



Press release

29 April 2019

EnergyMate pilot to support vulnerable families

Electricity retailers, lines companies, community organisations and the Government have partnered to launch EnergyMate, a free in-home coaching service helping families at highest risk of energy hardship to reduce electricity costs and live in a warmer home, Electricity Retailers' Association Chief Executive Cameron Burrows says.

"Some whanau can struggle to pay their power bills or keep their home warm because of poorly insulated housing, low incomes and a lack of energy literacy. We want all Kiwis to live in warm, dry homes with affordable energy costs."

EnergyMate coaches will work with people in hardship to help cut bills and increase warmth by:

- getting on the best electricity plan for them,
- heating their home in the cheapest way possible,
- using simple tips to make their home more energy-efficient, and
- connecting them with other services such as insulation or budgeting support.

"Some people can save hundreds of dollars a year just by changing their electricity plan. Simple steps like turning off a second fridge or putting draught stoppers around windows can cut electricity bills and make houses much warmer.

"Electricity in New Zealand is actually relatively cheap - the 11th cheapest in the developed world. But poor housing and a lack of insulation means we use a lot, resulting in high bills for some families over winter. EnergyMate is about helping families make the most of the money they spend on electricity."

EnergyMate will initially be trialled across 150 families in South Auckland, Rotorua and Porirua. It is being delivered by community-based financial mentors.

Mr Burrows says EnergyMate was made possible by funding from retailers Genesis Energy, Nova, Meridian, Mercury, TrustPower, Contact, and Prime Energy, region-specific funding from Vector in South Auckland, Unison in Rotorua, and Wellington Electricity in Porirua, and a contribution from the Energy Efficiency Conservation Authority (EECA).

“The electricity sector is committed to working together to do its bit to help those most in need. One sector can’t solve poverty - that’s driven by issues like education, incomes and housing stock - but we’re taking steps to ensure we are part of the solution.”

ENDS

Media contact

media@eranz.org.nz

