



Media Release

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Energy Consumers Australia response to Energy and Climate Change Ministerial Council communique

Quotes attributable to Energy Consumers Australia (ECA) Chief Executive Officer Dr Brendan French

"We congratulate Ministers' agreement to progress a critical rule change that would require energy retailers to engage with people in a way that meets their individual needs. This measure is essential at a time when so many people are facing significant pressures from high bill prices and energy hardship.

"This reform marks a first major step towards principles-based regulation as part of the Commonwealth's Better Energy Consumer Experiences (BECE) process and paves the way for the introduction of a principles-based consumer duty. A consumer duty has broad support from a range of consumer advocates, industry participants and market bodies, including the Australian Energy Regulator. ECA's research shows how this could be introduced into Australia's energy market to deliver better outcomes for consumers.

"Energy providers should have a duty to ensure good outcomes for consumers – rather than consumers continuing to bear responsibility for navigating an increasingly complex and rapidly changing energy market. Far too many consumers pay more than they need for energy. Research from the ACCC found that 36.5% of households on market offers are paying at or above the default market offer. ECA's research shows that many consumers find the energy market complex and difficult to navigate, and these challenges can be even more pronounced for people with diverse communication and access needs. As the system becomes more complex, it is reasonable that the responsibility sits with energy businesses—not consumers—to bridge this understanding gap. A requirement to genuinely engage based on customer needs is a critical shift that can enable earlier, more proactive support, reducing debt escalation and disconnections.

"While more is needed to be done to strengthen protections for all consumers, today's discussions are a further positive step and a meaningful one towards more principles- based regulation.

"ECA welcomes the government's commitment to a principles-based consumer duty and looks forward to its timely implementation across the energy sector. We look forward to continuing to work with Ministers, regulators and industry to ensure reforms to the energy market translate into real improvements for consumers."

You can read the Energy and Climate Change Ministerial Council communique here:
[Energy and Climate Change Ministerial Council meetings and communiques | energy.gov.au](https://energy.gov.au/energy-and-climate-change-ministerial-council-meetings-and-communications)

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About Energy Consumers Australia

[Energy Consumers Australia](https://energyconsumersaustralia.com.au) 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.