

## Energy Consumers Australia Board Meeting Communique - 18 August 2016

### Board Meeting

The ECA Board meet in Canberra on 18 August. After the Board Meeting, Directors met with the Reference Committee for lunch followed by a constructive and informative interactive workshop.

The CEO advised that ECA was looking forward to beginning work on the LIEEP project which promised to make a very significant and practical contribution to low-income consumers. [More information](#) about the project is available on ECA's website.

The Board adopted the recently developed ECA Risk Management Framework.

### Reference Committee

The Board met with ECA's [Reference Committee](#). The Committee discussed current and emerging consumer energy issues. The Committee was also briefed on two significant reports, funded through the ECA Grants Program

- Gavin Dufty presented the findings of the St Vincent de Paul Society report [Households in the Dark](#), which explored when, where and how households are disconnected from electricity
- Gerard Brody outlined the recommendations of Consumer Action Law Centre's [Power Transformed](#) report, which identifies the challenges for consumers in negotiating a market disrupted by new energy technology, and recommends appropriate protection measures.

### Grants Approved

The Board considered eleven applications for advocacy and research grants in the current round, totalling \$615,214. The Board welcomed the significant potential co-contribution by applicants, which amounted to a further \$427,955 for the proposed projects.

In this round the Board approved seven grants, with a total value of just over \$298,039. The approved grants cover a range of consumer energy issues – features of this round included

- A number of applications from small business advocacy organisations, seeking funding to research and represent the interests of small business consumers in Tasmania and Queensland
- Continuing advocacy around network regulatory and tariff reforms, to ensure a consumer voice is heard in those decisions
- Research to revisit ATA's modelling on the respective costs and benefits of fuel choices for consumers

A list of the approved grants is below:

<b>Ref.</b>	<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Grant amt (exc GST)</b>
AP 832	Bundaberg Regional Irrigators Group	<i>Research and advocacy materials on the feasibility of rural Qld users going off-grid</i>	\$42,750
AP 833	Cummings Economics	<i>The impact of electricity prices on small business in regional communities</i>	\$19,200
AP 834	Tasmanian Small Business Council	<i>Advocacy on behalf of Small Business to Tasmanian Energy Security Taskforce Inquiry</i>	\$47,550
AP 837	Total Environment Centre	<i>New Network Regulatory Reforms</i>	\$21,800
AP 839	Alternative Technology Association	<i>Gas Vs Solar: cost effective strategies for small energy consumers</i>	\$68,964
AP 840	Alternative Technology Association	<i>Assessing and improving consumer outcomes of network pricing reform</i>	\$36,010
AP 841	University of New South Wales	<i>Photovoltaics on Apartment Buildings</i>	\$61,765