

The award-winning EnergyMate pilot programme is a free energy coaching service to help consumers facing energy hardship i.e. those who are struggling to pay their power bill or keep their home warm. EnergyMate helps families make the most of their electricity – whether it is a reduced power bill or a warmer, drier, healthier home.

With support from an EnergyMate coach, whānau build a better understanding of their power bills and are supported with the best energy plans for their needs. It has also helped people to engage with other support services that are available, like budgeting or home insulation. Supporting whānau with knowledge and understanding has helped them to be more efficient with how they use energy.

EnergyMate is helping to keep bills more affordable.

Whānau are supported with tips and advice to keep their power bills manageable and make sure they are on the best plan and payment options for their needs.

- 30% made a positive change with their power company (set up a payment plan or contract, changed plan or something else e.g. downloading the power company's app).
- 67% reported a change in their power bills since the coaching visit.
- 12 months after an EnergyMate visit there was a reduction on the average monthly debt of \$26 (33%) - from \$78 to \$52.
- The greatest monthly debt reductions were in winter and spring.

Whānau gained knowledge about how best to use electricity in their homes with simple tips that lead to efficiency and savings.

The support from the energy coach builds their knowledge and understanding on how to manage energy use.

- 91% reported to have a better understanding of home energy and electricity use since the EnergyMate visit.
- 58% of respondents agreed they could shorten showers to save on water use.
- 38% could turn switches off to save energy.
- Of those with heat pumps, 73% could reduce their heat pump temperature setting (recommended temperature is between 18c-22c).
- 82% could change their lightbulbs to LEDs (EnergyMate provided free LED lightbulbs where needed, leading to instant power savings).
- 91% completed the energy efficiency actions recommended by their energy coach.

EnergyMate is supporting people to live in warmer, healthier homes.

A large majority of EnergyMate whānau have changed their energy-use practices and improved their heating, ventilation and cost-savings. 37% of whānau were referred onto healthy housing support services such as the Healthy Homes Initiative or Curtain Banks which have significantly improved their housing stock and appliances.

What are these whānau saying about EnergyMate?

"The whole visit was awesome. Our coach explained things in layman's terms. The three-way conversation had excellent results and a new payment plan that we could afford."

"The most helpful part of EnergyMate was learning how to take care of my house and also learning about the things around my house so I can teach other people."

"The whole visit was great but especially helping with the WINZ hardship grant to clear huge power arrears."

"I found it very helpful because I learnt that it was ok for me to turn on my heater and my fans to keep the moisture out. I also learnt that it's not good to turn my heater up really high."

What do we know about the whānau who have connected with EnergyMate?

- 82% identified as Māori or Pasifika.
- 60% had children and 15% had elderly living in the home.
- 70% received WINZ entitlements or benefits.
- 69% lived in rental housing (including Kainga Ora & social housing).
- 24% had power debt (average amount \$873) but 49% reported that they struggle to pay their power bills.
- Of those that receive the Winter Energy Payment, 78% use it to cover power costs.

Many of the homes that EnergyMate has engaged with are poor quality and difficult to heat.

- 59% of homes were draughty and 30% needed insulation.
- 32% of homes needed more heating devices and 32% of homes needed efficient curtains in the living rooms and bedrooms.
- Only 18% of respondents were able to always heat their bedrooms to desired warmth and 40% were able to always heat their living rooms to desired warmth.

Background

- The programme has been led by the Electricity Retailers' Association (ERANZ) and is funded by ERANZ members (Mercury, Meridian, Contact, Genesis, Trustpower and Nova), lines companies and the government.
- It is delivered in communities by community-based financial mentors who are trained as energy coaches. They provide a critical mentoring service in their communities and provide an important link between consumers and their power companies. With their knowledge and connection, we know that we are reaching those that need assistance with their power.
- EnergyMate is operating in 13 locations across Aotearoa, has helped 1,500 whānau, and has trained more than 70 community financial mentors as energy coaches.
- EnergyMate is currently operating in Kaitaia, Central Auckland, South Auckland, Rotorua, Whakatane, Rural Waikato/ King Country, Whanganui, Levin, Porirua, Hutt Valley, Christchurch, Oamaru and Dunedin.
- EnergyMate has had several independent evaluations to assess its impact throughout the pilot phase. These are available on the ERANZ website. www.eranz.org.nz.