

4th April 2008



ATA Advocacy Report – Project 246

For the 3-months from January to March 2008

This report outlines advocacy activity undertaken by ATA, under funding from the National Consumers Electricity Advocacy Panel funded project #246. This activity was undertaken for the three-month project period commencing in January and continuing through the end of March 2008.

Advocacy completed:

- Provided a submission offering our broad support for the ACT Government's *Feed-in Tariff Discussion Paper* proposing the introduction of a feed-in tariff in ACT. We urged the ACT Government to ensure any mechanism introduced is both efficient and effective in achieving the goal of increased adoption of solar photovoltaic electricity and other renewable energy technologies.
- Attended the Public Consultation Forum on the *Review of the effectiveness of competition in electricity and gas retail markets in Victoria* conducted by the AEMC in Melbourne on the 31st of January
- Provided a submission to the AEMC *Review of Effectiveness of Competition in the Electricity and Gas Retail Markets in Victoria* Second Draft Report. ATA expressed great concerns with this proposal, as we believe that the basis for the conclusion that the retail electricity market was effectively competitive was flawed, and the proposal as it stands is set to have a negative impact on electricity consumers through reduced transparency, lack of monitoring of the market and the inability for the government to reintroduce regulation in the event of market failure.
- Provided input via submission to the proposed *Electricity Feed-in (Solar Premium) Bill 2007* Exposure Draft, presented by Mick Gentleman, in which we applauded the initiative and encourage the whole of the ACT Government to embrace this proposal. Our submission proposed these amendments:
 - Renewable energy generators not more than 30kW of installed capacity receive the premium rate
 - Renewable energy generators larger than 30kW of installed capacity receive 75% of the premium rate
 - 'Fair and reasonable' criteria be developed for grid-connection standards
 - The Minister and the regulator assess all grid-connection standards against this criteria
 - The initial feed-in tariff premium rate be set at 67c/kWh
 - Renewable energy generators are guaranteed a set tariff for 15 years from installation
 - The feed-in tariff premium rate be indexed at CPI
 - Occupiers be paid for the total production from their system via gross generation metering

- Provided a submission to the Victorian Essential Services Commission's *Methodology for Assessment of Fair and Reasonable Feed-In Tariffs and Terms and Conditions* - Draft Guidance Paper. ATA supports the broad assessment methodology outlined in the paper, however expressed concerns with the actual criteria against which the feed-in tariff contracts will be assessed. Further, ATA expressed concerns with the process used by the Department of Primary Industries to develop the criteria, and the timeframes of assessment to date.
- Coordinated the staging of a feed-in tariff forum in Melbourne designed to inform interested parties (government, media, NGOs, individuals) on the German experience with feed-in tariffs and local developments. Presented on the key elements of successful feed-in tariff scheme designs
- Provided a submission to the *Phase-Out of Inefficient Incandescent Lamps and Standards for Compact Fluorescent Lamps* Final Technical Report, in which we offered broad support for the proposal to introduce minimum performance standards for lighting in Australia. However, ATA strongly recommended that the proposed threshold be strengthened and a mandatory energy labeling system is introduced to differentiate products
- Published and distributed the third ATA Feed-in Tariff e-bulletin providing an update on developments in feed-in tariffs nationally
- Attended the Victorian Energy Efficiency Target (VEET) Stakeholder Forum designed to inform the development of a Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS)
- Provided a submission to the *Total Environment Centre (TEC) (Demand Management) Rule Change Proposal* as processed by the AEMC, in which ATA offered broad support for the demand management rule change proposal. ATA stated that that extensive and significant changes need to be made to the National Electricity Rules in order to create an environment where DM initiatives are considered a real alternative to network constraints
- Scoped the design of a small-scale wind energy research project to be conducted jointly with Sustainability Victoria.
- Attended the National Consumer Roundtable on Energy March meeting in Canberra, discussing the AEMC Demand Management Review, RPWG developments, energy market privatisation and consumer protections, National Gas Market developments and the first AER distribution price review to be held in NSW/ACT
- Provided feedback to the Queensland Department of Mines and Energy on the proposed Queensland feed-in tariff scheme.
- Responded to enquiries from public and ATA members, answering both specific grid- connection related queries from members and installers, as well as providing assistance with broader enquiries related to small-scale renewable generation technologies.

Accompanying this report are copies of any submissions mentioned above.

Should the Advocacy Panel have any further queries regarding this report or any of the work mentioned with, don't hesitate to contact ATA's Energy Policy Manager, Brad Shone, on (03) 9631 5406 or by email Brad.Shone@ata.org.au