



Australian Capital Territory

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Media Release

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Utilities concession increase to provide energy, water cost relief for low-income households

The ACT Government will deliver \$12.3 million over four years to increase the concessions available to low-income households to reduce the impact of energy and water costs on the most vulnerable in our community, Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water, Simon Corbell MLA and Minister for Housing and Community Services, Joy Burch MLA jointly announced today.

Funding contained in the 2011-12 Budget will provide eligible households with up to an additional \$131 a year, in recognition of the financial burden posed by utilities costs.

ACT Minister for the Environment, Climate Change and Water Simon Corbell re-affirmed the Government's commitment to help low-income households deal with financial pressures following a recent announcement by the Independent Competition and Regulatory Commission that will see an increase to the average water price in the ACT from July 1, 2011.

"The ACT Government has acted quickly to help low-income households manage increases to the cost of living, especially in the context of recent announcements about water prices in Canberra.

"Two weeks ago, I foreshadowed that the Government would be providing assistance in the form of extra concession payments to people who are finding increases to their bills particularly difficult to manage. This funding today for a utilities concession delivers on that promise.

"This new payment complements the Government commitment in the Budget to expand the Outreach Program which assists low-income households to increase energy and water efficiency in their homes, and in turn save money on quarterly bills," Mr Corbell said.

The \$12.3 million investment over four years is in addition to existing concessions available, and has been designed to mitigate the impact of the increase to the average water price from July 1 2011.

The increase to the concession in this Budget follows a \$20 increase to the Energy Concession rebate in the 2010-11 ACT Budget. The Energy Concession provides an energy rebate for eligible cardholder residents of the ACT.

ACT Minister for Housing and Community Services, Joy Burch, said providing the water relief through the existing concessions scheme would ensure an equitable and targeted distribution of the funds to the households which needed it most.

“By providing this significant financial relief to mitigate the costs of electricity, gas and water through the existing concession scheme we are ensuring that low-income renters as well as homeowners will receive up to an additional \$131 a year,” Ms Burch concluded.

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