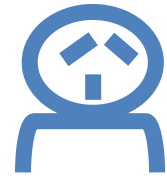


# Fair Go - Don't unplug Australians!



## MEDIA RELEASE

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### CONSUMER GROUPS SAY - DON'T UNPLUG AUSTRALIANS!

**Consumer representatives from across the nation tell Energy Ministers to lift their game on the national energy consumer law or put more Australians at risk of being cut-off from electricity and gas**

Consumer representatives from across the country greeted the Federal and State & Territory Energy Ministers as they entered their twice-yearly meeting today in Melbourne.

The Ministers will decide on the final form of the new national law for energy customer protections in their meeting. The representatives are protesting major failures in the law that will lead to unfair treatment of consumers and faster disconnections of households and small businesses, particularly at a time when energy prices across Australia are rising rapidly.

Gavin Duffy of the St Vincent de Paul Society said every Australian would be worse off in some way in the move from State and Territory laws to the proposed national law.

“Frankly, this law just isn’t good enough. Exactly how many Ministers does it take to fix the problems we’ve identified – that will see unfair treatment on prices and faster disconnections,” said Mr Duffy.

The Ministers were handed a Fact Sheet as they entered their meeting listing 10 key problems with the law.

Cath Smith, CEO of the Victorian Council of Social Service, said that it was very concerning the Ministers hadn’t yet agreed to ban late payment fees or disconnections during heatwaves, both of which tend to punish the most vulnerable consumers.

“The law doesn’t guarantee that all customers will be treated fairly and given help if they find they are genuinely struggling to meet their bill payments. We simply don’t understand why our Governments would not want to make sure there is early intervention before it is too late and a customer is facing being cut off supply,” Ms Smith said.

Organisations supporting the action include:

Brotherhood of St Laurence  
CCCL, Queensland University of Technology  
Public Interest Advocacy Centre  
St Vincent de Paul Society  
Tasmanian Council of Social Service  
Victorian Council of Social Service

Consumer Action Law Centre  
Ethnic Communities Council NSW  
Queensland Council of Social Service  
South Australian Council of Social Service  
Uniting Care Australia

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