



**Australian Government**

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**Department of Families,  
Housing, Community Services  
and Indigenous Affairs**

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**Part C: Home Energy Saver Scheme  
Application Information  
Effective January 2012**

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## Preface

The Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA or the Department) has a suite of documents (the **Program Guideline Suite**) which provide information relating to the program. They provide the key starting point for parties considering whether to participate in the program and form the basis for the business relationship between FaHCSIA and the funding recipient.

They are:

- **Part A: Program Guidelines** which provides the an overview of Program and the Activities relating to the program;
- **Part B: Information for Applicants** which provides information on the Application, Assessment, Eligibility, Selection and Complaints processes; Financial and Funding Agreement arrangements;
- **Part C: Application Information** provides specific information on the Activity, Selection Criteria, Performance Management and Reporting. This part should be read in conjunction with the Draft Funding Agreement for the Activity and the Standard Terms and Conditions.; and
- The **Application Form** which is completed by applicants applying for funding during a selection process.

FaHCSIA reserves the right to amend these documents from time-to-time by whatever means it may determine in its absolute discretion and will provide reasonable notice of these amendments.

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## 1 Financial Management Program overview

The Financial Management Program (FMP) aims to build financial resilience for vulnerable people and those most at risk of financial and social exclusion and disadvantage. It helps people across a range of income and financial literacy levels to overcome financial adversity and manage their money, participate in their communities and plan for the medium to long term.

### 1.1 FMP service strategies

The FMP contributes to improved outcomes for vulnerable people, families and communities through initiatives that work together to promote financial inclusion by helping people avoid or resolve financial difficulties and achieve financial self-reliance. The services provide crisis support, budgeting and financial counselling, financial education and access to financial services and products that build longer term capability and financial inclusion. Service strategies include:

- emergency relief,
- financial counselling,
- money management information and education,
- microfinance and matched savings initiatives,
- information about saving for retirement,
- research into problem gambling and its impacts, and
- assistance with energy efficiency.

Additional information about the FMP and location of services is available on the Department's website:

[www.fahcsia.gov.au](http://www.fahcsia.gov.au)

## 2 Home Energy Saver Scheme overview

The Home Energy Saver Scheme ('HESS' or 'the Scheme') is a new service strategy under the FMP aimed at assisting low-income households across Australia experiencing difficulty meeting and paying for their energy needs.

HESS is part of the Australian Government's climate change plan, [Securing a Clean Energy Future](#), and was developed in the context of the expansion of the Low Carbon Communities Program. **Annex A** details other Low Carbon Communities Programs and a selection of other initiatives under [Securing a Clean Energy Future](#) that relate to low-income households.

### 2.1 Aims and objectives

The aim of the Scheme is to improve the financial and energy management capability of low-income households to engage with and navigate the energy market through:

- access to energy efficiency and financial management information, advice, advocacy, support and appropriate financial products (in particular the No Interest Loans Scheme, known as NILS);
- increased knowledge and skills regarding energy efficiency and financial management;
- improved energy and financial management practices and strategies; and
- integrated service coordination around energy efficiency and financial management.

Low-income households are more susceptible to price changes for energy because they spend a greater proportion of their budget on meeting essential household expenses and have less room to adjust to increases. Commonwealth Financial Counselling (CFC) providers funded under the FMP report utilities as one of the key presenting issues for clients while FMP funded Emergency Relief (ER) providers report 'energy bills being difficult to pay' as one of the key issues nationally for people presenting to ER services. As a result, utilities vouchers are one of the most common forms of assistance delivered by ER providers. The number of households seeking assistance with energy costs is likely to grow over time.

The HESS will provide \$29.9 million over four years (until 2014-15) to support low-income households across Australia. These services will be delivered to 100,000 low-income households, including tailored in-depth assistance through a home visit by trained workers to 50,000 households facing financial and energy hardship.

An important part of the Scheme will be to link participants with the NILS as appropriate to enable them to access capital to make longer term energy efficiency improvements.

## **2.2 Core activity elements**

FMP service providers already encounter many clients with energy hardship issues. The HESS seeks to build on the current FMP service framework by improving its resourcing and capacity to provide advice and assistance to low-income households in relation to energy hardship issues. There are three core elements to the Scheme for which service providers can seek funding:

1. HESS workers,
2. national coordination, and
3. a national 1800 phone line.

Each of these is described in more detail below.

### **2.2.1 HESS workers**

The HESS will establish a network of workers linked in with existing FMP service providers and financial counsellors who will be able to deliver the following services.

For households:

- information, education and advice on energy efficiency and financial management and options to better manage energy costs;
- tailored assistance through home visits (target 50,000 households);
- detailed referrals<sup>1</sup> to other services and energy efficiency/hardship schemes; and
- detailed referrals to NILS as appropriate.

For the community and community sector:

- community education to targeted community groups, and
- education of the community sector on energy related issues.

In establishing the HESS network and delivering these services, there are several issues that were considered in the design of the Scheme. These included:

- the existence of a variety of energy efficiency programs (over 300 Australia-wide) funded by different levels of government that differ across locations;
- the contribution by some energy retailers, including through their energy hardship programs, to assist low-income households;
- the diversity and differing energy needs of low-income Australian households including culturally and linguistically diverse communities and households containing people with disabilities; and
- locational issues such as remoteness and differing climates.

These issues pointed towards an open design that leaves providers scope for developing service delivery models suited to the environment in which they will be delivering services. Such models will be carefully selected and assessed against, but not limited to, the following considerations:

- service area and coverage of the proposed model including rural and remote delivery where appropriate,
- delivery of the full range of HESS services,
- capacity to build on and link with existing FMP services,
- capacity to build on and link with existing energy efficiency and energy hardship programs and community services,
- capacity to leverage Commonwealth funding with funding from other sources including energy retailers and networks,
- willingness and ability to contribute to a national HESS network and work with State and National HESS coordinators, and
- value for money.

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<sup>1</sup> Examples of a 'detailed referral' include contacting another service on the client's behalf or assisting a client to fill out a form to receive an energy concession they are entitled to. This approach may be effective for clients who are hesitant to contact other services or who may not have the means (such as a telephone, or literacy) to contact the other agency or service.

### ***HESS worker training, qualifications and workforce development***

It is a requirement that all HESS workers must have completed or be undertaking a Certificate III in Community Services Work with the following three financial literacy units of competency or equivalent qualifications:

- CHCFLE301A Work with clients needing financial literacy education,
- CHCFLE302A Educate clients in fundamental financial literacy skills, and
- CHCFLE303A Educate clients to understand debt and consumer credit.

In addition, the Department will commission the development and delivery of a national HESS training program that will be provided to all HESS workers along with professional resources and materials. The training will help providers deliver effective services and ensure workers can identify needs and respond appropriately to improve outcomes for people and communities. The package will include elements such as, for example:

- energy efficiency and financial management;
- navigating the energy market;
- presentation and training skills;
- triage and referral;
- home visits and related occupational health and safety awareness;
- government benefits, energy concessions and the income support system; and
- the HESS toolkit.

All HESS workers will need to have undertaken or be undertaking relevant training before delivering HESS services.

The Department will commission the development of a HESS toolkit that will provide HESS workers with the necessary tools and materials to support their work, especially home visits.

Service providers will be expected to demonstrate that their HESS workers have appropriate support and supervision, development opportunities and career pathways to support and maintain the workforce.

#### **2.2.2 National coordination**

Funding will be available for the national coordination of HESS services. Coordination will involve the following responsibilities:

- ensuring consistent quality of HESS service delivery;
- coordinating the training and development of HESS workers;
- working to establish and maintain links with energy retailers' hardship schemes and energy efficiency programs;
- dissemination of relevant information to the HESS network;
- coordinating and ensuring consistency of reporting in line with Departmental requirements, which entails providing guidance to the HESS network;
- facilitating the sharing of better practice approaches to HESS service delivery and for HESS worker support and training; and
- actively contributing to the continuous improvement of the Scheme.

#### **2.2.3 National 1800 phone line**

Funding will also be provided for delivery of a national 1800 phone line which will involve:

- providing a basic energy and financial management telephone advisory service,
- performing triage and referrals to local HESS workers or to other services where appropriate, and
- collecting and managing data on calls and referrals.

The service could be provided by either a national provider or by state/territory based providers, which may include a different organisation in each state/territory.

### **2.3 Service provider eligibility**

Eligible organisations delivering services under the Financial Management Program are generally not-for-profit and one of the following:

- Incorporated Association,
- Incorporated Cooperative,
- Organisation established through specific Commonwealth or state/territory legislation (e.g. churches/public benevolent institutions),
- Company incorporated under the *Corporations Act, 2001*, or
- Non-government legal entity.

The Scheme will be delivered through existing not-for-profit organisations that are currently funded under the FMP to deliver Commonwealth Financial Counselling services and/ or state/territory governments to provide general financial counselling services to individuals. HESS will focus on working with households to improve their financial and energy management practices and engagement with the energy market. In this way, it seeks to build on and complement other financial management and energy initiatives.

### **2.4 Participants/clients/recipients/target group**

To be eligible for HESS services, participants should be low-income households:

- at immediate risk of, or who are currently suffering, energy hardship;
- at risk of disconnection from their energy supplier; and
- whose situation could be improved through better financial management and energy efficient practices.

The Department will expect service providers to prioritise services and determine the level of assistance for clients according to the providers' own needs assessment processes. Service providers must ensure that the home visit component of the Scheme is delivered to, and strongly targeted towards, those households most in need of assistance.

As a guide, the Department would expect service providers to consider the following indicators of financial and energy hardship in developing their targeting:

- household income in the bottom two quintiles of the Australian population;
- holder of an Australian Government concession card;
- household income mainly derived from income support payments;
- member of a particularly disadvantaged target group, such as Indigenous Australians, culturally and linguistically diverse people, new arrivals, people with disability;
- high energy needs due to either individual or locational factors, such as disability or climate;
- high energy usage relative to household size and composition;
- participating in an energy hardship program; and/or
- disconnected or at risk of disconnection from their energy supplier.

Applicants will be asked to include their proposed method of targeting low-income households as a part of their application and this will be assessed as part of the Selection Process. This approach ensures services are targeted at low-income households most in need while also giving service providers the flexibility to tailor their services to meet local needs.

Access to the service should be fair and equitable and free of discrimination.

### **2.5 Funding for the scheme**

The Government has allocated \$29.9 million in funding. The majority of this funding is for HESS workers, national co-ordination, the national 1800 HESS phone line, and the training and support of HESS workers. The funding also includes \$5 million to enhance No Interest Loans Scheme (NILS) to enable more loans for household goods that will improve energy efficiency for households under the Scheme.

Funding will be available over four years (2011-12 to 2014-15). Eligible organisations will be invited to apply for funding, and applications will be assessed on three main criteria,:

- appropriateness and quality of the proposed service model,
- governance and administrative arrangements, and
- value for money.

Funding for the NILS component will be handled separately (see below).

## **2.6 Eligible and ineligible activities**

Program funding is to be used in accordance with Funding Agreements.

### Eligible activities

Eligible activities are detailed in the **Home Energy Saver Scheme Overview** section of this document and should always be delivered in such a way as to enhance the dignity and well-being of the client receiving those services.

### Ineligible activities

Ineligible activities include:

- providing advice on or recommending specific commercial financial products where the worker or organisation receives financial payment,
- formal energy audits, or
- installation of energy efficiency products or devices.

## **2.7 Activity links and working with other agencies and services**

Providers of HESS services are required to ensure that they link with, refer to and complement existing energy efficiency and energy hardship schemes and relevant social services and community programs in their jurisdiction. HESS providers are required to collaborate and liaise with state, territory and local governments, energy retailers' hardship teams, and community services and other not-for-profit organisations in the delivery of the Scheme.

HESS providers will also refer clients to NILS as appropriate.

The Department encourages applications which leverage funding from other sources such as energy providers or other levels of government to complement or support the implementation of HESS services.

Applications from consortia are welcome.

## **2.8 Access to the No Interest Loans Scheme (NILS)**

HESS providers will be expected to link suitable low-income households with microfinance options to assist them with the purchase of more energy efficient appliances where appropriate. In particular, the HESS will provide \$5 million over four years in funding for the No Interest Loans Scheme (NILS) to provide access to loans for household goods that will improve energy efficiency.

Good Shepherd Microfinance will build on their existing NILS to deliver this additional microfinance component in conjunction with the National Australia Bank.

The Department will also work with Good Shepherd Microfinance to explore ways to build on NILS to further assist low-income households with their energy efficiency, such as linking NILS with buying services.

## **2.9 Specialist requirements**

HESS Service providers must comply with all relevant Commonwealth, State and Territory legislation.

## **2.10 Information technology**

There are no specific IT requirements but providers must have systems in place to meet their data collection and reporting requirements.

## **2.11 Activity performance and reporting**

### **Evaluation**

Data collection and reporting will be based on current arrangements for Commonwealth Financial Counselling, with some additional HESS specific components. Full details of performance indicators and reporting requirements will be provided in Funding Agreements.

The Department periodically undertakes or commissions program evaluations and reviews to ensure program outcomes are met through quality, efficient and effective services. Where input is sought from service providers, the Department will notify them of:

- the intention to conduct an evaluation;
- the focus of the evaluation;
- who is conducting the evaluation;
- the time period in which it is to be conducted;
- where appropriate, the involvement sought; and
- any special strategies or other information relevant to the collection of data.

For specific information relating to ongoing reporting data collection, service providers should refer to their Funding Agreement.

### **Performance and reporting**

Funding agreements will make provision for the Department to collect data and information from service providers funded under the HESS to:

- assess the performance of service providers against Funding Agreements,
- report on the overall performance of HESS and its services,
- undertake one-off evaluations to supplement information to contribute future program and policy, and
- develop or improve Scheme efficiency and effectiveness.

The Department will monitor and evaluate ongoing Scheme performance and will ensure any accountability requirements are met by service providers. Service providers are required to provide performance reports in accordance with their funding agreements.

### **Performance management and improvement**

Information provided in reports and collected through other mechanisms such as surveys, evaluations etc. contributes to the overall monitoring and evaluation of program performance and informs key aspects such as:

- what was done and where,
- how much has been done,
- how well has it been done, and
- did it make a difference.

In consultation with stakeholders, the Department will continue to refine the Scheme's performance framework for measuring the effectiveness of the Scheme while also contributing to the development of a sound, consistent evidence base for the Scheme as a whole.

## **2.12 Risk management strategy**

The Department is committed to a comprehensive and systematic approach to the effective management of potential opportunities and adverse effects. The Department's risk management decisions and practices are made in accordance with the Department's Strategic Framework, using consequence and likelihood to determine a risk rating for each of the Department's five key risk areas of governance, financial management, viability, performance management and issues management.

As a part of the overall risk management for the HESS, the Department requires service providers to:

- identify and document risks in delivering services funded under the HESS,
- identify and document risk control strategies, and
- implement adequate and effective policies and procedures to manage risks and achieve the control strategies through the funded period.

Funding Agreements are managed according to their level of risk. As such, service providers will be subject to a risk assessment prior to the negotiation of Funding Agreements.

As well as a general risk assessment, these assessments will focus on addressing areas of risk particularly related to HESS. These include:

- risks arising from the home visit element of the Scheme, such as HESS worker occupational health and safety requirements and household safety concerns, including police checks and worker identification;
- potential duplication and overlap with existing programs;
- privacy and confidentiality obligations;
- complaints handling; and
- referral pathways.

The HESS will be managed to ensure the efficient and effective use of public monies. This will be consistent with best value in social services principles and the Funding Agreement, and will aim to maintain viable services and act to prevent fraud upon the Commonwealth.

Funding must only be used for the purposes for which it was provided.

## 3 Application Process

### 3.1 Overview of the application process

The process will be a **restricted competitive** selection process. The Department will invite applications from not-for-profit organisations providing general financial counselling to individuals funded either under the FMP or by the state/territory government.

It is expected that proposed service delivery models may vary from state/territory to state/territory due to the requirement for models to build on, link with and refer to existing energy efficiency and energy hardship programs and other community services in the state/territory.

Providers will be asked to indicate whether they are applying for funding for HESS workers, the national coordination role and/or the national 1800 telephone line. Applicants must make their case for their suitability to undertake these roles as a part of the application process.

The selection process for development and delivery of the HESS worker training and toolkit will be undertaken as a separate process.

### 3.2 Selection criteria

Applicants are to be organisations who receive funding from the Australian Government's Financial Management Program and/or from a state and territory government to provide financial counselling services. Applications from these organisations will be assessed against the following selection criteria.

#### **HESS Workers**

##### **1. Appropriateness and quality of the proposed service model including:**

- a) Details of the proposed service delivery model including intended service coverage area (refer to separate document: HESS Service Coverage Area and Funding Table).
- b) Process for identifying and prioritising target groups, and obtaining referrals.
- c) How you will integrate with existing Financial Management Program services.
- d) How you will integrate with existing energy efficiency and energy hardship programs and other community services in your area.
- e) Details of any funding you receive/intend to receive from other sources including energy providers.
- f) Mechanisms for contributing to a national HESS network and working with the national HESS coordinator/s and 1800 phone line.

##### **2. Governance and administration arrangements including:**

- a) Organisational structures to support the management of the HESS services.
- b) Support and supervisory arrangements for HESS workers.
- c) Workforce planning, training and development of HESS workers.
- d) Quality assurance mechanisms.
- e) Complaints handling procedures.
- f) Capacity to meet the Department's reporting and evaluation requirements and to contribute to evaluation of the HESS Scheme.
- g) Detail the measures your organisation will have in place to ensure the safety of HESS workers undertaking home visits and clients.
- h) Detail your organisation's experience and ability to provide services to vulnerable and disadvantaged people, including people who have low literacy skills and/or where English is not their first language.
- i) Describe the process for ensuring that HESS services to be delivered by your organisation will be operational before 1 July 2012.

##### **3. Value for money**

- a) The application must demonstrate that the service provider will deliver services efficiently and in a cost effective way.
- b) Detail the amount of HESS funding you are applying for each year for 2011-12 to 2014-15.
- c) Please provide a budget of how you propose to use the funding.

## **National Coordination**

### **1. Appropriateness and quality of the proposed service model including:**

- a) Details of the proposed service model for national coordination of the HESS network including HESS workers and the 1800 phone line.
- b) How you will ensure consistent and quality HESS service delivery across the network and actively contribute to the continuous improvement of HESS.
- c) Process for assisting HESS workers identify and prioritise target groups, and obtaining referrals.
- d) How you will integrate with existing Financial Management Program services.
- e) How you will integrate with existing energy efficiency and energy hardship programs and other community services in your area.
- f) Details of any funding you receive/intend to receive from other sources including energy providers.
- g) Mechanisms for contributing to and sharing relevant information/best practice approaches.

### **2. Governance and administration arrangements including:**

- a) Organisational structures to support the management of the national coordinator/s.
- b) Support and supervisory arrangements for national coordinator/s.
- c) Workforce planning, training and development of national coordinator/s.
- d) Quality assurance mechanisms.
- e) Complaints handling procedures.
- f) Capacity to meet the Department's reporting and evaluation requirements and to contribute to evaluation of the HESS Scheme.
- g) Detail your organisation's experience and ability to provide services to vulnerable and disadvantaged people, including people who have low literacy skills and/or where English is not their first language.
- h) Describe the process for ensuring that HESS and national coordination services to be delivered by your organisation will be operational before 1 July 2012.

### **3. Value for money**

- a) The application must demonstrate that the service provider will deliver services efficiently and in a cost effective way.
- b) Detail the amount of HESS funding you are applying for each year for 2011-12 to 2014-15.
- c) Please provide a budget of how you propose to use the funding.

## **1800 Phone Line**

### **1. Appropriateness and quality of the proposed service model including:**

- a) Details of the proposed service delivery model including whether it is a single national model or a state/territory based model (include which state/territory), how the infrastructure/information technology will function, how it will link and refer to HESS workers, how it will refer to other FMP, community services and existing energy efficiency and energy hardship programs where appropriate.
- b) If it is a state/territory based model describe mechanisms to ensure coordination with the other organisations in other jurisdictions providing this service.
- c) Process for identifying and prioritising target groups, and completing referrals.
- d) Details of any funding you receive/intend to receive from other sources including energy providers.
- e) Mechanisms for contributing to a national HESS network and working with the national HESS coordinator/s.

### **2. Governance and administration arrangements including:**

- a) Organisational structures to support the management of the 1800 number.
- b) Support and supervisory arrangements for 1800 workers.
- c) Workforce planning, training and development of 1800 workers.
- d) Quality assurance mechanisms.
- e) Complaints handling procedures.
- f) Capacity to meet the Department's reporting and evaluation requirements and to contribute to evaluation of the HESS Scheme.
- g) Detail your organisation's experience and ability to provide services to vulnerable and disadvantaged people, including people who have low literacy skills and/or where English is not their first language.
- h) Describe the process for ensuring that HESS services to be delivered by your organisation will be operational before 1 July 2012.

### **3. Value for money**

- a) The application must demonstrate that the service provider will deliver services efficiently and in a cost effective way.
- b) Detail the amount of HESS funding you are applying for each year for 2011-12 to 2014-15.
- c) Please provide a budget of how you propose to use the funding.

### **3.3 How to submit an application**

To apply for selection under this process, applicants will need to complete the application form and respond to selection criteria as detailed at above. Applications must be received by the closing date and time as detailed at 3.7.

Applications can be submitted in one of two ways.

An original and two copies of the application must be lodged at:

**FaHCSIA/12/732– Home Energy Saver Scheme**  
Tender Box  
Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs  
Module B Reception  
Tuggeranong Office Park  
Athllon Drive  
TUGGERANONG ACT 2900

or

A full application may be emailed to the Department at [HESS@fahcsia.gov.au](mailto:HESS@fahcsia.gov.au).

The Department will not issue Application Forms or accept completed applications by fax.

### **3.4 Application acknowledgement**

Unless prior agreement has been reached with the Department an application will not be considered lodged until it is received by the Department.

The applicant will receive email notification from the Department within 48 hours of an application being lodged correctly. If the applicant has not received notification in this timeframe, the applicant should contact the [HESS@fahcsia.gov.au](mailto:HESS@fahcsia.gov.au) mailbox to confirm that their application has been lodged correctly.

### **3.5 Questions and answers during the application period**

In response to questions asked by applicants during the application open period, questions and answers will be included on the Department's website at:

[http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/communities/progserv/financial\\_management\\_program/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/communities/progserv/financial_management_program/Pages/default.aspx)

Questions should be emailed to the [HESS@fahcsia.gov.au](mailto:HESS@fahcsia.gov.au) mailbox or asked by contacting 1800 997 763. Questions will not be accepted after close of business on 15 February 2012.

The Department will only respond to requests for information that seek clarification of issues to allow applicants to better understand the requirements of the Application Form and Application Guidelines.

### **3.6 Questions after the application period**

The Department will not accept or respond to any applicants' requests for information or correspondence about the status or progress of their application during the assessment phase.

### **3.7 Closing date and time**

Applications will open on 31 January 2012 and close on 24 February at 2pm AEST.

Applications must be received by the Department within the application period to be considered.

## 4 Special Conditions applying to this Activity

Not applicable.

## 5 Contact information

Additional information can be sourced via:

- FaHCSIA's website:  
[http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/communities/progserv/financial\\_management\\_program/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/communities/progserv/financial_management_program/Pages/default.aspx)
- Email: [HESS@fahcsia.gov.au](mailto:HESS@fahcsia.gov.au)
- Phone: 1800 997 763
- Mail:  
Money Management Branch  
TOP CW2  
Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs  
PO Box 7576  
Canberra Business Centre ACT 2610

Local FaHCSIA contact details for successful applicants will be included in funding agreements.

## Annex A

### Securing a Clean Energy Future Initiative

Tackling the challenge of climate change is one of the Commonwealth Government's highest priorities. The Government has committed to ambitious emissions reduction targets and is implementing a comprehensive nationwide response to climate change: reducing emissions, adapting to unavoidable climate change and helping to shape a global response.

Improving the efficiency of our energy use is one of the fastest and most cost effective ways to reduce emissions. The Commonwealth Government has implemented a raft of energy efficiency measures which will help improve the productivity of our economy and move Australia towards a prosperous low-carbon future.

Listed below are some of the initiatives that will support low-income households and community organisations, under the Government's *Securing a Clean Energy Future*. Additional information can be obtained from <http://www.cleanenergyfuture.gov.au>.

#### Low Carbon Communities Program

The Australian Government is supporting community and household action on climate change through Low Carbon Communities. The Home Energy Saver Scheme (HESS) is one of the schemes under this initiative. In addition to HESS, support will be provided to local councils, community organisations and low income households through the following funding streams.

- The \$200 million Community Energy Efficiency Program (CEEP) will support local governments and community organisations improve their energy efficiency in council and community use buildings and facilities.
- The \$100 million Low Income Energy Efficiency Program (LIEEP) will support consortia of local councils, community and welfare organisations, state and territory governments and energy companies to trial and evaluate approaches to improve the energy efficiency of low income households.
- The Charities Maritime and Aviation Support Program will offer a rebate for the carbon price impact on essential maritime and aviation fuels used by organisations such as air and sea rescue services.

The Community Energy Efficiency Program, the Low Income Energy Efficiency Program and the Charities Maritime and Aviation Support Program will be administered by the Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency (DCCEE) and additional information regarding these programs is available on the Department's website at [www.climatechange.gov.au](http://www.climatechange.gov.au).

#### Energy Efficiency Information Grants

Clear information from trusted sources will be vital in helping small and medium enterprises and community organisations reduce energy costs. The Australian Government will establish a \$40 million program providing grants over four years to industry associations and non-profit organisations that work with small and medium enterprises and community organisations.

These grants will help industry associations and non-profit organisations deliver information about the impacts of a carbon price on small and medium enterprises and community organisations and suggest practical steps to manage these impacts.

Applications for the first round of grant funding are expected to be sought in the first quarter of 2012. Grants are expected to range from \$100,000 to \$1 million.

## Remote Indigenous Energy Program

The Remote Indigenous Energy Program (RIEP) will support Indigenous people to make the adjustment to a clean energy future, aligning with the Government's commitment to improve Indigenous health principally through a reliable power supply. The Program will provide fit-for-purpose renewable energy systems in up to 50 remote Indigenous communities, energy efficiency education, training for basic maintenance and repairs and maintenance for existing systems. The Program builds upon the success of previous programs such as Bushlight, delivered by the Centre for Appropriate Technology (CAT) since 2002.

## Household advice line and Living Greener website

The Government's LivingGreener website ([www.livinggreener.gov.au](http://www.livinggreener.gov.au)) provides information on living sustainably and links all Commonwealth, state and territory energy efficiency and climate change programs. This website will be expanded to provide information on how households can improve their energy efficiency to save money and manage the impacts of increasing energy costs. The website will also provide new content for schools and local governments. Tailored advice to householders will also be delivered through a phone advice line, supplemented by social media and mobile applications to reach younger age groups.

## Household Assistance Package

To help households adjust to the introduction of the carbon price, more than half of the revenue raised will be given to them primarily in the form of tax cuts, higher family payments and increases in pensions and allowances.

The package of household assistance helps to ensure that the impact of a carbon price is manageable for low and middle income Australian households, especially those who have less financial room to adjust to change. It does this through cash assistance delivered through tax cuts and increased Government payments. Other parts of the household assistance package support incentives for households to adopt their own energy and cost saving measures. By adopting such measures, households will be able to save money as well as contribute to Australia's clean energy future. Some elements of the package include:

- **Essential medical equipment payment**

The Essential Medical Equipment Payment of \$140 per year will be available to provide extra help for the eligible people in Australia who face additional and unavoidable electricity costs owing to medical conditions or disabilities and hold a relevant concession card. People in this situation might use equipment such as a home dialysis machine, or they may have thermoregulatory dysfunctions which mean that they require additional heating or cooling to regulate their body temperature.

The \$140 per year additional payment will cover the additional electricity cost impacts associated with this essential medical equipment faced under a carbon price. People affected can apply for this payment, which will supplement existing state and territory assistance for the cost of essential medical equipment.

- **Assistance for families**

Low-income families will be eligible for assistance that at least covers the expected average impact of carbon pricing on their cost of living.

Middle-income families may also be eligible for assistance that will help them to meet the expected impacts of carbon pricing on their living expenses.

Depending on the family's income, the package of assistance will be a combination of reductions in their income tax and/or increases in any benefits they may receive, such as Family Tax Benefit (FTB), pensions or allowances. This package of assistance will appropriately account for different household types and sizes.

More information on assistance can be found at: <http://www.cleanenergyfuture.gov.au>