



# Brisbane needs regional Queensland

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Brisbane *needs* regional Queensland.

“If regional Queensland is doing well then all of Queensland will prosper.”

“Regional Queensland cannot prosper when the Queensland Government has caused power bills to double and the increases keep coming.”

That’s the message from Jennifer Brownie, Coordinator of the Queensland Electricity Users Network, regarding the impact of rising regional power prices on Brisbane and Southeast Queensland residents.

Regional Queensland businesses are paying up to 30% more for electricity and regional households up to 20% more.

“Businesses across regional Queensland are doing it very tough after the Queensland Government increased electricity prices by more than 15% in just two years.”

A recent survey of nearly 800 regional Queensland businesses found that 22% of businesses were extremely concerned about their ability to pay their power bills in full and on time.

The survey covered a diverse range of businesses involved in agriculture, tourism, mining, retail and the services industries across hot humid North and Central Queensland, the cooler Southern Downs region and west to the hot climate of Mt Isa.

“It is clear the pain over power prices is widespread across all industries in regional Queensland and the pain is intensifying.”

In response to the question on the impact of rising business and household electricity bills on their regional community, the average rating was 8.5 on a scale of 1 to 10 where 10 is severely impacted. Only 4% recorded an impact of less than 5.

“If mining and agriculture are doing well so is the Queensland economy and Brisbane. These industries are not located in the suburbs of Brisbane. Thousands of Brisbane residents rely on mining and agriculture for their jobs.”

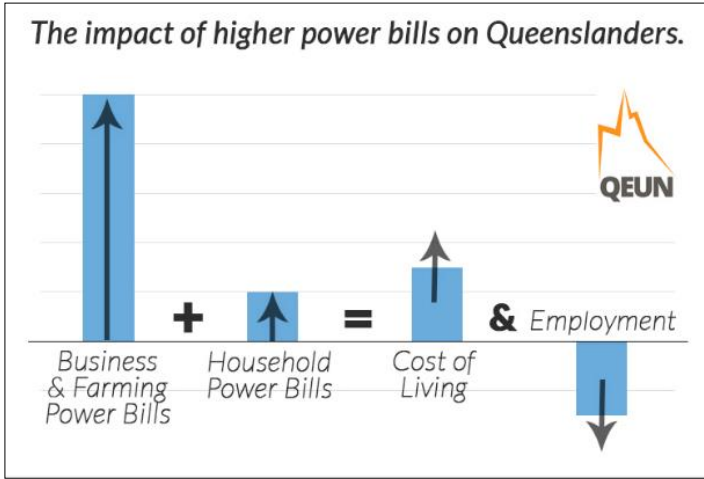
“Small business is the engine room of the economy, where most Queenslanders are employed. If your boss can’t pay his power bill then your hours or your job is at risk whether you work in Brisbane or regional Queensland.”

The Queensland Government owned Ergon Energy Retail has disconnected more small businesses for not paying their power bills in regional Queensland than in the states of South Australia, Tasmania and ACT *combined*.

“To accommodate rising power bills, businesses in regional Queensland and Brisbane must make changes because businesses have to pay their power bills to continue operating.”

“This means businesses have to make a choice between passing the cost onto customers or reducing business costs. Staff numbers are increasingly being investigated as a cost saving measure”.

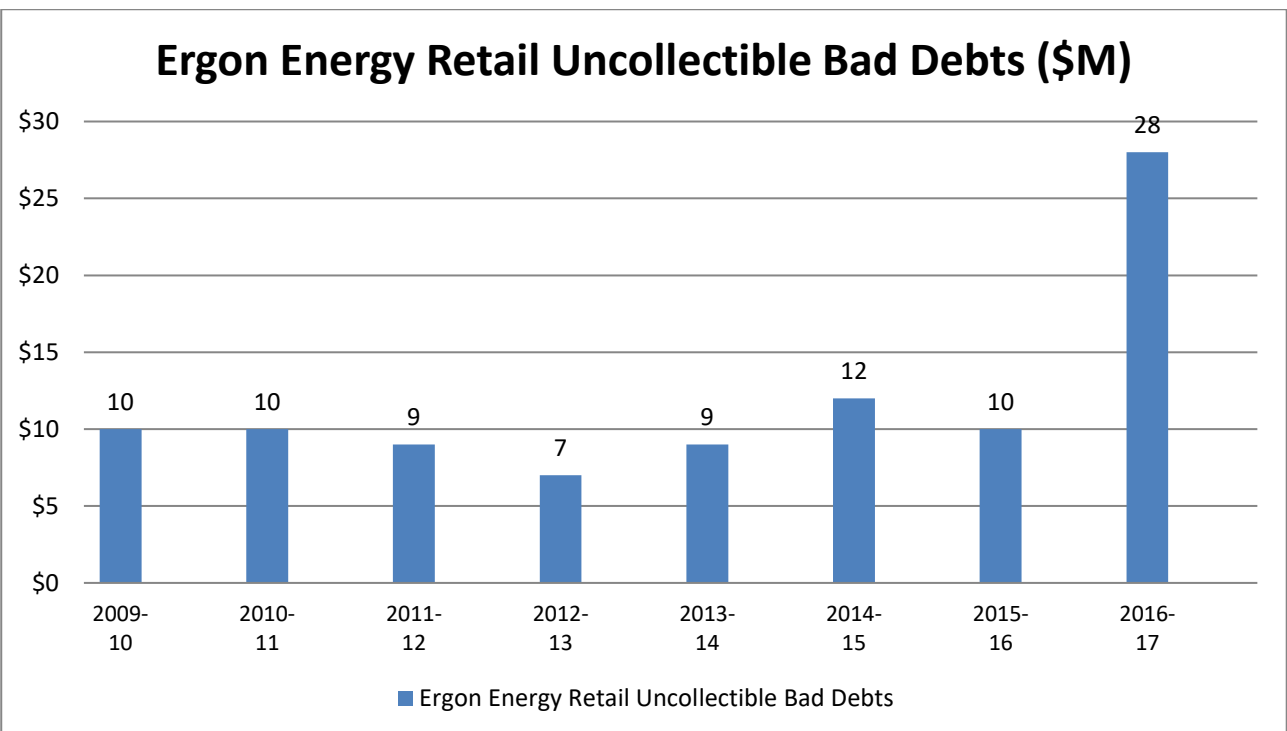
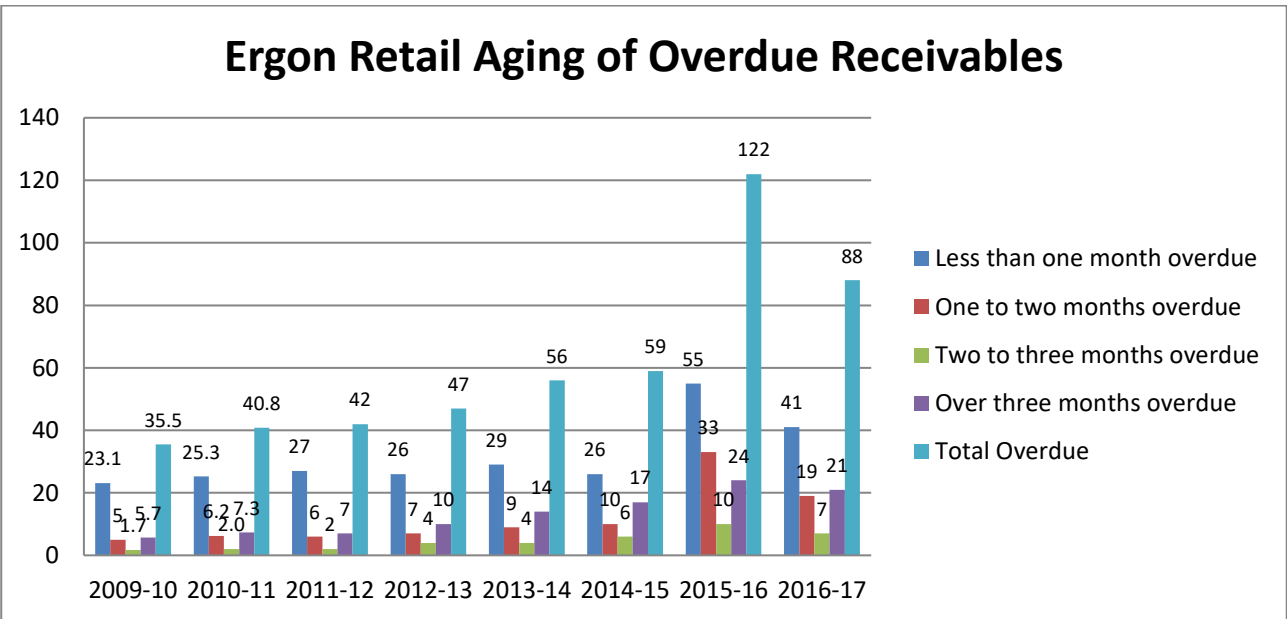
“We are at a tipping point, if power prices do not fall the economy will decline and jobs will be lost in both regional Queensland and Brisbane,” Ms Brownie said.



**Small business customers disconnected for non-payment of electricity in Q3 2016-17 by jurisdiction <sup>1</sup>**

New South Wales	495
Queensland	417
<b>Ergon Energy in regional Queensland</b>	<b>162</b>
South Australia	102
Tasmania	18
ACT	14

1. Under the National Energy Retail Law the Australian Energy Regulator is not responsible for the reporting of retailer performance in Victoria.



For further information please contact: Jennifer Brownie, Coordinator, QEUN, ph: 0740 312 865, QEUN website [www.qeun.com.au](http://www.qeun.com.au) and click on 'Electricity Flow and Prices' on the 'Understanding Electricity' tab for a live feed of wholesale electricity spot prices and electricity demand in Queensland and the NEM.