

## **Top Energy Lines Charge Discount, November 2017**

### **Your questions answered**

#### **WHY?**

##### **Why are you giving me this money?**

You qualify for it automatically. As the eligible holder of a Far North electricity account you get a discount on the charges you pay to Top Energy (as part of your electricity bill) for using our electricity lines network.

It's a credit that comes to you from Top Energy, the power company that operates the electricity lines network in the Far North.

##### **Why can't you just reduce your line charges instead of giving me a discount once a year?**

There is no guarantee that your electricity retailer would pass on any reduction in our line charges.

##### **Why are you crediting bills and not sending us a cheque?**

It's fairer, safer and allows us to distribute the credit to you immediately

##### Fairer

Your discount is linked to the size of the power bill you have to pay. So the more power you use, the bigger the discount credited to your power account.

##### A better way

It avoids lots of hassles like cheques going missing in the mail or being stolen or having to have your name changed on a cheque. You receive the immediate benefit of the credit on you latest power bill.

#### **WHO?**

##### **Who pays the line discount?**

It's a credit that comes to you from Top Energy, the power company that operates the electricity lines network in the Far North.

##### **Who gets a lines charge discount payment?**

Every eligible electricity account holder in the Far North with an active electricity account.

##### **How many units do I need to have used to qualify for this discount?**

Very few, in fact you only need to use 1kwh in the period 1 September 2016 to 31 August 2017. The lowest threshold to qualify for a \$200 payment is just 1,130 units between 1 September 2016 and 31 August 2017.

### **How much will I get?**

The value of the discount will be based on the consumption used in the 12-month period 1 September 2016 to 31 August 2017. Any account that has used between 1 and 1,130 units will get at least \$57 plus an additional amount depending on actual consumption; more than 1,130 units will get \$200.

### **Will anyone get less than \$200?**

Any account with a very low annual usage rate of less than 1,130 units will receive a minimum of \$57. Most of these accounts will get more than this as a further discount is provided based on the actual consumption used. But these accounts will be for things like pumps or water troughs – it's unlikely that any permanent residence, marae, community facility or business will use fewer than 1,130 units in a year.

## **WHEN?**

### **How long do I need to have been at my address in order to qualify for the discount?**

If your electricity meter was connected and in your name on Tuesday 24 October 2017 you will receive the discount.

### **What if I moved home or business premises just before that date? Do I still qualify for a discount?**

If you were not connected on the 24 October 2017, you won't be eligible for the discount. You need to have been connected on the 24 October 2017 and the discount will be based on the consumption of the connection you are attached to on that date (24 October), over the period 1 September 2016 to 31 August 2017.

### **What if I moved home or business premises just after that date? (e.g. 25 October 2017) Do I still qualify for a discount?**

Yes, you will receive the discount on the final bill from your old retailer. Any problems regarding the discount should be directed to the retailer you were with on the 24 October 2017.

## **HOW?**

### **How does it work? How will I receive my discount?**

If you:

- get a monthly bill either by email or through the post your Top Energy lines charge discount is credited to your account by your electricity retailer. You get a lower bill than usual and can use the

cash you save to do something else with!

- have a Direct Debit Payment your Top Energy lines charge discount is credited to your account by your electricity retailer. Your power bill is cut and less cash than usual gets taken from your account. Use the cash you save to do something else with
- pay by Automatic Payment your Top Energy lines charge discount tops up your account and you are free to choose to reduce the amount you pay at each instalment, or put a stop to it for a while. Whichever option you choose, use the cash you save to do something else with!
- have a pre-paid electricity account your Top Energy lines charge discount tops up your account. Next time you call your retailer or pop into the Post Office, check your balance and choose whether or not to make your usual payment. If you choose not to, use the cash you save to do something else with!

**I qualify but my bill does not show my discount. Why not?**

It is possible that the discount was not received by your electricity retailer in time to be applied to your account this month. It should therefore be applied next month. If it doesn't appear on next month's bill, please contact your electricity retailer to find out why.

**If I close my account and the discount doesn't appear, who do I take this up with?**

If you were taking a power supply somewhere on 24 October, you should contact the electricity retailer that you had that account with.

**My neighbour has received two discount payments and I've just received one. Why?**

It must be that your neighbour has more than one electricity account or connection point.

**Does each power account receive a separate line charge credit?**

Yes.

**Does this mean I can get several \$57 Lines Charge Discount credits by opening several accounts?**

It's not a matter of opening more than one account. The credit is paid in relation to a connection point. You would have to pay to put a new connection point in and then every connection point you have is charged a fixed charge per month, regardless of how much power you use. It's not worth it.

**Can I donate my payment to the 2017 Electricity Rescue Helicopter Appeal?**

Top Energy supports the Electricity Rescue Helicopter because we believe it's a vital service for our local communities. We encourage anyone who wants to, to donate some or all of this line charge discount credit to the appeal. But you will have to do it by making out a cheque to the appeal and sending it to us.

**Will I have to pay income tax on my discount payment?**

Not unless you claim your electricity payments as a business expense in your tax return.

**If I'm not in business, do I need to include my discount payment in my tax return?**

No.

**Does the discount include GST?**

Yes.

**I am in credit with my power account - how do I get the cash?**

You should call your electricity retailer and they will arrange a cheque for you.

**I need cash! Can you give me a cheque instead?**

If your electricity account is in credit, you can ring your electricity retailer (the company that sends you your electricity bill) for a cheque to the value of your credit. Top Energy can't give you a cheque because the money has already gone to your electricity retailer.

**My name is no longer on the electricity bill. But it was until very recently. You say more people are getting more under this new arrangement but I'm losing out!**

More people are indeed getting more money this way. We've done everything we can to ensure that this is a fairer way of doing things. But, because this discount is now paid through electricity accounts it has to be the account holder who gets the discount.

If you pay a share of the electricity bill where you are now, and you are still in the Far North, you should still benefit from the reduced bill in November.

**I've left the region but I paid power bills for most of this year. I deserve my discount.**

We've done everything we can to find a fairer way of distributing this discount and a great many more people will benefit more by from this new approach. But, because the discount is now paid through electricity accounts it has to be the existing account holder at your former property who gets the discount.

It's possible that you will qualify for a lines charge discount from the lines company in your new region.

**I'm a PrePaid/CashPower customer - how do I receive my discount?**

Your Top Energy lines charge discount tops up your account. Next time you call your retailer or pop into the Post Office, check your balance and choose whether or not to make your usual payment.

**Why choose 24 October as your date? Why not make the date the same as the last consumption measurement?**

We have to determine how much we are crediting to all our customers and give that information to the electricity retailers. The 24 October date was set to be as close as possible to the date on which the information was provided to the retailers and they started to produce the customer's bills with the credit on it.

**I am not happy with the process. Who can I take this further with, and how?**

You should write to Top Energy setting out your complaint, which will then be handled through our established complaint procedure.

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