



The Hon Chris Hartcher

Minister for Resources and Energy

Special Minister of State

Minister for the Central Coast

MEDIA RELEASE

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NATIONAL ENERGY FRAMEWORK TO COMMENCE ON 1 JULY 2013

NSW households will receive the benefit of greater consumer protection and information measures with the commencement of reforms under the National Energy Customer Framework (NECF) from 1 July.

The reforms fall under the Standing Council on Energy and Resources' program to harmonise the regulatory framework for energy retailers across the eastern states of Australia so that customers can see the benefit of strong and consistent protections, as well as increased competition. The national framework was originally intended to commence in all participating jurisdictions from July 2012.

"The NSW Government was one of the first States to enact the national legislation but deferred commencement of these reforms to ensure that NSW customers remained the focus of any reforms affecting retailers," Energy Minister Chris Hartcher said.

"We have subsequently introduced a number of additional consumer protection measures that go above and beyond the requirements of the national framework, including extending the ban on late payment fees to all contract types for vulnerable customers and post-disconnection notices that include information about reconnection and the relevant point of contact. The package which commences on 1 July will also include restrictions on the charging of contract exit fees.

"The national framework also builds on a number of measures already operating in NSW, including additional protections for hardship customers and prohibiting retailers from disconnecting customers with outstanding bills of less than \$300.

"The transition to the national framework will now ensure that all NSW customers have equal or stronger protections than those available under the existing NSW requirements."

The NSW Government has been working with energy retailers and network businesses to ensure they are able to meet their obligations under the national framework from 1 July this year.