

**The Mid-term Progress Report for the Application 350  
- Advocacy and capacity-building for ethnic communities and small  
businesses in the National Electricity Market**

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*Project Background*

Since May 2007, Ethnic Communities Council of NSW (ECC) has engaged in a range of advocacy and responded via submissions and/or representation, to a number of government processes around the National Electricity Market (NEM) reform. This project specifically focuses on the domestic customers and small businesses who come from a non-English speaking background to increase ethnic communities' inputs/involvements into the consultation processes towards a more efficient and effective NEM.

The aim of this project is to make sure the views of ethnic communities and small businesses are represented during the NEM reform process. ECC continues to advocate for reform of the NEM, as well as the National Electricity Law and Rules, for the encouragement of the effective demand side management (DSM), energy efficiency, consumer protection, and the roll-out of smart meters across the NEM. This work includes responding to the ongoing consultative processes. ECC will continue the engagement in the numerous NEM consultations in the future.

*Activity Highlights*

Up to the end of February 2010, the project officer has been actively engaged in the following networking opportunities to develop policy and engage in dialogue on NEM reform issues:

- NEM Consumers Roundtable Conferences (July & Nov 2009);
- Advocacy Panel Stakeholder Consultation Forum (12 Oct 2009);
- Smart Meter Pilots and Trials Working Group (PTWG) Workshops (27 July, 12 August, 28 Sep, 29 Oct, 30 Nov 2009);
- Smart Meter Customer Protection and Safety Review Forum (15 Sep 2009);
- MCE SCO Energy Bill Benchmarking Consultation Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS) Consultation (17 Nov 2009);
- DEWHA Solar Cities Workshop (18 Nov 2009);
- MCE SCO Second Exposure of the National Energy Customer Framework (NECF) Forum (3-5 Feb 2010)
- MCE SCO 1.) Greenhouse Intensive Water Heater Phase-out – Consultation Regulation Impact Statement (RIS) Consultation 2.) National Legislation for Appliance and Equipment Minimum Energy Performance Standards (MEPS) and Energy Labelling Consultation (11 Feb 2010)
- AEMO Overview of The NEM Training (25 & 26 Feb 2010)

- Public Interest Advocacy Centre (PIAC) Energy & Water Consumers' Advocacy Program (EWCAP) Reference Group Meetings;

### *Achievements*

All the outputs and outcomes have been achieved under the funding support for only one-day-a-week work loads.

### Project Outputs:

- Capacity-building –
  - Much better filing system for the NEM related reports / research papers / documents / submissions
  - Publication of project information on the ECC newsletters
- Advocacy -
  - Made contributions to the Total Environment Centre's climate change research project
  - Prepared a submission for the MCE SCO "Energy Bill Benchmarking RIS Consultation" (Appendix 1);
  - Prepared a submission for the DEWHA "In From the Cold: Strategies to increase the energy efficiency of non-domestic refrigeration in Australia and New Zealand" (Appendix 2);
  - Prepared a submission for the National Smart Metering Program (NSMP) National Stakeholder Steering Committee (NSSC) PTWG "Consumer Impact Reporting Framework" (Appendix 3); and,
  - Prepared a submission for the MCE SCO Second Exposure of the National Energy Customer Framework (Appendix 4).

### Project Outcomes (What changes the funding has made):

- Capacity-building –
  - ECC members get better understandings of the NEM in general and any related specific issues
  - The CALD communities and small businesses have been better equipped with knowledge of the NEM, therefore to better protect their interests under a deregulated electricity market
  - Better understanding of DSM and energy efficiency among the ECC stakeholders and members.
- Advocacy – Apart from the joint advocacy done together with other community organizations, ECC has separately carried out the following activities to make sure that ethnic communities' views are represented and considered when the government and regulators make the policy decisions.
  - Met with the NSW RPWG representatives and the AER representatives to discuss the NECF (re: specifically about the small business consumption thresholds and the additional protection for CALD communities from the door-to-door sales)
  - Had conversations with DEWHA regarding the energy bill benchmarking (re: the importance of consumer education and

information provision toward the usefulness of energy bill benchmarking)

- Had conversations with DEWHA regarding the energy efficiency strategies for commercial refrigeration (re: MEPS Energy Intensity figures for the supermarkets)
- Provided feedbacks at the NSSC PTWG workshops regarding the proposed pilots/trials Consumer Impact Reporting Framework (re: the household characteristics & the customer surveys)