

9 April 2009

Review of market-based electricity purchase allowance  
Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal  
PO Box Q290  
QVP Post Office NSW 1230  
[ipart@ipart.nsw.gov.au](mailto:ipart@ipart.nsw.gov.au)

Dear Sir/Madam,

The Council on the Ageing NSW (COTA NSW) is a non government organisation and the peak body representing persons over 50 years of age in NSW. This submission addresses the Market-based electricity purchase cost allowance – 2009 review.

COTA NSW notes that this review is being undertaken in the context of the 2007 IPART determination on *Regulated electricity retail tariffs and charges for small customers 2007 to 2010*.

COTA NSW's role is to advocate for the needs of older people, particularly those who are on low or fixed incomes or pensions. It is our belief that the increased charges indicated in the draft report of \$4.45 to \$5.10 per week to average bills represents a significant increase to customers on fixed or low incomes or pensions. It has come to our attention that single age pensioners are particularly adversely affected by increases in energy costs as expressed by a single age pensioner below:

*"The cost of heating or cooling my home is the same as when my husband was alive. But now I have to pay for it on my own out of my single pension, it is very distressing."*

Pat J. single age pensioner NSW

COTA NSW welcomes the NSW Government's announcement of increased consumer protection and hope that these measures coincide with the sale of the NSW electricity businesses so as not to disadvantage already vulnerable customers.

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**COUNCIL ON THE AGEING (NEW SOUTH WALES) est. 1956**

**PATRON:**  
*Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir AC, CVO*  
*Governor of New South Wales*  
  
*Council on the Ageing (NSW) Inc. ABN 31 090 328 955*

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Consumer protection is paramount to ensuring that those on fixed or low incomes or pensions are able to manage their energy bills, particularly with climate change causing more extreme temperatures which often adversely affect older people. As such COTA NSW proposes greater access to the Energy Accounts Payment Assistance scheme by those on fixed or low incomes or pensions experiencing hardship.

**COTA NSW Recommends:**

1. The immediate implementation of the consumer protection package.
2. The immediate application of the increase and extension of the energy rebate so as to reduce the impact of the 1 July 2009 price increases.
3. Greater access of the Energy Accounts Payment Assistance scheme for consumers with high bills who are on low or fixed incomes or pensions.

Please do not hesitate to contact Anne-Marie Elias, Policy and Communications Manager or myself on 9286 3860.

Kind regards,



Jon Bisset  
Executive Director  
COTA NSW Inc.

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