



MEDIA RELEASE

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EXPERTS HELP CHATSWOOD LOCALS CUT BILLS

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St Vincent de Paul Society NSW is teaming up with the Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW (EWON) and Willoughby City Council to host a special *Bring Your Bills Day* during the Chatswood Community Expo on **Friday 22 July**.

This is a **free** event designed to support people experiencing trouble with their finances. On the day, community members can speak face-to-face with EWON staff about any problems they may be experiencing paying their power or water accounts. Locals are encouraged to bring along their current bills, past bills and letters from providers.

Barbara Healy, Chatswood's immediate Past Regional President and organiser of the Day, said the event was being offered to allow financially vulnerable people to find savings and reduce the risks they face.

"Households in this state will be paying exceedingly high rates since power prices dramatically increased on 1 July. Everyone needs to be really savvy with their energy costs and more people will require assistance and learn how to deal with their supplier from now on," said Ms Healy.

Gosford President, Bruce Dent, has organised similar Days on the Central Coast.

"This is the first Day we've held in Chatswood and we are anticipating a good response, just like we've had elsewhere," said Mr Dent.

"We are keen to run more of these events with our partners across NSW because the feedback we receive from visitors shows there is a lack of knowledge. As one woman said, she was unaware that she needed to inform her new energy supplier about senior and pension rebates – she had assumed they would be passed along automatically."

The rising cost of living and the deregulation of the energy market means people have to be more aware when it comes to shopping around for their energy providers.

The Society's [NSW Energy Price Report \(July 2015\)](#) highlights how customers switching from the worst electricity offer to the best market can save up to \$550-\$1050 per annum depending on their local network area.

The Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW, Janine Young, encourages people to take advantage of help available to them.

"There is a lot to get your head around when it comes to energy and water consumer issues, but you don't have to make sense of it on your own. If you have a question you need answered or there's an issue you'd like explained, you can talk to EWON staff at the *Bring Your Bills Day*," Ms Young said.

The Community Expo and *Bring Your Bills Day* will also connect people free-of-charge to other vital services like: Financial Rights Legal Centre, NILS Chatswood, Legal Aid, Northern Sydney Area Tenants' Service, Sydney Water, NSW Fair Trading, Centrelink and Links Housing.

When: Friday 22 July 2016, 9.00am - 3.00pm

Where: Auditorium, Dougherty Centre, 7 Victor Street, Chatswood

Bookings (free): Alex 8218 5217 | alexandrat@ewon.com.au

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