



**Embargo: Midnight 12 March 2009**

### **Free Home Energy Advice is a phone call away**

A national network of energy trusts, the Energy Efficiency Community Network, is launching a Canterbury Home Energy Advice Centre (HEAC) which will help people gain valuable home energy advice via an 0800 free phone line. A Christchurch based service will join trained advisors based in Wellington and Auckland in providing impartial advice on making homes warmer, healthier and more energy efficient. The Canterbury free phone service is targeted at all Cantabrians north of the Rakaia until additional funding enables it to extend to other parts of the South Island. The service is being delivered by Christchurch based charitable trust, Community Energy Action (CEA) on behalf of the national network.

“The Canterbury HEAC is part of a national roll-out which aims to provide access to home energy advice for all householders in the country through an 0800 free phone line”, says Bede Martin, Chief Executive for CEA. “This service is badly needed. People need help understanding their power bill, which electricity plan they should be on, or why they are using so much electricity. Home owners are being confronted with confusing and conflicting information about heating and insulation products. The opportunity to speak over the phone with a trained, independent advisor about their personal situation is a key to making the best possible decisions”.

“We will help people identify practical ways to improve the comfort and health of their homes while saving money on energy costs” he says. “In addition to the phone service we will advise by email, carry out a Home Energy Check for a small fee, and run free community education programmes. Our advice will be completely independent and we don’t promote any particular brands or companies. We aim to be the first point of call for home energy advice in Canterbury.”

The initiative is funded by the Ministry for the Environment, MainPower New Zealand Limited and Community Energy Action Charitable Trust.

Todd Mead, Commercial Manager for MainPower New Zealand Limited believes free, independent energy advice is essential to enable homeowners and tenants to make well informed decisions about how to save energy and keep their homes warm. “MainPower is pleased to sponsor this initiative. At MainPower we promote home energy efficiency and conservation and we are keen that our North Canterbury and Kaikoura customers, as well as other residents in Canterbury have free access to the latest in information”, says Todd.

### **The free phone number is 0800 388 588**

Commencing operations on 9 March the Canterbury Home Energy Advice Centre will be officially opened by the **Minister of Energy and Resources**, Gerry Brownlee, at **10.00 a.m. on 13 March** at **Mancan House, 253 Cambridge Tce, Christchurch**. (Media representatives are welcome)

The centre operates Monday - Friday 10am – 4pm. Canterbury residents can contact the HEAC by

1. calling 0800 388 588
2. emailing [canterbury@energyadvice.org.nz](mailto:canterbury@energyadvice.org.nz)
3. visiting the Home Energy Advice Centre website [www.energyadvice.org.nz](http://www.energyadvice.org.nz)

**ENDS**

**Notes:**

CEA is a Christchurch based, non-profit group working to improve the energy efficiency and warmth of low income homes by installing home insulation and other energy efficiency measures. It targets people who are particularly vulnerable to the cold, including older people and families with infants. CEA has been managing community-based energy efficiency projects for the past 15 years and is a member of the New Zealand-wide Energy Efficiency Community Network Trust.

The HEAC's website is [www.energyadvice.org.nz](http://www.energyadvice.org.nz).

CEA's website: <http://www.cea.co.nz/>. For more information or comment, contact

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MainPower is the electricity lines company providing network services into the North Canterbury and Kaikoura region. All residents and businesses in the North Canterbury and Kaikoura region who are connected to national electricity grid are MainPower customers.