



## Press Release

### For immediate release

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## MESSAGE FOR ALL TO LOCK-IN-THE-WARMTH SO ELECTRICITY DOLLAR GOES FURTHER, AS GOVERNMENT KICKS-OFF FIRST WINTER ENERGY PAYMENT

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With the first Winter Energy Payment (WEP) for beneficiaries and superannuitants to be paid on 1 July, the Electricity Retailers Association (ERANZ) wants to mark this date with a drive to ensure all New Zealanders are getting the best value out of their electricity dollar.

The highest usage of electricity for all homes is during winter. June, July and August are typically our coldest months and demand for electricity usually doubles.

“New Zealanders will use more electricity over the next few months to stay warm, to dry their clothes and to cook comfort meals,” says Jenny Cameron, CE, ERANZ.

“This greater use of electricity will naturally mean power bills are at their highest and, while the winter energy payment will make a difference for some of those who struggle to pay their bills, we want all New Zealanders to take action and invest in the best ways to make their electricity dollar go further.

“There are some simple things that can be done today and there are bigger decisions that can be made to future-proof your households from **electricity loss**,” says Cameron.

“For some, using more electricity may be a choice, but for others higher use may be a result of **electricity loss** and this concerns us.

“**Electricity loss** is caused when homes are damp, draughty and don’t hold in the heat. These homes are often under-insulated and have heaters that are inefficient, unsafe and expensive to run.

“Forty percent of New Zealand homes are damp or mouldy. Particular problems are lack of adequate insulation, ventilation and heating. This creates real issues for many New Zealanders,” says Andrew Eagles, Chief Executive of the New Zealand Green Building Council

The OECD estimated that at least 1/3 of our 1.8 million private dwellings may be under-insulated<sup>1</sup>, many of which are rental homes.

“Customers getting the best value out of electricity is a key focus of our members,” says Jenny Cameron, CE, ERANZ.

“Not only do we want families to be warm and well, we also want them to get the most out of the electricity our power companies supply.

We encourage all New Zealanders to:

- check you are on right plan for your circumstances
- shop around – there are over 30 power companies to choose from and comparing is easy on [powerswitch.org.nz](http://powerswitch.org.nz).
- insulate, heat and ventilate your home (remember to warm it up, dry it out, air it out).
- ensure any appliances you buy, or are gifted on sites like Neighbourly, are newer, and more efficient, than the ones you currently own - check out EECA’s [Rightware tool](#) and upgrade when you can.
- think about the old beer fridge in the garage. Do you need to run it over winter? Can you upgrade it to a newer model?
- visit <https://www.eranz.org.nz/for-customers/tips-for-making-your-power-go-further/> for more tips.

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<sup>1</sup> **Source:** New Zealand Housing Stocktake, Feb 2018

We also want landlords to make sure they are putting in insulation and good heating, as required under the Healthy Homes Guarantee Bill, and to check to see if they are eligible for the EECA insulation grant of \$2000.

“The Winter Energy Payment (WEP) could go towards purchases that make a long-term benefit - insulation, heavier curtains, floor coverings, newer heating appliances, LED lights - all will help to lock in the warmth and ensure you get more value out of your electricity and reduce costs in the long-run,” says Camerson. Alternatively, people may wish to use it to pay off a bill that has been difficult to get on top of.

ENDS

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#### **About ERANZ**

The Electricity Retailers Association of New Zealand was established in August 2015 to represent the electricity retail industry on important sector-wide issues such as delivering value to stakeholders and consumers, and supporting the continued development of an open, competitive, sustainable and effective electricity market for the benefit of New Zealanders.

ERANZ members commit to a code of conduct that stresses putting the interests of customers at the heart of what they do. Customers facing issues with winter electricity bill payments are encouraged to talk openly with their power company, which will be able to offer advice and assistance, such as connecting them to appropriate support services.

Sources available on request.