

3 August 2020

ERANZ welcomes Govt investment to reduce energy hardship

The Electricity Retailers' Association welcomes new Government initiatives to address energy hardship and is looking forward to working with the Government to further help Kiwis in need, Acting Chief Executive Mike Munro says.

"The electricity sector works hard to support Kiwis at risk of energy hardship. The Government's announcement of a \$17 million package to reduce energy hardship aligns with work the industry is already doing, and will further strengthen the support available to vulnerable Kiwis.

"New Zealand has the 10th cheapest electricity in the developed world, but low-quality housing means we use a lot of it—which can lead to high bills.

"Additionally, the economic impact of COVID-19 means more Kiwis may get into debt over their power bills or be unable to heat their homes.

"One sector alone can't solve hardship, which is being driven by issues such as chronic unemployment, inadequate incomes, educational failure, and poor housing.

"The electricity sector is committed to doing its part to help families in need by working to ensure that all families live in warm, dry homes with affordable energy costs.

"That's why ERANZ is running EnergyMate, a free in-home energy coaching service for Kiwis at risk of energy hardship, that is funded by electricity retailers, lines companies, and EECA."

During an in-home EnergyMate visit, coaches:

- Connect the family with their power company to ensure they're on a power plan and payment terms that best suit the household's needs.
- Advise families about heating their home in the cheapest way, and on using appliances efficiently.
- Check hot water and shower flow.

- Deliver free LED lightbulbs for instant power savings.

“An independent evaluation of the 2019 EnergyMate pilot found it succeeded in helping households become more energy efficient. In follow-up interviews, families indicated they had a better understanding of their power use, their home’s energy performance, and their power bill,” Mr Munro says.

“It’s great to see the Government interested in investing in programmes like EnergyMate. This year, ERANZ is running an expanded pilot of EnergyMate reaching 800 households in hardship—and with Government funding, it could reach over 6000 households.

“EnergyMate sits alongside a range of work power companies have undertaken to support consumers at risk of energy hardship, including developing and implementing best practice benchmarks for supporting vulnerable consumers, and introducing new products to support financially distressed families.”

In 2020, EnergyMate is funded by the electricity retailers Contact, Genesis, Mercury, Meridian, Nova, Trustpower, and Prime, the lines companies Electra, Powerco, Top Energy, Unison, and Wellington Electricity, and by EECA, and is delivered by community organisations in Christchurch, Dunedin, Kaitaia, Levin, Lower Hutt, Rotorua, South Auckland, and South Taranaki.

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About ERANZ

The Electricity Retailers' Association of New Zealand (ERANZ) represents companies that sell electricity to Kiwi households and businesses. Our members supply 92% of New Zealand’s electricity to Kiwis.

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