



## Don Harwin

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

### MEDIA RELEASE

Tuesday, 16 May 2017

#### **ENERGY RETAILERS TO FOCUS ON HARDSHIP**

Energy retailers will focus on helping NSW customers facing hardship get the best deal possible following a meeting with Energy and Utilities Minister Don Harwin.

Minister Harwin held a two-hour roundtable with the state's biggest energy retailers today, alongside consumer advocates and the Energy and Water Ombudsman.

"This wasn't about shirt-fronting the retailers, it's about focusing them on the issues that NSW consumers have raised with me and the Ombudsman," Mr Harwin said.

"Consumers feel they aren't getting the best value on energy and with prices rising due to national energy market issues we need to go the extra mile for those in need.

"It was a chance for us to discuss help for hardship customers and making sure they have better access to NSW Government rebates, advice and flexible payment offers.

"We are working through COAG Energy Council to push national market reform and we're boosting energy supply in NSW but our focus now is on helping consumers."

The meeting also involved discussions on how energy plans could be made easier to understand so that it is simpler for customers to compare offers, save money and avoid additional fees and charges.

"Some of these things will take time to work on, however the immediate attention has to be that those facing hardship are on the best offer," Mr Harwin said.

"We encourage consumers to shop around to find the best deals but it was made clear that the whole sector will be there to support those doing it toughest."

The NSW Government has recently increased the number of community welfare organisations that can provide energy assistance through emergency vouchers.

"It will be challenging for many households so the NSW Government will continue to do more to support of our most vulnerable customers," Mr Harwin said.

"I'll be seeking updates from the sector and I'd encourage those facing difficulty to talk with their retailer about help on offer, particularly around flexible payment or moving to a new plan."

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