

Media Release

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NSW Government urged to introduce minimum energy efficiency standards to save renters up to \$570 a year

NSW renters could save hundreds of dollars a year on their power bills if the NSW government introduces minimum energy efficiency rental standards (MEERS), new Energy Consumers Australia (ECA) research shows.

ECA's research indicates the state's 950,000 renting households could save between \$300 and \$570 annually on their energy bills if energy efficiency standards for rental homes are implemented, while also benefitting from more comfortable homes, including cooler indoor temperatures in summer and warmer homes in winter.

The NSW Government is currently considering the introduction of MEERS, which would require rental homes to become more energy efficient, by, for example, providing insulation, draught proofing or more efficient appliances.

Renters in the Northern Tablelands, including Armidale, could save \$570 under new minimum energy standards due to colder winters and older housing stock – the highest modelled savings in the state.

The report also shows that Western Sydney households stand to benefit the most when considering where renters are concentrated, are experiencing the most rent stress, and would get the most energy bill relief.

In addition to these savings, renters – who make up about a third of all households in New South Wales – would gain health benefits from homes that are warmer in winter and cooler in summer.

"Access to a comfortable and affordable home should not depend on whether you own or rent," ECA Manager, Consumer Advocacy Justin Whelan said. "Right now, though, our research shows almost 70% of NSW renters avoid heating and cooling their homes to save money.

"Renters are also more than twice as likely as homeowners to report being unable to pay their energy bills on time due to financial difficulties.

"Every family deserves to live in a comfortable home they can afford to heat in winter and cool in summer – no matter what their circumstances are. The NSW Government introducing minimum energy efficiency standards, with a clear implementation pathway and appropriate support for landlords, will help achieve that."

Renters face significant barriers to enjoying more comfortable and energy efficient homes because they cannot make upgrades themselves, and landlords have limited incentive to do so. This leaves renters at higher risk of energy hardship and with higher energy bills and poorer health outcomes.

"This research shows exactly where renters are most concentrated and where the benefits of this policy would make the most difference to families across New South Wales," Mr Whelan said. "MEERS would make a massive difference to renters in New South Wales, bringing much-needed cost of living relief while also improving wellbeing and reducing costs on the health system.

"We urge the NSW Government to seize this opportunity to deliver real relief on health and the cost of living for the one in three NSW households who rent."

[Click here to read more about the NSW Government MEERS consultation.](#)

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Notes to editors:

- The research was conducted for ECA by SPR Consulting and was completed in August 2026.
- According to the 2021 Census, there are over 950,000 renting households in New South Wales – 32.6% of NSW households. The 2026 Census data is expected to bring this number well over 1 million households.
- ECA's latest [Consumer Energy Report Card](#) shows that 68% of NSW renters went without heating or cooling in the past year to save money, compared with 57% of owner-occupiers.
- Only 21% of renters say they were able to keep their home comfortably warm through the past winter, compared with about 40% 2 in 5 of owner-occupiers.
- Victorian MEERS have been legislated and take effect from 1 March 2027. ACT has had insulation-only MEERS since 2023.
- The NSW Government is currently investigating the proposal following a public consultation process in May, with no date set for an announcement.

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.