



Media Release

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New report reveals scale of energy hardship in Australia

A new Energy Consumers Australia report shows 1 in 5 Australian households are vulnerable to, or are experiencing, some form of energy hardship - with renters disproportionately affected.

[*Understanding and measuring energy hardship in Australia*](#), released today, shows that almost 70% of the households meeting two or more key indicators of energy hardship are renters.

The report analysis, based on data from Energy Consumers Australia's new Consumer Energy Report Card survey, also shows only around a third (37%) of rental properties have at least one form of insulation, compared with 80% of owner-occupied homes.

"Many renters are living in homes with woefully inadequate energy performance standards," Energy Consumers Australia CEO Dr Brendan French said. "This is affecting them financially, because energy inefficient homes cost more to heat and cool, thus further entrenching energy hardship."

"While the ACT and Victoria have enforceable minimum energy efficiency standards for rental homes, most states and territories do not. We want to see nationally consistent minimum energy performance standards for all rental properties in Australia."

The report uses key indicators from the Consumer Energy Report Card survey data to identify households experiencing, or vulnerable to, energy hardship. These include household expenditure on energy bills as a share of income, reported difficulty paying bills, reported levels of financial stress, and reported behaviours such as doing without heating or cooling to save money.

The report also finds that many of the hardest-hit households are not accessing, or aware of, available retailer or government assistance programs aimed at helping to ease energy costs.

Among households reporting two or more indicators of hardship, almost two-thirds (65%) had not enrolled in a hardship program with their energy retailer. About a third (30%) had not contacted their retailer about difficulty paying bills and almost half (49%) said they had not applied for government support.

Moreover, the report also finds that many households receiving government assistance still experience energy hardship, highlighting that current support is insufficient.

"Governments must provide targeted supports to ensure those who most need help are receiving enough support," Dr French said.

"Energy retailers must also be more proactive in identifying and assisting customers experiencing energy hardship and moving customers who are vulnerable to, or are experiencing energy hardship, onto the best offer they have available."

The Consumer Energy Report Card survey asks more than 4,000 Australian households their views on a range of energy topics. You can read the *Understanding and measuring energy hardship in Australia* report [here](#).

Data from the Consumer Energy Report Card, conducted by SEC Newgate for Energy Consumers Australia, [is available for download here](#).

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About Energy Consumers Australia: Energy Consumers Australia is the independent, national voice for residential and small business energy consumers. We enable residential and small business energy consumers to have their voices heard.