

**TASCOSS DOMESTIC END USER ELECTRICITY TRAINING PROJECT**  
**Second Progress Report**  
**16 July 2004**

The second session in this four part training program was held in Hobart on Wednesday 30 June. As with the first session, this was promoted within the community services sector throughout Tasmania and a promotional flyer was posted to over 50 community service organisations (*see attached flyer*).

The session was once again held at Hydro Tasmania's Hands On Energy Discovery Centre, an educational centre in central Hobart with a small theatre. Hydro Tasmania kindly donated the use of their facilities and provided morning and afternoon teas.

This second session saw an increase in participants with eleven people attending. These included most of those who attended the first session and several new-comers. Participants came from the following organisations: Anglicare Financial Counselling Service (x2), Anglicare Social and Action Research Centre, the Salvation Army (x3), the Tenants Union of Tasmania, Community Support for Refugees and the Tasmanian Environment Centre. In addition, a recently appointed investigation officer for the Electricity Ombudsman sat in on the session.

The morning session focused on issues of regulation and consumer protection in the electricity supply industry and began with the Director of the State Office of Energy Planning (Tony Vandevusse) presenting an overview of recent national energy market reforms including the establishment of the Australian Energy Regulator and the Australian Energy Market Commission. He outlined the activities and concerns of the Ministerial Council on Energy and its Standing Committee of Officials, as well as providing an overview of the role and functions of his Office. It was an appropriate start to the day in that it presented 'the big picture' and linked the Tasmanian government to national energy market activities.

Tim Astley from the Office of the Tasmanian Energy Regulator followed with a presentation on the history, roles and functions of the local Regulator, as well as an overview of the Tasmanian and National Electricity Codes and the consumer protection provisions in the Codes and in the Tariff Customer Regulations. Peter Clemes, the Tasmanian Regional Director of the Australian Competition & Consumer Commission then discussed the ACCC's regulatory role in electricity and its general consumer protection role. Peter was followed by Trish Barron, Senior Investigations Officer for the Electricity Ombudsman. Trish delivered a detailed presentation on the work of the Ombudsman's Office, including complaint and investigation procedures, and avenues of redress.

The morning's presenters joined participants for either morning tea or lunch and spent some time speaking informally. In addition, participants were free to ask questions and discuss issues with the speakers throughout the presentations.

In the afternoon, two presentations were made. David Bowker, from Hydro Tasmania (Principal Advisor, Regulation) gave a presentation on electricity generation in Tasmania – including water, wind and gas generation – and its availability, reliability and adequacy. He also spoke about the Basslink project and Tasmania's plans for joining the NEM, including Hydro Tasmania's preparations for that event. David also spoke about the issue of renewable energy, including Renewable Energy Certificates and Mandatory Renewable Energy Targets.

The last presentation was delivered by Richard Bevan, CEO of Transend Networks who gave a very entertaining overview of electricity transmission issues in Tasmania. He talked about the transmission system, its assets and their reliability, the need for further capital expenditure and ongoing maintenance of the system, the recent revenue cap determination by the ACCC and price drivers and costs in electricity transmission.

Again, participants were free to ask questions throughout the presentations. Several presenters provided handouts on their topics and/or paper copies of their Powerpoint presentations. *See Session 2 Program attached.*

It was a very full and successful program, and feedback from participants indicated that they not only enjoyed the presentations, but also learnt a great deal. Most indicated that they were keen to attend the remaining two sessions.

### **Future Plans**

The next session is scheduled for October 6 and will cover electricity distribution and retail issues. As with all of the sessions, it will be promoted separately and I expect a good attendance since electricity retail issues, especially those associated with affordability, tend to be central to much work in the community services sector. The next will be a half, rather than a full-day session since experience from the first two sessions has shown that a full day is probably too long to be exposed to new and complex information and to expect to retain it all. I will experiment with a half-day format to see if it better suits participants. If so, I may run three rather than two more sessions in that format.

Again, I will endeavour to interest more people in the coming sessions and to continue to increase numbers.

### **Attachments:**

- o *Flyer promoting the second session*
- o *Session 2 Program*

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Kath McLean  
Training Coordinator  
Domestic End User Electricity Training Project  
TasCOSS  
McDougall Building  
Ellerslie Road  
Battery Point 7004 Tasmania  
Phone (03) 6231 0755      Fax (03) 6223 6136  
[kath@tascoss.org.au](mailto:kath@tascoss.org.au)