

NATIONAL ELECTRICITY CONSUMERS ADVOCACY PANEL

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Advocacy/capacity building projects for 2008/2009

At its meeting on 27 February 2008, the Panel decided it would like to consider applications for advocacy/capacity building projects for 2008/9 at its March 2008 meeting in order to meet the request from past applicants that they be advised of the Panel's decision well before the next funding period commences. Applications for advocacy/capacity building projects should therefore be lodged as soon as possible and no later than 5pm on 13 March.

Applications for funding for advocacy projects that are to be considered at the March meeting are to be lodged with the Panel by 5pm on 6 March, in accordance with the usual timetable.

As legislation to give the Panel responsibility for funding gas advocacy and energy research has not commenced, the Panel is only able to consider applications relating to electricity advocacy.

In 2007/8 the Panel decided on a budget of \$680,000 for advocacy/capacity building projects. Based on applications, the budget was allocated as shown in the following table:

	\$	\$
Advocacy/capacity building budget 2007/8		680,000
Allocations - refer the Panel's website for details		
Alternative Technology Association	46,726	
Australian Council of Social Service	121,770	
Centre for Credit and Consumer Law	138,678	
Consumer Action Law Centre	145,688	
Energy Users Association of Australia	136,828	
South Australian Council of Social Service	25,896	
Tasmanian Council of Social Service	34,378	
Total Environment Centre	65,160	715,124

The Panel's budget for 2008/9 will not be known until possibly late March or in April but if the budget recommended by the Panel is approved, the allocation to advocacy/capacity building projects will most likely be the same as in 2007/8. Therefore, when preparing applications and project budgets for 2008/9, applicants should consider all forms of advocacy/capacity building projects (e.g. embedded advocates, advocacy meetings or conferences, training for advocates, etc) and should include them in the applications. Applicants should also prioritise the various forms of advocacy/capacity building and explain the priority that they have decided on in order that the Panel is aware of the priorities when it considers the applications. If, as in 2007/8, the applications for funding exceed the budget, the Panel will consider the priorities when allocating the budget between applicants and sub-projects.

In order to be consistent and fair across all applications, the Panel requests that when preparing a budget for an advocacy/capacity building project, the following matters should be noted:

- Salary costs – all staff to be dedicated to the project should be costed at their actual salary cost, including superannuation. Salary costs should not include allowances for any other costs (e.g. WorkCover, overhead recovery costs, etc - these should be dealt with separately). The equivalent fulltime percentage of the time to be worked by the staff on the project should be stated.
- Generally, any new additional cost to be incurred by an applicant when undertaking a project is a cost that can be included in the project budget and, if the application is successful, will be funded by the Panel subject to the co-payment obligation of the applicant;

- Where national competition policy requires an applicant to include in its project budget a provision for infrastructure costs, the Panel will consider those costs;
- The cost to an applicant of any existing internal resources to be devoted to the project (e.g. supervision, support from senior advocates, space costs, equipment costs and other overhead costs) may be included in the project budget and, in accordance with the Panel's policy, will be treated as part of the co-payment the applicant is expected to make to a Panel-funded project unless a waiver is granted by the Panel;
- Imputed costs cannot be included in a project budget but may be mentioned as a note, if considered to be material;
- Any particular issue in relation to a project budget will be considered by the Panel on its merit;
- An application for advocacy/capacity building funding should relate to that type of project only and not include applications for funding for advocacy projects;
- Suggestions as to payment of funding by instalments should take into account the Panel's policy that employed advocates are funded according to a 30/30/30/10 formula i.e. 30% of the funding is payable upon signing of the funding agreement, 30% four months later, 30% eight months later and the balance of 10% on completion of the project;
- The Panel's current application form must be used and can be found on the Panel's website. Particular attention should be given to the information provided in the schedule of outputs and outcomes that forms part of the application as this information is essential to the Panel's decision-making;
- The period for which funding is to be sought should end no later than 30 June 2009;

David J L Bremner
Executive Officer
28 February 2008