



Don Harwin

Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council
Minister for Resources
Minister for Energy and Utilities
Minister for the Arts

MEDIA RELEASE

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EMERGENCY ENERGY BILL SUPPORT EASIER TO ACCESS

Emergency payment support for vulnerable energy customers will now be easier to access with a new digital voucher system speeding up the process.

Minister for Energy and Utilities Don Harwin said the Energy Accounts Payment Assistance (EAPA) scheme backed by \$17 million in NSW Government funding helps customers at risk of disconnection from essential energy services.

“Flicking a switch to turn on the lights is something many of us take for granted. I want to make sure that our state’s most vulnerable households have access to emergency vouchers to secure basic electricity or gas needs,” Mr Harwin said.

“Under the changes to the system, it’s now easier for regional households who previously travelled long distances, to claim vouchers from the charities and community groups that help administer the scheme.

“In the past, paper vouchers were physically handed to the customer, who then presented or posted them to pay their bills.

“Now, customers can work remotely with the same charities and community groups, who can then issue the vouchers electronically to the retailers.

“The crucial payments will now be made faster, meaning bills will be paid in a matter of hours rather than the previous days or weeks, giving greater peace of mind.”

Mr Harwin added the NSW Government is concerned about households and businesses facing energy bill increases due to a broken national market.

“We are working hard to put downward pressure on energy prices,” he said.

“We need a national plan from the Finkel Review to secure new investment, but we have to help people in the here and now as well.

“The NSW Government has allocated \$1 billion over four years to support a range of energy rebates for vulnerable customers who are doing it tough.”

The EAPA scheme provides critical support to around 55,000 energy customers facing a financial crisis each year, with more than half coming from regional and rural areas.

Contact Service NSW 13 77 88 for details on your local EAPA providers.

<http://www.resourcesandenergy.nsw.gov.au/energy-consumers/financial-assistance>