



## Questions and Answers

### Eligibility:

#### How do I know if I am eligible for the program?

The ACT Government has engaged Care Financial, as a trusted community partner with financial counselling experience, to conduct eligibility assessments for the Access to Electric Program.

To be eligible for the Program you must:

- Own and occupy the home where the upgrades will occur (and not own any additional properties in the ACT or interstate).
- Meet the [National Rental Affordability Scheme](#) income limits.

Also, your property must be:

- located within the ACT (including Hall, Tharwa and Oaks Estate but not Jervis Bay Territory)
- a standalone house, non-unit or standalone unit titled dwelling
- an existing residence and not a new build (a property that has not yet been occupied)
- at or below a defined Unimproved Value (UV) threshold.

The eligibility assessment will also include an assessment of financial capability to ensure that support is going to those households most in need. This may take into consideration exceptional circumstances that could be contributing to financial hardship.

Please refer to the Participant Guidelines for more detailed information on eligibility.

#### How do I apply?

Participation in the Program is by referral only and the ACT Government is working with a range of community partners to identify households that may be eligible.

If you are referred to the Program, Care Financial will undertake an eligibility assessment of your household. You will need to provide a range of documents (as outlined in the Participant Guidelines) as part of the eligibility assessment.

#### I am experiencing financial hardship, but I do not hold a concession card. Am I eligible?

It is not an eligibility requirement for participants to hold a concession card. If you own and occupy your home and meet the National Rental Affordability Scheme income limits, you may be eligible for the Program. Eligibility assessments include an assessment of your financial capability, which may take into consideration exceptional circumstances that are contributing to financial hardship.

## **I have already received a Home Energy Support Rebate to install an efficient electric appliance at my property. Can I have remaining gas appliances in my property upgraded through the Access to Electric Program?**

No. If you have already received financial support through the Home Energy Support Program and/or the Sustainable Household Scheme, you will not be eligible to participate in the Access to Electric Program.

## **Upgrades:**

### **Why are you removing gas appliances?**

The Access to Electric Program is one of a range of measures being implemented under the ACT Government's new Integrated Energy Plan (IEP). This plan sets out the next stage of work for the Territory's transition off fossil fuel energy use over the next 20 years. As well as being the cheapest, most effective pathway to net-zero emissions for the ACT, switching appliances from gas to electric can also bring significant energy bill savings and greater thermal comfort. A household that swaps gas cooking, heating and hot water for efficient electric appliances can save around \$735 per year.

### **What upgrades are included in the program?**

The Program will fully fund electrification and energy efficiency upgrades in eligible households, including:

- Replacing gas appliances with like-for-like efficient electric appliances (heating and cooling, water heating, cooktops).
- Installing ceiling insulation where required.

Participating households will also be permanently disconnected from the gas network following the electrification upgrades.

### **Which appliances will be replaced?**

All gas appliances in your home will be replaced with more efficient alternative electric options, such as:

- Electric hot water heat pumps
- Electric heating and cooling systems (reverse-cycle air-conditioners)
- Electric cooktops and ovens

### **Do I have to remove all my gas appliances?**

Yes. It is a mandatory requirement of participating in the Program that you agree to have all your gas appliances replaced with more efficient electric alternatives.

### **Will my gas service be disconnected following the upgrades? Who will pay for this?**

Yes. It is a condition of participating in the Program that you consent to having your property permanently disconnected from the gas network once all the gas appliances have been replaced with efficient electric alternatives. The Access to Electric team will arrange for the gas to be disconnected from your property and the cost of disconnecting the gas service will be covered under this Program.

### **Will I need to close my gas account once all my gas appliances have been removed?**

Yes. Once the upgrades have been completed at your property you should contact your energy retailer and ask them to close your gas account.

### **Will the existing gas appliances be removed from my property?**

Yes. The upgrade plan that is approved for your property will include the removal of your gas appliances. The cost of removal is covered under this Program.

### **Will my ceiling insulation be upgraded?**

Prior to any upgrades, a contractor will conduct a pre-assessment of your property to verify the state of your ceiling insulation and determine what appliance upgrades will be recommended. If the pre-assessment determines that there is no ceiling insulation present or the existing insulation is below R2 value, the installation of ceiling insulation will be included as part of your upgrade plan.

### **Will double glazing be provided as an upgrade under the Program?**

No. Double glazing is not included as part of the Access to Electric Program. The key focus of the Program is to support the transition of gas to efficient electric appliances.

### **Who will be doing the upgrades in my property?**

An ACT Government contractor will complete the upgrades in your property. Depending on the number and type of upgrades, there may be several contractors involved in completing the works.

### **Can I choose the products that get installed?**

If you are deemed eligible for the Program, the Access to Electric team will contact you to discuss proposed upgrades and ask you about any specific needs or concerns you have in relation to energy use in your property. The ACT Government contractor will then conduct a pre-assessment at your property to determine what like-for-like upgrades will be necessary to fully electrify your property and will be fit for purpose for your household. They will provide a quote for these upgrades to the Access to Electric Program team who will then contact you to discuss the approved upgrades. You will have an opportunity to discuss your needs with the Program team and will be asked to sign a consent form prior to the upgrades proceeding.

### **Do I need to contribute to the cost of the upgrades?**

No. There is no cost to eligible participating households for any upgrades delivered under the Program.

### **How long will the upgrades take?**

Once the ACT Government has approved a quote for the upgrades to be completed in your property, these should be completed within 3-4 weeks. This is dependent on the type of appliances being installed and subject to availability of stock as the contractor/s may need to place orders for particular appliances. Once there is an upgrade plan in place for your property, the contractor/s should be able to provide more specific information on timeframes.

## **What will the contractor look at when they come to my home to conduct the pre-upgrade assessment?**

The contractor will:

- Assess the condition of the ceiling insulation in your property.
- Confirm which gas appliances are in the property.
- Recommend which like-for-like efficient electric appliances can replace each gas appliance.
- Conduct an electrical safety inspection. This will identify if any electrical work needs to be done before replacing gas appliances at the property.

**Note:** You do not need to clean or tidy your home before this assessment.

## **Who do I contact if I need to re-schedule the installation date?**

The contractor/s will provide their contact details in case changes need to be made. If you need to cancel or reschedule the installation date, please contact the contractor directly to advise. If you experience any difficulties making contact with the contractor, you can call the Access to Electric team on 1300 141 777.

## **Will I be without heating/cooling for an extended period during the upgrades?**

The contractors will work with you to ensure there is limited disruption to your household and they will provide specific information on timeframes once there is an approved upgrade plan for your property. The contractors will usually be able to complete the installation of an appliance within a single day, however, some upgrades may require a short period between removal of existing systems and installation of new appliances.

## **Do I need to be on site at my property during the upgrades?**

Yes. You will need to be on site to provide access to the property (where required) and sign the contractor's form to confirm the installation is complete. If you have any concerns on the day of installation, please contact the Access to Electric team on 1300 141 777.

## **What if I change my mind about taking part in the program?**

If you decide not to participate in the Program, please contact the Access to Electric team on 1300 141 777 or email [accessstoelectric@act.gov.au](mailto:accessstoelectric@act.gov.au) to discuss.

## **Who do I contact if I have a complaint or feedback about the upgrades?**

If you have any concerns or feedback, please contact the Access to Electric team on 1300 141 777 or email [accessstoelectric@act.gov.au](mailto:accessstoelectric@act.gov.au). If there are any issues with the installations that need to be rectified, the Access to Electric team can coordinate this with the contractor.

## **Who do I contact for repairs and maintenance of the installed appliances?**

Your contractor will provide details for repairs and maintenance.

## **Will I be shown how to use the new appliances installed in my home?**

Yes. The installers will show you how to use and maintain the appliances that have been installed in your home.

With your consent, you will be referred to the [Home Energy Efficiency Program](#) following the completion of your upgrades. This program involves a free in-home energy assessment which is delivered by St Vincent de Paul (Vinnies) on behalf of the ACT Government. The Vinnies team can provide you with advice on how to get the most out of your new appliances and assist with draught proofing your home.

## **If the upgrades to my property involve decommissioning gas ducted heating or an evaporative cooling system, what happens to the ducted vents no longer used?**

Depending on the type of system installed, some of the vents may be re-used. For vents that are no longer in use, there are low-cost options for sealing these. You can contact the ACT Government's [Sustainable Home Advice Program](#) for tips or access the [Home Energy Efficiency Program](#) which provides a free in-home energy assessment as well as assistance with draught-proofing.

## **Benefits and further supports:**

### **What benefits might I experience from switching from gas to electricity?**

Appliances use about 25% of the energy in your home and switching from gas to more efficient electric alternatives can save you money and improve thermal comfort in your home. For example, efficient electric reverse-cycle air-conditioners are up to six times more efficient at heating than a gas system and are much cheaper to run. Additionally, once households have removed all gas appliances, they can close their gas account and stop paying gas supply charges. This is about \$300 per year.

### **What else can I do to improve the energy efficiency of my home?**

The [Home Energy Efficiency Program](#) provides free support to eligible households to help reduce energy use and improve thermal comfort. This includes a free in-home assessment, draught proofing and other energy saving items and advice.

The [Sustainable Home Advice Program](#) is a free service available to all ACT residents for general information on how to improve home energy efficiency. It includes access to energy experts (phone or email), free workshops and other resources and tips for homes.

For more information about the above programs, please contact our team:

- Phone: 1300 141 777
- Email: [SustainableHomeAdviceProgram@act.gov.au](mailto:SustainableHomeAdviceProgram@act.gov.au)
- Website: [climatechoices.act.gov.au](http://climatechoices.act.gov.au)

### **Who can I contact if I am still struggling with paying my energy bills?**

If you are struggling to pay your energy bills, we encourage you to contact your energy provider to discuss what supports they may have available for you.

With your consent, the Access to Electric team can connect you with St Vincent de Paul who deliver the [Home Energy Efficiency Program](#) on behalf of the ACT Government. St Vincent de Paul can visit your home and provide advice on how to get the most from your new electric appliances as well as other ways to save energy in your home. They can also assist with draught proofing.

