

MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday 12 October 2017

Penrith to host Energy & Water Anti-Poverty Week Forum

Penrith City Council and the Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW (EWON) will partner to host a forum for community workers on Tuesday 17 October, as part of this year's Anti-Poverty Week.

The event will be EWON's 12th annual Anti-Poverty Week forum and mini expo aimed at raising awareness of issues affecting energy and water consumers in financial hardship, and how community workers can help households stay connected.

"Community workers provide an invaluable link between my office, other services and people experiencing affordability issues. It is very important that they receive up to date information about energy and water issues and the assistance available, so that they can support and inform their clients," Energy & Water Ombudsman, Janine Young, explained.

Penrith Mayor, Councillor John Thain, will open the forum.

"Here in Penrith, where we make the headlines for extremely hot summer days, any residents struggling to make ends meet are forced to choose between cooling their home or buying enough food. So, it's fantastic to see a group of experts coming together at this event to provide information to help us support our residents," Councillor Thain said.

Complaints related to affordability issues accounted for 25% of the all complaints EWON received from the outer Sydney area, which Penrith is part of. This is above the NSW average of 21%.

"We know from our community engagement work and our complaints that people in Penrith and surrounding areas are finding it hard to pay their energy bills and we expect the situation to get worse as a result of the 1 July 2017 prices increases," Ms Young said.

The forum will cover range of current topics, such as metering, the NSW Government's Home Energy Action Plan, new technologies, battery storage and solar. Stallholders will include government and community services, energy providers and other Ombudsman services.

The forum is aimed at frontline workers, community advocates, government and non-government workers and volunteers assisting low income and vulnerable consumers. Community workers interested in attending the event can find more information at ewon.com.au/events.

To arrange an interview with the Ombudsman, contact: Mia Lauzé, Manager Communications - 0408 602 503 /mial@ewon.com.au.