

# **Aurora Energy**

## **Insights To Hardship Assistance**

**Energy Consumers Australia**  
**Hobart Board & Stakeholders Forum**  
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# Your Energy Support (YES) Program



Where we started...

- AER approved Hardship Policy
- Only **600** customers on hardship identified
- Customers lacking assistance to reduce energy consumption
- No motivation for customers to engage in the program
- Little to no engagement with welfare groups/community stakeholders; working in a state of opposition not co-operation
- No proactive steps to bring customers onto the program

Recognition we needed to change approach...

# Development and Launch of the YES Program

- Culture was key to the development and delivery of the YES Program
- A Customer **not** Finance lens was applied to Credit Management activity
- Employee led and supported by appropriate decision making authority
- Easy to manage, understand and access
- Practical and sustainable approach
- Building on and utilising community partnerships

# Practical Actions of the YES Program

- Engaged with Welfare Groups and Stakeholders

- Rewarding Behavioural Change:

Since May 2015 (to Mar 2017) provided incentive payments to customers

- Increased profile of YES Program through attendance at community events; at community organisations meetings and expos and at frontline government sector organisations
- Educated internal staff in the Customer Service Centre and Collections to identify customers in financial hardship at first point of contact

# YES Program Outcomes

## What has been the outcome?

- Significant number of customers have successfully completed the YES program since May 2015 and are now in control of energy debt
- Positive relationships with community welfare organisations and YES program publicly acknowledged by these organisations for making a difference
- Very high employee engagement and sense of purpose amongst the YES team
- Improved Aurora Energy's arrears position

## What we can still do better:

- More promotion of the program – still pockets where YES Program is not known
- Still room to improve in earlier identification of customers in financial hardship
- Opportunity to drive deeper discussions using frontline staff on how to reduce energy usage

# YES Program Insights

- There is no silver bullet to managing energy affordability
- Education is a key tool
- The carrot is more effective than the stick
- Simple steps can make a significant difference
- Need to leave prejudices outside
- Organisational culture is critical

**Proactive management is in the interest of energy retailers**

**BUT they cannot succeed without willing partners**