

# Energy Bill Relief Fund Extension – Australian Capital Territory

## FEDERATION FUNDING AGREEMENT – ENVIRONMENT

<b>Table 1: Formalities and operation of schedule</b>	
Parties	Commonwealth Australian Capital Territory (ACT)
Duration	This Schedule is expected to expire on 30 June 2026, or when the final payment adjustments are made (if applicable), whichever occurs later.
Purpose	<p>This Schedule will support the delivery of energy bill assistance (bill relief) to all households and eligible small businesses in the ACT from the Commonwealth’s Energy Bill Relief Fund (the Fund) over the period 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025.</p> <p>Bill relief will be provided to all ACT households and to small business customers of electricity retailers, as defined by the ACT’s application of the National Energy Retail Law.</p> <p>Further details of the eligibility criteria for bill relief are detailed at Appendix A.</p>
Governance	<p>The ACT will utilise existing processes and implement appropriate processes where necessary to ensure the integrity of payments from the Fund.</p> <p>For household and small business customers this will require participating electricity retailers to check eligibility for retail customers and the ACT to confirm eligibility for embedded network customers as outlined in Appendix A.</p> <p>For small businesses, eligibility will be administered using the ACT’s definition of small businesses under the National Energy Retail Law.</p> <p>The Commonwealth will implement appropriate processes to ensure the integrity of Commonwealth facilities used in delivering bill relief. The ACT will ensure that there are appropriate risk and governance frameworks for the extension, similar to those that are used in administering the Fund.</p> <p>The Commonwealth will work with the ACT to identify shared risks and manage and appropriately mitigate those risks.</p>
Reporting arrangements	The ACT will provide the Commonwealth with statements of assurance in relation to bill relief that satisfies the reporting requirements outlined in Appendix B of this Schedule.

	<p>The ACT will provide additional information, where possible, if requested by the Commonwealth for the purposes of approving the statements of assurance and for the Commonwealth’s assurance activities where relevant.</p>
<p>Estimated financial contributions</p>	<p>Through the Fund, the Commonwealth will contribute an estimate of \$3.5 billion in aggregate to all states for bill relief.</p> <p>The final resulting allocations to all jurisdictions will depend on the actual number of households, embedded networks and small business customers in each jurisdiction over the period of the program. The Commonwealth’s contributions for bill relief in the ACT are set out in Table 2.</p> <p>The Commonwealth will pay ACT in arrears based on statements of assurance confirming reports are an accurate representation of bill relief provided by retailers.</p>
<p>Additional terms</p>	<p>Any changes to the key parameters outlined in Appendix A will need to be agreed by the ACT and Commonwealth Treasurers.</p> <p>Any changes to data reporting requirements outlined in Appendix B will need to be agreed by the relevant ACT and Commonwealth officials.</p> <p>Payments made outside the agreed scheme parameters will not be funded by the Commonwealth.</p> <p>Where the ACT recoups payments made to ineligible entities, the ACT will repay the Commonwealth’s financial contributions.</p> <p>Rebates will not be refundable for active accounts. Where rebates from the Fund remain as unused credit upon the closure of an account, upon request the remaining credit should be refunded to the customer in line with existing concessions.</p> <p>Repayments may be managed by either the Commonwealth amending a future payment to the ACT under this Schedule by the relevant amount, or by the Commonwealth invoicing the ACT for the relevant amount.</p> <p>ACT requires retailers to report quarterly on the number of customers receiving rebates and provide breakdowns of the type of customers who have received rebates split between residential, embedded network and small business customers, who have received rebates.</p> <p>ACT requires retailers to assist residential customers who wish to check their eligibility for the Fund payment.</p> <p>Any retailer requests for funding to support program administration and rollout are matters for the Commonwealth to resolve and, if necessary, fund. The ACT will not be required to co-fund administration costs requested from retailers.</p>

**Table 2: ACT – Performance requirements, reporting and payment summary**

1. The Commonwealth will reimburse the ACT for bill relief provided to all households and eligible small businesses as part of the extension as detailed in this schedule, at a rate of up to \$300 per households and \$325 per eligible small business. The total cost to the Commonwealth is estimated to be \$64 million for the 2024-25 bill relief.
2. Any costs for bill relief that exceed the above estimated total cost (e.g. due to take-up being higher than forecast) will be borne by the Commonwealth subject to appropriate data and fraud controls.
3. Eligibility criteria are detailed in Appendix A.
4. Eligibility for bill relief to households will be checked by retailers for retail customer and the ACT for households in embedded networks.
5. Eligibility for bill relief to small businesses will be administered by retailers, consistent with ACT legislation and using the ACT's definition of small businesses under the National Energy Retail Law.
6. To mitigate fraud, retailers will use existing mechanisms in place for providing concessions and annual statements/reports. All claims will be reviewed for irregularities and additional information may be requested from retailers if there are any variabilities in claims.
7. Payment to the ACT will be made as soon as practicable following the provision of a statement of assurance in relation to bill relief that satisfies the requirements outlined in this Schedule.
  - a. The reporting requirements for the statement of assurance are detailed in Appendix B.
  - b. A statement of assurance should be provided to the Commonwealth within two months, or as soon as practicable, after the end of each quarter.
8. A line item will be included on energy bills regarding the Fund, with details to be determined in discussions with the Commonwealth, the ACT and retailers that acknowledges the contributions made by the Commonwealth.
9. The ACT will encourage electricity retailers to comply with the AER's Better Bills Guideline as soon as practicable.

## **Payment arrangements**

### Household Rebate

1. Eligible households will receive a total bill credit through their retailers of up to \$300 (in addition to any relief provided under the existing ACT Utilities Concession scheme) for 2024-25, contributed by the Commonwealth.
2. Credits of \$75 will be applied to the bills of those eligible households in each quarter of the 2024-25 financial year, or as soon as practicable.
3. In the case of household embedded networks, a grant payment of \$300 will be made to eligible customers in 2024-25.

### Small Business Rebate

4. The ACT will continue to administer the Small Business Rebate scheme on behalf of the Commonwealth.
5. Eligible small businesses will receive a total bill credit of up to \$325 for 2024-25, contributed by the Commonwealth.
6. Credits of \$81.25 will be applied to the bills of those eligible small businesses in each quarter of the 2024-25 financial year, or as soon as practicable.
7. In the case of small business embedded networks that are separately billed or invoiced by an ACT

Retailer, a grant payment of \$325 will be made to eligible customers as a one-off payment for 2024-25.

The Parties have confirmed their commitment to this schedule as follows:

**Signed** for and on behalf of the Commonwealth of Australia by



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**The Honourable Dr Jim Chalmers MP**  
Treasurer

3 July 2024

**Signed** for and on behalf of the Australian Capital Territory by



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**Andrew Barr MLA**  
Treasurer and Chief Minister

[Day] [Month] [Year]

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## Appendix A: Key scheme parameters

1. This appendix to the *Energy Bill Relief Fund Extension – Australian Capital Territory* (the Schedule) supports the delivery of an extension to the Fund. The extension was announced in the Commonwealth's 2024-25 Budget. This package will support households and small businesses and help shield them from the worst impacts of rising global energy prices and ongoing cost of living pressures.
2. The Commonwealth will reimburse the ACT for bill relief provided to all households and eligible small businesses at a rate of up to \$300 per household and \$325 per eligible small business.
3. Payments to the ACT will be made in accordance with the requirements outlined in this Schedule.
4. In agreeing to this appendix, the ACT agrees to implement this package in accordance with the eligibility criteria detailed below.
5. The Commonwealth's funding contributions are outlined in Table 2 of this Schedule.
6. The delivery of bill relief through the Fund is not intended to and will not affect any state or territory's GST allocation.

### Eligibility

#### Census Dates

7. The census dates for each quarter are:
  - a. Quarter 1: 31 July 2024
  - b. Quarter 2: 1 October 2024
  - c. Quarter 3: 1 January 2025
  - d. Quarter 4: 1 April 2025

#### Household eligibility criteria

8. Eligibility and payments for households will be based on the census dates for each quarter:
  - a. Residential retail customers holding an active electricity account for their place of residence in the ACT at the census date of each quarter in 2024-25 will be eligible to receive that quarter's rebate on the account.
  - b. Households in an embedded network in the ACT at the census date of each quarter in 2024-25 will be eligible to receive that quarter's rebate or will receive one grant payment of \$300 in 2024-25.
9. Households may be determined to be eligible as otherwise agreed between the parties, including any changes after the Schedule commences.
10. Rebates will be provided to households on an account basis where possible.
11. New household electricity accounts created after 30 June 2025 will not be able to access bill relief.

#### Small business eligibility criteria

12. Eligibility and payments for small businesses will use the 'small customer' definition below and be based on the census dates for each quarter:
  - a. Small business retail customers holding an active electricity account at the census date of each quarter in 2024-25 will be eligible to receive that quarter's rebate on the account.
  - b. Small businesses in embedded networks that are separately billed or invoiced by an ACT Retailer will only need to apply once and be able to receive the full rebate in a once-off payment.
13. Bill relief will be targeted to small business customers of electricity retailers using the definition of electricity 'small customer' as applied in each state under the National Energy Retail Law. In the ACT, this definition is an annual electricity consumption below 100 MWh.
14. The ACT and retailers will take reasonable steps to make appropriate carve-outs of government agencies and branches of larger businesses.

15. New small business electricity accounts created after 30 June 2025 will not be able to access bill relief.

## Appendix B: Data reporting requirements

### Statement of assurance

1. The ACT will report to the Commonwealth on the provision of bill relief via statements of assurance that confirm retailers, or the ACT where applicable, have checked the eligibility of each recipient against the criteria outlined in Appendix A.
2. A statement of assurance will be provided to the Commonwealth within two months, or as soon as practicable, after each quarter.
3. The statement of assurance will include summary statistics on the take-up of bill relief for each quarter, including:
  - a. total value of bill relief provided, split between households and small businesses;
  - b. total number of entities that had received bill relief, split between households and small businesses; and
  - c. total number and value of payments made to customers in embedded networks; and
  - d. details of any bill relief provided to households or small businesses subsequently found to have been ineligible for support and funding recovered, including de-identified invoices upon request.
4. In addition to the statement of assurance for the final quarter, the ACT must also provide a statement which includes summary statistics on the take-up of bill relief over the period 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025, including information outlined in clause 3 of Appendix B, to inform an end of program reconciliation and, if required, any payment adjustments.
5. Where the ACT identifies any instances of fraud or misconduct relating to payments made under the Fund, ACT officials will notify the Commonwealth in writing, including details of action taken to remedy this where appropriate.
6. Where any audits or other assurance activities are undertaken to ensure the integrity of payments made under the Fund, the ACT will write to the Commonwealth to summarise the findings and advise the Commonwealth of the outcomes of these processes.
7. The parties must, in good faith, negotiate to resolve any disagreement or dispute arising between them in relation to the statements of assurance. If a dispute cannot be resolved by officials, it may be escalated to the relevant Ministers.