

Energy Consumers Australia Board Meeting Communique

2 June 2016

Grants approved

The Board considered 29 applications for advocacy and research grants in the current round – the last for the 2015/16 financial year. The total amount of funding sought was over \$2 million, the largest round in the history of ECA and the Consumer Advocacy Panel.

The Board welcomed the strong interest from new applicants, and the strong focus on national residential and small business issues.

In this round the Board approved 18 grants, with a total value of just over \$1.5 million. Of those, 10 grants will be funded out of the 2016/17 grants program, as that work begins in the 2016/17 financial year. That also means that ECA has fully expended its grants program budget for the current financial year.

The Board was also pleased by the significant co-contributions in this round. Of approved grants, applicants leveraged that funding by 30%, providing an additional \$570,000 to complete these projects.

A list of the approved grants is attached.

Meeting with Queensland stakeholders

The Board meeting was preceded by a meeting with Queensland stakeholders, including consumer advocates representing residential, small business and large end-users, local and State government, and researchers and energy experts.

The Board welcomed discussion on how ECA can best work with Queensland advocates.

Lively discussion covered price increases, consumers' experience in the market, consumers' difficulty in effective engagement in policy and regulatory advocacy, the QPC recommendation on concessions and market.

Forum participants were briefed on the following three Queensland pilot projects funded through the Commonwealth Low Income Energy Efficiency Program

- City Smart – Reduce your Juice
- QCOSS – Bright Actions
- Brisbane City Council – Green Heart Wisdom

ECA Approved grants, June 2016

Ref. No.	Applicant	Project purpose	Grant amt (exc GST)
AP 800	Public Interest Advocacy Centre	To participate in the AER vs Australian Competition Tribunal ADJR applications to the Full Federal Court	\$212,800
AP 801	Public Interest Advocacy Centre	Provide legal expertise to consumer advocacy organisations in relation to limited merits review and associated judicial review proceedings	\$154, 375
AP 802	Consumer Utilities Advocacy Centre	To commission prospects advice on CUAC intervention in the Australian Competition Tribunal's consideration of the appeal of the AER final decision by Victorian networks	\$48,000
AP 804	Tasmanian Council of Social Service (TasCOSS)	Undertake energy advocacy and research on behalf of Tasmanian low-income households (bridging grant)	\$29,811
AP 807	Engineroom Infrastructure Consulting	Build an evidence base on accelerated depreciation, which could be used by consumer advocates	\$32,490
AP 809	Ethnic Communities Council of New South Wales	Support CALD consumers in their engagement with emerging products and services in the energy market (bridging grant)	\$40,750
AP 810	South Australian Council of Social Service	Enable three meetings of the National Consumer Roundtable on Energy to act as an incubator for consumer focused policy and program development, and provide a vehicle to make contact with key decision-makers	\$103,725
AP 812	South Australian Council of Social Service	To represent exempt consumers, improve consumer protection and access to redress for consumers, and address jurisdictional issues such as safety	\$88,000
AP 813	RMIT	Electricity pricing and managing heatwaves at home: mitigating health and financial risks for heat-vulnerable household consumers	\$156,684

ATTACHMENT

Ref. No.	Applicant	Project purpose	Grant amt (exc GST)
AP 814	University of NSW, School of PV and Renewable Energy Engineering	To develop a tariff testing tool to enable consumer advocates and researchers to investigate how different tariff structures impact on the bills of different types of residential customers, while also estimating alignment with network costs	\$54,200
AP 815	Northern Alliance for Greenhouse Action	Enabling local governments and DNSPs to work cooperatively to create planned, integrating energy solutions through sharing data and developing resources to identify planning opportunities, and establishing a replicable process to identify cross sector planning opportunities	\$31,760
AP 817	Cummings Economics	To input into strategies for the smooth transition to a renewable energy future while maintaining affordable and reliable electricity in National Electricity Market and particularly in the regions	\$96,000
AP 820	Melbourne Energy Institute	OpenNEM – to make NEM data more accessible	\$47,000
AP 821	CitySmart Pty Ltd	Understanding the changing needs of residential energy consumers in the information age, and the implications for tariff reform	\$195,000
AP 822	Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland	To provide enhanced advocacy on behalf of small business in SE QLD	\$50,621.90
AP 825	Consumer Action Law Centre	To provide advocacy for fair access to safe and affordable energy for domestic retail consumers (bridging grant)	\$114,908
AP 827	Uniting Communities	Five Minutes More - promoting consumers' perspectives in the rule change proposal to move wholesale market to 5 minute settlement	\$28,205
AP 828	Uniting Communities	Living DNA - Applying the DNA approach to UnitingCare's engagement with ElectraNet (bridging grant)	\$60,757