

Australian Council of Social Service and  
Consumer Advocacy Panel

**NEM Advocacy – National Smart Meter Consumer Advocacy Project**

Consumer Advocacy Panel reference: Application 315

**Progress Report #2:**

**Period 01 July 2009 through 31 December 2009**

Provided under the terms of the Agreement

Tony Westmore, Senior Policy Officer (Electricity)

**Introduction:**

ACOSS made application to the Panel for financial support of work to facilitate advocacy of small consumer interests in a significant project of the Ministerial Council on Energy deriving from decisions in December 2007 (and subsequently June 2008) to proceed with work towards a national roll-out of smart electricity meters. The application was for funds to support participation in meetings and related expenses. The application was not for funds to support labour or related expenses. The advocates working through this project are established and supported through a variety of means including other Panel-funded projects, jurisdictional governments and independent sources. The co-applicants at Consumer Utilities Advocacy Centre (Victoria), St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria and Consumer Action Law Centre have all been involved in the project, amongst advocates from other organisations including: UnitingCare Wesley Adelaide, Ethnic Communities Council of New South Wales, Queensland Council of Social Service and Alternative Technology Association. Consumer advocates working on this project represent interests independently but are understood to be participants in the National Consumer Roundtable on Energy.

When the application was lodged the scope and detail of the National Smart Metering Program had not been finalised. The application was approved by the Panel on that understanding and on the basis that funds would be provided in the context of the application (outputs and outcomes) on a reimbursement basis.

**Summary of progress: highlights**

In retrospect there is some clarity around three distinct phases of the project to date: scoping, establishment and operations. Consumer advocates have been involved in all three phases and continue to be involved in the operational phase which is intended to run through to June 2012, although at a level of intensity that decreases dramatically from June 2010.

AEMO hosts the publicly accessible website for the NSMP at  
<http://share.aemo.com.au/smartmetering>

Background documents including the MCE decisions and precursor material (the cost benefit analysis), the NSMP terms of reference are stored on this site.

Consumer advocates are represented on the Business Requirements working group (Tony Westmore or ACOSS and Craig Memery of Alternative Technology Association), Regulation working group (Tony Westmore of ACOSS, Janine Rayner of Consumer Action Law Centre, Mark Henley of UnitingCare Wesley Adelaide, and more recently Deanna Foong of Consumer Utilities Advocacy Centre) and Pilots & Trials working group (Joyce Fu of Ethnic Communities Council, Gavin Dufty and May Johnston of St Vincent de Paul Victoria, Linda Parmenter of Queensland Council of Social Service). Details of processes and proceedings of these groups can be found at the AEMO hosted website noted above.

This project has allowed for the cost of travel and related expenses for consumer advocates to participate in the processes described above and meetings listed below.

## Summary of project outputs and outcomes

At 31 December 2009 the project is well advanced. It should be noted that the timing of project deliverables has shifted significantly since the application for funds was made in June of 2008. At December 2009 key deliverables from the Business Requirements and Regulation working groups are not likely to be finalised until early 2010. A revised program plan (roadmap) and budget are attached by way of background. Also attached are the results of collaboration between consumer advocates in processes to advance the smart meter project

The work of consumer advocates through these processes is in line with the outputs and outcomes proposed in the application. It should be noted that this project allows for coordination of engagement through the administration of travel and related expenses. Work by advocates on particular components of the NSMP and the SMWG-coordinated consumer protection and safety work stream is not the subject of accountability and reporting through this project.

### Meetings and consultations:

Business requirements working group workshop, 07/07, Melbourne  
 Regulation working group workshop 14/07, Melbourne  
 NSSC: meeting 15/07, Melbourne  
 meet w/ program director and business requirements stream leader 16/07, Sydney  
 Pilots & Trials 27/07, Sydney  
 NSSC: meeting 03/08, teleconf  
 Business requirements working group workshop 10-11/08, Sydney  
 Pilots & Trials sub-group re reporting frameworks 12/08, Sydney  
 Regulation working group workshop 17/08, Sydney  
 Roundtable: meet re smart meter 'policy issues' 19/08, teleconf  
 NSSC: meeting 19/08, Sydney  
 Regulation working group workshop 10/09, Melbourne  
 Roundtable: meet re smart meter consumer protection issues 14/09, Melbourne  
 MCE: smart meters consumer protections forum 15/09, Melbourne  
 Business requirements working group workshop, 16-17/09, Melbourne  
 meet w/ program director and regulation stream leader 21/09, Melbourne  
 ACOSS meet w/ advisor to Minister Ferguson re NEL smart meter amendments 21/09, Melbourne  
 NSSC: meeting 22/09, Melbourne  
 Pilots & Trials 28/09, Sydney  
 NSSC: meeting 01/10, Sydney  
 Roundtable: meet re smart meter 'policy issues' 06/10, teleconf  
 Regulation working group workshop 08-09/10, Sydney  
 Seminar re smart meter home area networks 16/10, Melbourne  
 Business requirements working group workshop, 19/10, Sydney  
 NSSC: meeting 21/10, Sydney  
 Pilots & Trials 29/10, Sydney  
 Regulation working group workshop 29/10, teleconf  
 Regulation working group workshop 09-10/11, Melbourne  
 Business requirements working group workshop, 18-19/11, Melbourne  
 NSSC: meeting 27/11, Melbourne  
 Pilots & Trials 30/11, Melbourne  
 meet w/ program director and AGL representative 04/12, teleconf  
 NSSC: meet w/ secretariat re communications strategy 07/12, teleconf  
 Regulation working group workshop 08/12, Sydney  
 Business requirements working group workshop, 15/12, Sydney  
 NSSC: meeting 16/12, Sydney

## Statement of project income and expenditure as at 31 December 2009

(nb: the accounts of this project have been subject to external and independent audit)

	project budget	actual to Jun 09	actual to Dec 09	total to Dec 09	project remaining
<b>income</b>					
grant	41910	0	0	0	41910
other	0	0	0	0	0
<b>total</b>	<b>41910</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>41910</b>
<b>expenditure</b>					
travel etc	38763	16719	16031	32750	6013
teleconferences	1227	0	96	96	1131
administration	1920	1920	0	1920	0
sundry	0	296	0	296	-296
<b>total</b>	<b>41910</b>	<b>18935</b>	<b>16127</b>	<b>35062</b>	<b>6848</b>
<b>surplus/deficit</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-18935</b>	<b>-16127</b>	<b>-35062</b>	

A detailed transaction listing has been provided under separate cover. Please direct any questions about project finances to Mr Ray Pedley at ACOSS on 02 9310 6200.