

Consumer Advocacy Panel 2009/10 budget

The Hon. Martin Ferguson, in his capacity as Chair of the Ministerial Council on Energy (MCE), informed the Panel that the MCE has approved a total budget of \$2,767,294 (exclusive of GST) for the Consumer Advocacy Panel for 2009/10.

That total budget incorporates \$2,195,294 for the electricity component funded by NEMMCO, and \$572,000 for the gas component, provided by the Australian Energy Market Commission.

	Electricity Funding Only	Gas Funding Only	Total Gas and Electricity budget
Project costs sought	1,885,955	491,399	2,377,354
Administrative costs sought	309,339	80,601	389,940
Sub total (excl GST)	2,195,294	572,000	2,767,294
Less accumulated funds	400,000	0	400,000
Funding required	1,795,294	572,000	2,367,294

This budget effectively provides an increase to the Panel's 2008/09 budget consistent with the rate of inflation.

The Chair advised the Panel that Ministers believed

- o funding for gas advocacy in 2009/10 was believed to be sufficient given the level of maturity in the market; and
- o electricity advocacy should be targeted to meet priority areas, using electricity reserves if required, to address areas where the workload may increase in 2009/10.

The Minister also advised that, in order to provide the Panel and industry participants with increased certainty concerning future Panel budgets, Ministers would seek the Panel to use forward estimates for out years, in common with the approach used by jurisdictional governments and which was part of the budget approval process for the Australian Energy Market Commission. That approach should be established for inclusion in the 2010/11 budget.

The Minister also stated that the MCE appreciates the work of the Consumer Advocacy Panel, and recognises its importance in providing a voice to small and medium-sized consumers.

A breakdown of the 2009/10 budget into grants programs is attached.

24 April 2009

Consumer Advocacy Panel 2009/10 Budget

Grant category	Project type	2009/10	
<i>Advocacy</i>	Electricity Advocacy Projects		
	○ staff/capacity-building	775,200	
	○ advocacy	853,740	
	Gas Advocacy Projects		
	○ staff/capacity-building	100,700	
	○ advocacy	200,340	
	Joint Advocacy Projects	110,610	
<i>Research</i>	Panel initiated		
	• Electricity research	55,080	
	• Gas research	28,620	
	• Joint Research	28,620	
	Stakeholder initiated		
	• Electricity research	82,62	
	• Gas research	57,240	
	• Joint Research	27,540	
		TOTAL	2,237,773
	<i>Evaluation</i>	Evaluation of electricity projects	37,230
Evaluation of gas projects		12,413	
Evaluation of joint projects		10,200	
		TOTAL	\$2,297,616