

## Board Communique: October 2020

### The Energy Consumers Australia Board met via video conference on 22 October 2020.

#### Consideration of Grants

At this meeting, the Board considered 14 grant applications. Applications covered a range of topics, demonstrating a breadth of activity and interest from advocates and researchers.

Four grants were approved, for total funding of \$581,669. Successful applicants all identified opportunities to drive change that would deliver benefits to consumers and put forward achievable and well-considered strategies to help them deliver that change. The following projects were approved:

- AP 1087 – Etrog Consulting – *Consumer advocacy on regulated network and retail electricity prices in Queensland*  
Through a grant of \$89,600, Etrog Consulting will work with consumer advocates in Queensland to bring a strong consumer voice to Queensland and national decisions on regulated retail electricity prices.
- AP 1088 – Better Renting – *National advocacy initiative for minimum energy efficiency requirements for rental properties*  
Better Renting's grant of \$117,924 will support its work to develop a coordinated national advocacy strategy aimed at mandating minimum energy performance standards in rental housing. That work will also inform the workplan of COAG's National Trajectory for Low Energy Homes – Existing Buildings.
- AP 1090 – Total Environment Centre – *The role of distributed energy resources (DER) in the equitable decarbonisation of the NEM*  
Total Environment Centre received a grant of \$165,428 to contribute to: designing electricity grids using lower-cost approaches to rebuilding after extreme weather events; helping achieve lower cost access to energy storage and energy sharing; and engaging in regulatory decisions developing new grid architecture.
- AP 985 – Australian Council of Social Service - *Equitable, Affordable Inclusive Energy Transition Advocacy Project*  
ACOSS received its third year of funding to represent the interests of low-income and vulnerable consumers on a diverse range of issues, from principles underpinning DER integration to ensure no consumer is left behind in the energy market transformation, to supporting improved energy efficiency of rental and social and community housing.

The Board also noted the degree to which those applications are underpinned by coalitions of consumer organisations, to support their advocacy.

#### Grants Program Supplementary Annual Report

ECA grants support advocacy and research on emerging issues, as well as current policy and regulatory decisions. They also help ensure that consumer interests and consumer voices are at the centre of energy market reform. The Board welcomed the publication of the [Grant Program Supplementary Report](#), which is an adjunct to the [ECA 2019/20 Annual Report, now available on the ECA website](#).

The supplementary report outlines the grants made in 2019/20, as well as analysing whole-of-program trends over time. In 2019/20, ECA approved grants totalling \$2.3m, out of 43 applications seeking

nearly \$5m. Funding went to a range of activities, including major projects focused on the energy market transition.

### **ECA Business Planning**

The Board finalised ECA's 2020/21 Business Plan, which will be provided to COAG Energy Ministers.

The Board meeting also provided an opportunity to progress ECA's strategic planning, which will be finalised in early 2021.