not even notice the tariff rate increases as retailer consultants focus on the amount of Discounts in Plan offers only to attract the customer to change over to their company . How the consumers will be able to pay for these price increments is totally beyond reason and comprehension . The Federal government has taken a bigger stick to Australia"s major banks with tax levies but stands back where far more serious price charges and profit gouging is being practiced by leading privately owned companies and State Government part owned gas and electricity suppliers . This is endangering the health and lives of every Australian I also refer to you a copy below of email sent to me from Origin Advanced Metering consulting where they respond to my email that it was confusing for me to read usage from the new smart meters installed as display codes and kilowatt usage and solar panel generation were difficult to relate to kilowatt hr totals on my bill that are used to charge out power cost/usage dollars to bill the customer . More simply the older mechanical meters movements and readings were shown in separate sections on the bill eg kilowatts used and kilowatts generated and not all lumped in together and hidden undisclosed . Surely the previous billing details should be retained to assist consumers in monitoring and comparing current to previous bills Copy email as follows Hi Ron, Thank you for your email. In relation to meter #216540551, our technical team have advised they believe it is just a small amount of energy going into the meter. Since, after your digital meter installation, the wiring was installed as requiring an off-peak/controlled load component, it is still possible to see usage. I have contacted them to ask how best to facilitate the removal of the off-peak/controlled load component from your meter and, subsequently, your electricity bill. As advised previously, there are meter types our meter providers are installing that we, as customer service consultants, require additional training on. We have both the meter read guide sent to you on 23.08.2017, as well as a "how to read your new meter" video available on our website at the following link: <https://www.originenergy.com.au/for-home/electricity-and-gas/info/digital-meter.html> . Unfortunately, the data on the meter's display will not always match up with the information Origin Energy receive for billing purposes, as the meter returns data remotely, via a 3G mobile phone network, at 15-minute intervals. You are able to view your energy usage in real-time online via our website, using a product called Energy Manager. Energy Manager provides visibility of your energy consumption and costs and greater control over your energy usage through bill prediction and energy efficiency features. This is delivered via Origin's online 'My Account' which is accessible

24/7. Energy Manager receives electricity usage information from the customer's digital meter. It allows customers to track how much electricity they're using and how much they're spending on energy each day. Should you have any additional enquiries or concerns, please feel free to reply to this email. Kind regards, Sarah M New Connections Specialist Digital Metering Consultant Origin GPO Box 186, Melbourne VIC 3001 t 1800 132 461 f 1300 132 465 e [advancedmeters@originenergy.com.au](mailto:advancedmeters@originenergy.com.au) ( end of email )

At the very least three new laws need to be passed by Governments

- 1 Eliminate all GST charges on Electricity and Gas as is with Water Charges
- 2 Set up Price Control Authority or Tribunal to approve charge rates as we have with wage award rates , medical prescribed fees rates and medical insurance rates
- 3 Set up an inquiry into the Energy retailers as is happening with the Commonwealth Bank

Unless these measures are put in place , we will soon have businesses closing down everywhere and a welfare bill that will make Australia a 5 th rate Country

When utilities and energy were supplied and managed by State and Local governments none of these problems existed and supplies were reliable with few blackouts . Now everything has been turned on it head and supply is unaffordable It is not rocket science , it has all been done before the changes and excuses about gold plating power lines etc the only gold plating now is the pockets of executives and State Government receiving over generous shared dividends instead of affordable rates for consumers thank you Ron Cross Wagga Wagga private consumer