

Media Release



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Energy Retailers Called to Account as Power Prices Hit SA Hard

The South Australian Council of Social Service (SACOSS) is today calling on energy retailers to immediately reduce the increasing rate of power cut offs.

The Keeping the Power On report on energy power cut offs released by SACOSS today provides evidence that the National Energy Customer Framework has failed to reduce the growing rate of disconnections.

SACOSS Executive Director, Ross Womersley said,

“The energy market stands in crisis, as it metes out exorbitant power prices and an alarming rate of energy disconnections. Too many consumers are overburdened with what are the highest power prices in the country. It’s time for industry to come to the table and start talking about what it will do to stop these power cut offs.”

“It’s clear that more and more South Australians are having their power cut off, despite the promise of better protections for vulnerable households.”

The analysis in “Keeping the Power On” is based on the Australian Energy Regulator 2013 Retail Energy Market Updates as well as data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the Essential Services Commission of South Australia, and the Essential Services Commission of Victoria.

Mr Womersley said,

“It’s very concerning to see that some retailers have relatively higher rates of disconnection, including AGL, the retailer with the most market share. Those retailers with higher rates of disconnection need to take immediate action to reduce their disconnection rates.”

“Electricity is a basic human necessity and essential service. No-one should be cut off because they can’t afford to pay.”

“When we are talking about vulnerable groups including children and people living with disability, there is simply no excuse for a continued lack of action.”

SACOSS has been calling for some time for an independent umpire to be introduced, to intervene before someone has their power cut off. SACOSS also calls for the energy concession being paid to vulnerable households to keep up by being a percentage of the bill, rather than a flat rate.

For further information/comment contact:

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