

TasCOSS Energy Research and Advocacy Project (No. 399)

Final Project Report 2010-2011: January 2011 to June 30 2011

This project, involving research and advocacy on national energy issues and jurisdictional issues related to the National Energy Market on behalf of Tasmanian domestic consumers commenced with funding from the Advocacy Panel in July 2006. This report is the final for the 2010-2011 year, and covers the period January to 30 June 2011. Note that project reports for the periods July-October 2010 and November-December 2010 have previously been submitted to the Panel.

Participation in the National Consumers' Roundtable on Energy

TasCOSS has continued to play an active role, as the only Tasmanian participant, in the national network of energy consumer advocates coordinated by the Consumer Action Law Centre. In this period, our participation has involved:

- Organisation of and attendance at a special two-day planning meeting of the Roundtable to discuss a preferred model for future energy advocacy (Feb 2011) in Melbourne;
- Attendance at a regular two-day meeting of the Roundtable in Melbourne (March 2011);
- Participation in a number of national teleconferences organised by Roundtable coordinators on Roundtable agenda planning and follow-up, and on specific energy advocacy issues.

Office of the Tasmanian Economic Regulator's Customer Consultative Committee

TasCOSS continued to participate in the Office of the Tasmanian Economic Regulator's (OTTER) Customer Consultative Committee (OCCC) and to receive quarterly reports on the performance of Aurora Energy and updates on the activities of the Regulator's office.

Made a presentation to the Committee's February meeting on the TasCOSS-Anglicare advocacy document, *Making electricity affordable: a four point plan*.

Tasmanian Electricity Supply Industry Expert Panel Review of the Tasmanian Electricity Sector

The Tasmanian Government has established an Expert Panel (chaired by John Pierce, current Chair of the AEMC) to review the Tasmanian electricity sector. TasCOSS has been involved in the Review through discussions with the Review's CEO, a presentation at the Panel's public hearing and a submission on the Panel's *Statement of Approach* paper (see details below and submission attached).

AER Distribution Determination for Aurora Energy 2012-17

Attended an information session in Hobart run by the AER on its approach to the current distribution determination for Aurora Energy 2012-17. This is the first determination for Aurora to be carried out by the AER.

Distribution Masterclass planning

TasCOSS is a member of the organising committee for a Distribution Masterclass to be held in August (postponed from June) and funded by the Advocacy Panel. This has involved participation in teleconferences to arrange the agenda, speakers, invitations, etc.

Relevant meetings

TasCOSS met with:

- Sue Morrison, Manager, Energy Planning in the Tas Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources and the Tasmanian representative on the Retail Policy Working Group, regarding plans for the implementation of the NECF in Tasmania and transitional application issues.
- TasCOSS CEO, Tony Reidy and Policy Officer and Advocate, Kath McLean met with AEMC Commissioners and CEO in Hobart in March. Discussions included general Tasmanian energy issues, with a particular focus on affordability; the use of pre-payment meters; TasCOSS Rural Energy Consumer Consultation project outcomes and the TasCOSS-Anglicare advocacy document, *Making electricity affordable: a four point plan*.
- Representatives of Aurora Energy, on several occasions during the period, regarding electricity prices and Aurora's Retail Tariff Review (see attached submission).
- A representative of TasGas, the Tasmanian natural gas distribution company regarding issues associated with the roll-out and use of natural gas in the state.

Submissions

TasCOSS made the following submissions in this period:

- Submission to the Tasmanian Electricity Supply Industry Expert Panel on its *Statement of Approach* paper (February 2011)
- Submission to Aurora Energy for its Retail Tariff Review (Feb 2011)
- Submission to the Australian Energy Regulator on its draft *Guidance to Retailers on Approval of Customer Hardship Policies* (Feb 2011)
- Submission to the Australian Energy Market Commission on its *Strategic Priorities for Energy Market Development Discussion Paper 2011* (May 2011)

[PDF Copies of all submissions sent by e-mail for inclusion in this report]

July 21, 2011

Kath McLean
Senior Policy Officer & Energy Advocate
Tasmanian Council of Social Service

PO Box 1126
Sandy Bay TAS 7006
Phone (03) 6231 0755

Fax (03) 6223 6136