



Power bills hike to push more NSW families into Fuel Poverty

312,000 NSW families – the equivalent to the population of Canberra – will officially be in Fuel Poverty following the price hikes

- In 2009 an estimated 210,000 NSW households suffered Fuel Poverty
- In 2010 this rose sharply to 249,000 households
- These 2011 price hikes will push 312,000 NSW families into Fuel Poverty
- Fuel Poverty is when a household needs to spend more than 10% of its income on fuel

Sydney, 15 April, 2011: The latest power price hike in NSW will push over 300,000 families into Fuel Poverty according to research from independent electricity price comparison site www.makeitcheaper.com.au.

Figures announced yesterday by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal of NSW (IPART) state that a 10% increase in network costs will be passed to the retailers, as will a 6% price rise from the Federal Government's Renewable Energy Target (RET) scheme.

If the price increases go up to the much mooted 18% figure the hike will put 312,000 households – the equivalent of the population of Canberra – officially into the Fuel Poverty category.

Fuel poverty isn't just about access to heating. The definition of fuel is taken to include all expenditure on domestic energy, including that used for hot water, cooling, lights and appliances.

Tim Wolfenden, CEO of Make It Cheaper warns that these hikes will have a severe impact on NSW households.

"An 18% increase could add around \$216 per year to the average household bill. This will be compounded by the seasonal spike as heating bills rise during the winter months. Soon many families may have to choose between fuel and food," he said.

"Families were already concerned about the rising cost of living. This increase is just unsustainable for many households and as always, the vulnerable will suffer most. Winter can hit hard in NSW and the sick and elderly will genuinely struggle to pay such high bills," he continued.

However, there are other options for reducing the family fuel bill.

"A household bill could be slashed by up to 15% by finding a better deal and switching to a new supplier," he advised.

"As competition across NSW begins to creep in, families can make significant savings by just switching their energy supplier. Even if they think they are locked into contracts, the savings often outweigh the penalties," Wolfenden explained.

Common Electricity Supplier Myths Busted

- ***It's too hard to switch:*** Switching supplier is easy - it only take a few minutes to complete the paper work, which can all be done over the phone
- ***My power will get cut off:*** Switching is seamless - your electricity supply will not be affected. The only difference will be the supplier's name at the top of the bill, and the price you pay
- ***There's no saving to be made:*** There's a range of electricity suppliers operating in New South Wales - all of these are vying for your business, offering cheaper rates to beat the old traditional suppliers

How to switch with Make It Cheaper:

- Call Make It Cheaper on **1300 95 77 21** and we'll search the entire market for a cheaper deal
- Fax your most recently electricity bill directly to Make It Cheaper (including your contact details) on **02 9423 4648**. We'll search the entire market and call you back with a cheaper deal

About www.makeitcheaper.com.au

Make It Cheaper is Australia's first dedicated business price comparison service. Acting as an independent energy broker Make It Cheaper is helping Australians make their electricity and gas bills cheaper, by offering a free and independent comparison and switching service.

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Media enquiries:

Karen Tearney

Re:Public PR

karen@republicpr.com

0410 743 151