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Consumers to receive greater protection after new energy tech code clears final hurdle

Consumers investing in new technology to manage their energy use will receive stronger protection under an industry code set to roll out over the coming months.

The Australian Competition Tribunal has today ruled to authorise the New Energy Tech Consumer Code in a win for consumers and energy industry players who had worked constructively together to fill a major gap in the consumer protection landscape.

Energy Consumers Australia CEO Lynne Gallagher welcomed the Tribunal's decision, saying the Code would play an important role in ensuring consumers were protected by minimum standards of service through the whole energy journey.

"This Code will help households and businesses shop with confidence when they're buying solar panels, batteries and a range of other energy technologies," she said.

"Buying new energy tech and making the best choices for your individual energy needs can be a complicated process, so it's critical consumers are empowered with the information and support they need to make the best decision."

The Code aims to raise standards of consumer protection in the sector and to strengthen consumer confidence in New Energy Tech. Signatories to the Code agree to meet higher standards for information, quality and service, including extra consumer protections not currently available to consumers under existing legislation.

It ensures consumers are informed about their rights throughout the process of buying, installing and running new energy devices. The Tribunal noted that this will help consumers make informed choices about products that suit their needs, increasing competition in the supply of New Energy Tech.

"This is a good model of how the industry and consumer representatives can work productively together to get a better outcome for consumers," Ms Gallagher said. "This project originated through a request from Energy Ministers, and we appreciate the support each jurisdiction has shown for the Code as a way to empower and protect Australians."

"I would also like to acknowledge the hard work and cooperation of the other organisations who helped develop the code – the Clean Energy Council, the Australian Energy Council, the Smart Energy Council, the Consumer Action Law Centre, Energy Networks Australia, Renew and the Public Interest Advocacy Centre. Collaboration like this means consumers avoid additional costs which might be passed on if energy suppliers were subject to a more heavy-handed form of industry regulation."

"We urge the industry to adopt this voluntary code as soon as possible, recognising that a higher standard of consumer protection will strengthen adoption of this technology and help us move towards a cheaper, smarter energy future."

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