



Energy & Water  
Ombudsman NSW  
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# Media release

Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW

Monday 5 November 2018

## Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW to assist people experiencing affordability issues in Bega and surrounds

The Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW (EWON) will hold a Bring Your Bills day for consumers in Bega on Wednesday 14 November 2018, to assist them with energy issues.

The Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW, Janine Young, said affordability is a key issue for people in the South Eastern region of NSW\*.

“Complaints about energy affordability, including payment difficulties, debt collection, credit default listings and disconnections increased by 25% and factored in 24% of all complaints we received from the region in the 2017/2018 financial year. There were 43 complaints per 10,000 people – the fifth highest number of complaints from any region in NSW,” Ms Young said.

EWON will be joined by Bega Valley Shire Council, Bega Women’s Resource Centre, Service NSW, NSW Fair Trading, Revenue NSW, Seniors Rights Service, Shoalcoast Community Legal Centre, Lumo/Red Energy, Origin Energy, Konekt Employment Bega, St Vincent de Paul, the Office Environment & Heritage, the Australian Energy Regulator and more.

“Customers can get help setting up payment plans, having rebates applied to their account if eligible, accessing emergency payment assistance and dealing with outstanding fines and legal issues,” Ms Young explained.

Ms Young encourages people in Bega and surrounding areas to take advantage of the opportunity to meet with EWON, energy providers and other services while they are in the region.

“We find that meeting with customers face-to-face makes a big difference to everyone involved and often leads to problems being resolved much quicker than they would otherwise be.”

EWON will also be holding a forum for community workers in Bega as part of its annual Anti-Poverty Week activities. The forum aims to raise awareness of energy and water issues and the assistance available for people experiencing affordability issues. It will feature speakers from the NSW Department of Planning and Environment, the Australian Financial Complaints Authority, the Australian Energy Market Commission, Seniors Rights Service, Revenue NSW, as well as energy providers.

“I am really looking forward to talking to customers and community workers to find out more about the issues people in the region are facing,” Ms Young said.

People should bring along current and past energy and water bills, any letters from their retailer, their Centrelink Health Card if they have one and any concession cards.

## Event details:

### Anti-Poverty Forum

**Where:** Civic Centre, Zingel Place, Bega

**When:** Tuesday 13 November 2018

**Time:** Registration 9am for a 9.30am start - 3pm. Morning tea and lunch provided.

**Bookings are essential:** Email [community@ewon.com.au](mailto:community@ewon.com.au) or call 02 8218 5241 to reserve a place.

### Bega Bring Your Bills Day

**Where:** Civic Centre, Zingel Place, Bega

**When:** Wednesday 14 November 2018, 9.00 am – 1.00 pm

**No bookings necessary.**

*\*EWON's South Eastern reporting region includes the following Local Government Areas: Bega Valley, Eurobodalla, Goulburn Mulwaree, Hilltops, Queanbeyan-Palerang, Snowy Monaro, Snowy Valleys, Upper Lachlan and Yass Valley.*

**To arrange an interview with the Ombudsman on 12-14 November 2018, or request high resolution images, contact: Jacqui Heywood, Communications Officer- 0426 822 341 [jacquelineh@ewon.com.au](mailto:jacquelineh@ewon.com.au).**