

**ECCV Submission
To
The Victorian Essential Services Commission's
Supporting Customers, Avoiding Labels: Energy Hardship
Inquiry Draft Report
September 2015**

The Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria Inc. (ECCV) is the voice of multicultural Victoria and the peak policy advocacy body for eight regional ethnic community councils and up to 220 members including ethnic and multicultural organisations across Victoria since 1974. During this time, we have been the link between multicultural communities, government and the wider community.

Recently the ECCV was requested to review the Essential Services Commission's (ESC) draft report *Supporting Customers, Avoiding Labels: Energy Hardship Inquiry Report, September 2015* (the Report).

In 2015 ECCV completed one submission to the Australian Electricity Regulator (AER) for its *Electricity Pricing Review* and one consumer education project for culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) consumers in Victoria funded for one year by the Department of State Development, Business and Innovation (DSDBI). These efforts have focused more on culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) consumers specifically as residential customers of energy retailers. For CALD small business owners we refer you to ECCV's 2015 publication *Business Energy Smart Tips* (BEST).

The ECCV project - The Multicultural Communities Energy Education Project (MCEE) – partially informs this response to the ESC's draft report. ECCV has attached its independent evaluation of this project *Multicultural Communities' Energy Education Project Evaluation Report, September 2015 (Attachment 1)*. ECCV also provided some ongoing feedback to the AER and attended a workshop conducted by ENA/CSIRO on the development of its *Consumer Engagement Handbook* for electricity network businesses. It has had brief conversations with the Victorian Council of Social Services (VCOSS), The Consumer Utilities Advocacy Centre (CUAC) and the Consumer Action Law Centre. While aligned in many respects, ECCV has decided to make a brief submission focused on aspects of the proposed framework which it sees as potentially disadvantaging CALD consumers.

Disadvantaged Customers

1. ECCV recognises that early intervention payment plans may be useful to some consumers who function well on the current plans but is not yet convinced that the new framework will meet the needs of vulnerable CALD consumers. The evidence for the success of the retail sector in currently providing clear and transparent communication to its CALD consumer customers is not obvious in the report. Since it is proposed that retailers will be charged with identifying vulnerable CALD consumers, ECCV has chosen to make this submission.
2. ECCV advocates for communities who sometimes experience entrenched or even generational low incomes and not temporary ones. Our council would like to see some further recognition of the consumer rights movement in Victoria's retail energy framework.

Excluding socio-economic issues from the scope of this inquiry, however, divorces CALD energy consumers from consumer protection principles that support hardship provisions in the retail and consumer credit sectors. Advocacy and legal appeal often depends on the existence of hardship provisions to assist vulnerable consumers. ECCV does not consider the identification of 'vulnerable consumers' and their 'capacity to pay' as unnecessary "labelling" as it benefits CALD consumers in genuine hardship affecting their capacity to pay.

3. Human rights inform the current retail framework and provide CALD consumers with recognition of the barriers affecting their ability to engage with retailers about payment difficulties. Recognition of vulnerable consumers and unfair trading practices influence fair trading and consumer protection legislation in other states and nationally through related issues such as the National Credit Code (NCC). Consumer hardship and vulnerability for all consumers has its origins in the socio-economic conditions which inform ECCV's advocacy work. Despite these conditions being excluded from the scope of the Inquiry, ECCV feedback indicates that Victorians from new and emerging communities suffer economic hardship by inadvertently accumulating bill fines they are unable to pay. The ESC needs to further explain to CALD consumers how the Victorian energy retail regulator and sector differs from other jurisdictions to the extent that the proposed framework warrants removal of the categories of "hardship provisions" and "vulnerable consumer" as well as the need for retailers to consider the consumer's "capacity to pay".

Recommendation 1

That the ESC retains the categories of "hardship provisions", "vulnerable consumer" and the need for retailers to consider the consumer's "capacity to pay".

4. The draft report states that avoiding debt and disconnection only works if energy retailers and customers share responsibility, however the report is problematic in assuming that increasing disconnection rates do not have socio-economic causes. Many older people and newly arrived people from non-English speaking backgrounds have low financial literacy and a poor understanding of energy retailers due to the migration experience. These CALD consumers have a reduced capacity to pay and limited understanding of current retail hardship provisions. Research by Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW (ECCNSW) found that older migrants were "... less likely than the other groups to do anything to reduce or conserve energy. They weren't aware of any financial help options available to assist with hardship in paying bills. They want information on energy provided in their first language." (Cunningham & Schaffer, ECCV 2012, p2). ECCV's believes that where CALD consumer application for hardship provisions is low it does not mean that they do not need the provisions at all.

ECCV believes that retailers are not able to meet the procedural requirements in the current legislation to identify and support CALD consumers. Furthermore ECCV advocates that early intervention, better language services and investment in the CLE sector in the current framework would achieve improved outcomes for CALD consumers without removing key hardship provisions in the draft framework.

5. ECCV community feedback indicates that the risk of homelessness for older CALD consumers who are renting will be increased if the proposed changes to the “hardship provisions” are made. The majority of full aged pensioners in Victoria are from a CALD background. CALD aged pensioners who are renting are already struggling to pay both their rent and their energy bills. Many abstain from using their amenities to save money and many others use the “hardship provisions” to make payment plans so that their bills are affordable over time. ECCV feedback indicates that homelessness services already see many older CALD people who have received a 14 day notice to vacate from their rental property because they were unable to pay their rent. If “hardship provisions” are no longer available for energy bills, this number will increase significantly.
6. ECCV’s 2014 policy paper *Multicultural Aged Care Strategy: What matters to seniors from non-English speaking background in Victoria* (ECCV, 2014) recommended that the Victorian Government introduce increases in senior pensioner concession rates for utilities and council fees in recognition of their financial hardship and vulnerability.
7. CALD consumers may become more disadvantaged if it is assumed that retailers have the cultural capacity or access to a well-funded community legal educator network in Victoria to close gaps in CALD customer/consumer education. Proposed costs and benefits under point 7.5 (ESC, p.114) on customer benefits assume the cultural competency of retailers to engage with CALD customers and that proposed minimum levels of support to CALD consumers will reflect this. ECCV would like to see this point developed as its MCEE project found that there is a limited number of energy information programs targeting CALD communities who still experience difficulty in comprehending or filling out forms and contracts including those provided by door knock electricity salespeople.

Recommendation 2

That the ESC provides bilingual awareness-raising to CALD consumers about shared retailer and consumer responsibility.

Recommendation 3

ESC to further explain to CALD consumers the data and consultation that informs its confidence that the retail sector can accurately identify, communicate and support (or refer) vulnerable CALD consumers to appropriate “Active Assistance programs” before disconnection.

Reduced Advocacy and Legal Capacity for CALD Consumers

8. ECCV is concerned that removing the importance of the concept of ‘vulnerable consumer’ and ‘hardship’ may weaken CALD consumer advocacy and legal representation. Identifying vulnerable consumers without labelling them as such permits retailers to legally group some

consumers as 'high risk', which is what the banking sector is able to do through the practice of "de-risking". Under the proposed framework vulnerable consumers would no longer be "labelled" as such, this is also a legal omission that could reduce the evidence trail if retailers were to repeat unfair trading practices by 'de-risking' CALD consumers if compliance costs, for example in staff training, exceeded the profit of identifying and referring vulnerable CALD customers.

For advocates, it is important to be able to categorise CALD consumers experiencing hardship because of that category's relationship to broader legislation, codes of practice and financial institute policies. Advocates rely on these categories to gain data that informs their submissions for legislative reforms and amendments; or to highlight breaches in access and equity. The proposed framework could see the retailer's accountability to CALD consumers reduced if they only have to refer vulnerable consumers who cannot pay to 'Active Assistance Programs' that are ineffective. ECCV would like to see the ESC consider any potential imbalance between retailer and CALD consumers in the new framework which may affect consumers seeking advocacy or clarity of their legal rights.

Recommendation 4

That retailers provide culturally responsive/bilingual awareness sessions on how to undergo legal appeal as CALD energy consumers.

ECCV's Multicultural Communities Energy Education Project (MCEE)

9. The MCEE project delivered by ECCV held over 40 energy education workshop engaging 1214 participants through information sessions and more community members broadly through media. A minimum of 200 community members across six cultures were deeply engaged directly through attending a series of workshops. ECCV has attached our external evaluation of the MCEE project in this submission to share its findings on CALD energy consumers (**Attachment 1**) in Victoria with the ESC and other interested parties.

The MCEE was a one year project from September 2014-15 providing practical advice on how to reduce costs and energy use on household electricity bills and raise awareness on renewable energy and climate change among six culturally and linguistically diverse communities in Victoria. The communities were Polish, Russian, Turkish, South-Sudanese, Chin-Burmese and Bhutanese.

10. The MCEE project's bilingual workers reported that the communities did not understand the structure of energy bills and could not read them. An evaluation of the project confirmed the extent of bill stress and lack of knowledge within CALD communities. CALD consumers were unaware of flexible pricing options, concessions and utility relief funds available. Anecdotally, bills are high and unscrupulous energy retailers are targeting suburbs with high concentrations of newly arrived migrants who do not understand the energy system. Reports of high energy use during winter due to a lack of awareness of energy saving options came from some newly arrived African communities.

This feedback highlighted the lack of current awareness and programs available to help CALD consumers to take steps to better manage their energy consumption. This includes culturally appropriate assistance to manage their negotiation of payment plans with retailers or any third party registered to assist CALD consumers such as community legal educators (CLE). ECCV also notes that in Victoria CLE sector funding has been reduced and it is not in a position to provide external active assistance programs that might benefit CALD consumers. Further, the grants for the MCEE project for which 19 applicants were successful is not ongoing. ECCV recommends that an across-government approach to further ESC draft reports would benefit CALD consumers.

Recommendation 5

ESC to consider seeking more data on the effectiveness of ethno-specific energy programs currently provided by retailers and the capacity of the CLE sector to provide effective “Active Assistance Programs” as referral services.

CALD Consumers’ Capacity to Pay

11. The new framework from the Report recommends the removal of current hardship provisions in place of early intervention by retailers, the removal of the concept of ‘vulnerable consumers’ and the removal for retailers to have ‘regard to a customer’s capacity to pay when establishing a payment plan’ (ESC, Sept 2015, p.99). ECCV would like the ESC to consider the effects on CALD consumers, and all vulnerable Victorian energy consumers, of taking steps to remove these consumer protections.
12. In the draft Report’s section 7.4.4 (ESC, p.113) it removes the requirement for CALD consumers to disclose their payment difficulty, which places the responsibility onto the retailer to effectively assess their customers’ “capacity to pay” or “vulnerability” to refer them onto the assistance programs. This assumes a confidence in the sector and, as with ECCV’s Recommendation 1, ECCV would like to see the data which shows that retailers have the capacity to identify vulnerable CALD consumers. It also notes that removing these categories means that retailers have no obligation if they ‘get it wrong’.

The ESC’s draft report is premised on the assumption that labelling customers as being ‘in hardship’ is due to an irregular and unguided response by retailers towards disadvantaged consumers without the capacity to pay. ECCV sees these hardship provisions as an important element of energy retail regulation that understands that CALD consumers (including CALD seniors) experience vulnerability as consumers of a range of public and private services.

There may also be other reasons for customers not being identified as needing hardship provisions including that:

Retailers –

- a) lack language proficiency and/or interpreter/translations services;
- b) lack cultural competency when identifying vulnerable consumers;

- c) practice unconscious bias/ or discrimination;
- d) do not want to invest in culturally appropriate consultation, education material and staff training.

Some CALD Consumers:

- a) experience language and financial literacy barriers;
- b) reside in suburbs or regional areas with poor access to retail services and higher unemployment;
- c) experience higher unemployment;
- d) CALD communities (such as new and emerging communities and refugees) experience high levels of entrenched debt caused by accumulated bills and fines across sectors;
- e) Experience economic stress due to making regular overseas remittance payments;
- f) are also seniors isolated without adequate family support;
- g) have a fear of authority; and
- h) are less informed about the implications of written and verbal contracts

Recommendation 6

ESC to consult both CALD consumers and across government, other jurisdictions and national legislation affecting CALD consumers to seek clarity on the benefits CALD consumers gain by removing the retailers obligation to have regard for CALD consumers' "capacity to pay".

13. The proposed framework relies on clear communication between customer and retailer in meeting the 'engagement' principle to understand their rights and responsibilities. ECCV believes the Active Assistance Programs are not culturally responsive enough to effectively reach vulnerable CALD consumers. ECCV is concerned that such a framework could justify disconnections by the retailer with impunity, leaving CALD consumers without legal appeal.

While some of the proposed incentive payment plans are promising, ECCV notes that they can also be offered as clearer obligations on the retailer under the existing framework without dismantling consumer protection principles. ECCV agree that retailers need more support to engage with and communicate their policies to CALD consumers.

14. In the Report's section 7.5.1 (ESC, p.114). it is assumed that the new framework will clarify, "...the retailers' obligations to assist customers in payment difficulty, which reduces time spent in dispute with customers, financial counsellors, welfare and other agencies, EWOF and the Commission." ECCV, as one of those other agencies advocating for CALD consumers notes that not all disputes are the fault of the customer or the existing framework but may also be fair trading issues on the part of the retailer. The reduction in time in dispute should not be confused with a reduction in time spent on legitimate consumer complaints. If the term "clarify" from this section also means to relinquish obligation then the ECCV does not support benefits to retailers at the expense of consumer rights.

15. While ECCV understands that the term 'vulnerable' can sometimes be abused, the significant changes proposed by the ESC's draft report will tip the regulatory balance in favour of the retailer and weaken the consumer protections for CALD consumers in Victoria.

ECCV thanks the ESC for the opportunity to submit comments on the early draft of the new framework for hardship provisions for Victorian energy retail regulation.

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Multicultural Communities' Energy Education Project

EVALUATION REPORT

Report prepared by Dr Harriet Radermacher DPsych MAPS,
Radermacher and Associates, for Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria

September 2015

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Glossary

BEE	Bilingual Energy Educator
	<i>Bilingual energy educators are trained educators who conducted the community education sessions in their respective languages</i>
CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
	<i>For the purpose of this report, a person from a CALD background refers to someone who may or may not have been born in Australia, and identifies as coming from a non-English speaking background</i>
CUAC	Consumer Utilities Advocacy Centre
DSDBI	Victorian Department of State Development, Business and Innovation
ECCV	Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria
EIF	Energy Information Fund
PEP	Peer Education Participant
	<i>A person who attended a community education session</i>

Executive Summary

Background

The project was funded by the Victorian Department of State Development, Business and Innovation (DSDBI), which established the Energy Information Fund (EIF). The objective of the EIF is to educate and empower groups that may not be reached by mainstream information campaigns, to enable them to make informed decisions about electricity.

Project Aim and Design

Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria (ECCV) undertook the Multicultural Communities' Energy Education (MCEE) project to develop and deliver a community education program that would give practical advice on how to reduce costs and energy use on household electricity bills and raise awareness on renewable energy and climate change among six culturally and linguistically diverse communities in Victoria. An advisory group, comprising organisational representatives from each of the communities, assisted the project development and implementation. Bilingual energy educators (BEEs) were trained to deliver community education workshops and a broader media campaign, using translated resources.

Evaluation Framework

A primary aim of the evaluation was to provide information to the funding body and other key stakeholders about the value and effectiveness of the project. Given the time frame, it was only possible to report on the short-term outcomes. The key evaluation question explored to what extent awareness about energy use, renewable energy and climate change increased within the 6 target communities.

Key Project Outputs and Outcomes

- In total, 1214 participants attended 48 community education workshops delivered by 6 different BEEs across 6 different communities (Bhutanese, Chin-Burmese, Polish, Russian, South Sudanese and Turkish).
- The majority of participants had not used the Switch On website before the session (95%), learned new things as a result of the session (98%), intended to tell friends and family about saving electricity (97%), and intended to reduce their energy use after the session (99%).
- Overall, educators thought the sessions were extremely effective at increasing participants' awareness of electricity use, and participants interacted well and asked lots of questions. In only one session, an educator thought that participants were not engaged.
- Resources about understanding energy use and flexible pricing were developed and translated into 7 different languages (Nepali, Chin-Hakka, Polish, Russian, Arabic, Nuer and Turkish) and are available to download.
- 66 items of media activity were generated across all 6 communities: about half were via social media, with the remainder being flyers and articles posted online (newsletters and websites) or in printed newsletters.

Key Lessons

Based on the findings, a number of key lessons were identified which could inform the future roll out of the project and other similar initiatives:

- Project confirmed extent of bill stress and lack of knowledge within CALD communities
- Smaller groups worked better to communicate information
- Reaching newer communities required different strategies
- Technology and language were barriers to accessing energy information
- A range of people and organisations within each community should be targeted
- Personnel determined project success
- Translated resources are a useful legacy to leverage project outcomes
- Project outcomes and sustainability limited by short time frame and small scale
- Greater leadership and collaboration required for more impact.

Evaluation Conclusion

Given the scope and limited resources, the value and reach of the project was commendable. There was evidence to indicate that awareness of energy use, renewable energy and climate change increased amongst members of the 6 target communities.

Due to the small scale, the project did not perhaps achieve its full potential. With slightly more investment of resources, to reinforce the project messages and develop stronger linkages, greater impact could have been achieved. Further, given the diversity in demographics and infrastructure available within each community, the model was perhaps not flexible enough to achieve maximum benefit. With the exception of the translated resources, there is little evidence to indicate that project messages will continue to be relayed, without incentives to continue active dissemination.

Key Recommendations

- Develop strategies to encourage the ongoing use and leverage of resources developed by this project (MCEE handouts, flipcharts, Animoto movie, trained energy educators) by other communities and organisations.
- Long-term research and evaluation of CALD community needs and understanding about energy issues, as well as the ongoing value and use of translated resources.
- Consolidate findings from other EIF grant recipients, particularly with a CALD focus, to gain insight about the most effective models to bring about changes in energy usage and knowledge.
- Apply findings from this and other related projects to develop the cultural responsiveness of utility companies, with the aim of improving awareness, communication skills and how to use interpreters.
- Develop formal mechanisms to support the building of partnerships and links across the ethnic and energy/utility sectors, particularly to develop ownership of the project objectives within communities and their organisations.

1. Project Design and Development

1.1 Funding Body

The project was funded by the Victorian Department of State Development, Business and Innovation (DSDBI), which established the Energy Information Fund (EIF). The DSDBI partnered with the Consumer Utilities Advocacy Centre (CUAC) to develop and support implementation of the EIF.

The objective of the EIF is to educate and empower groups that may not be reached by mainstream information campaigns, to enable them to make informed decisions about electricity. The EIF provide funding to not-for-profit organisations to adapt information about the electricity market and flexible pricing and develop and deliver education materials, tools and resources to 'hard-to-reach' consumers across Victoria.

1.2 Background¹

There has been little community engagement to address the understanding and concerns of culturally and linguistically diverse householders about energy consumption, conservation and the impact of higher costs. "The changes to the energy retail market and what it means for households is not well understood by this segment of the Australian population"². The impact on families of rising energy costs, coupled with impacts of climate change, can result in significant stress and confusion by households.

There are specific issues that have been identified for culturally and linguistically diverse communities when taking charge of electricity consumption and bills. Research conducted by Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW in 2012 found that counter to an assumption that the longer migrants have been in Australia the more familiar they are likely to be with information in a range of areas, the older Greeks and Italians surveyed were less likely than the other groups to be aware of various aspects of energy use and conservation. They were less likely than the other groups to do anything to reduce or conserve energy. They weren't aware of any financial help options available to assist with hardship in paying bills. Further, they wanted information on energy provided in their first language.³

Conversely this study also found that newly arrived Australian community members had little assistance or knowledge in navigating electricity supply. "Three quarters of this group have been visited or contacted by an electricity supplier to change supplier. About half changed supplier because they thought it would save them money. Those that didn't change gave their reasons as not trusting the companies or they didn't believe it would make a difference to their bills".³

¹ This section was written by ECCV as part of the project proposal

² Cunningham, Susan and Schaffer, Elizabeth (2012). Experiences of Energy Consumption for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities, Ethnic Communities Council of NSW Inc. p.17

³ Ibid, p.2

Where sustainability programs have been delivered, targeting involvement of culturally and linguistically diverse community members, they have reported significant environmental and financial savings for households and a keenness to learn about the issues. GreenTown was a behavioural change program, run by Environment Victoria and partner organisations, to focus on educating, mobilising and motivating adults from CALD backgrounds to live more sustainably. The program evaluation report (Bailey, 2011) recorded significant savings per program participant where each household saved approximately \$774 on their electricity and gas bills each year by saving four tonnes of CO₂e.

1.3 Project Aim and Design

Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria (ECCV) undertook the Multicultural Communities' Energy Education (MCEE) project to develop and deliver a community education program that would give practical advice on how to reduce costs and energy use on household electricity bills and raise awareness on renewable energy and climate change among six culturally and linguistically diverse communities in Victoria.

In this twelve month project, conducted between September 2014 and September 2015, ECCV worked with six ethnic communities to develop project resources and a community education workshop program. ECCV project officers identified, employed and trained bilingual energy educators (BEEs), to be based at ECCV, to deliver information sessions and engage community members more broadly via the media. Each BEE tailored the approach according to the cultural needs and values of each of the participating culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

Seven project objectives, as well as the anticipated project outcomes, were identified by ECCV in their original proposal (see Appendix A).

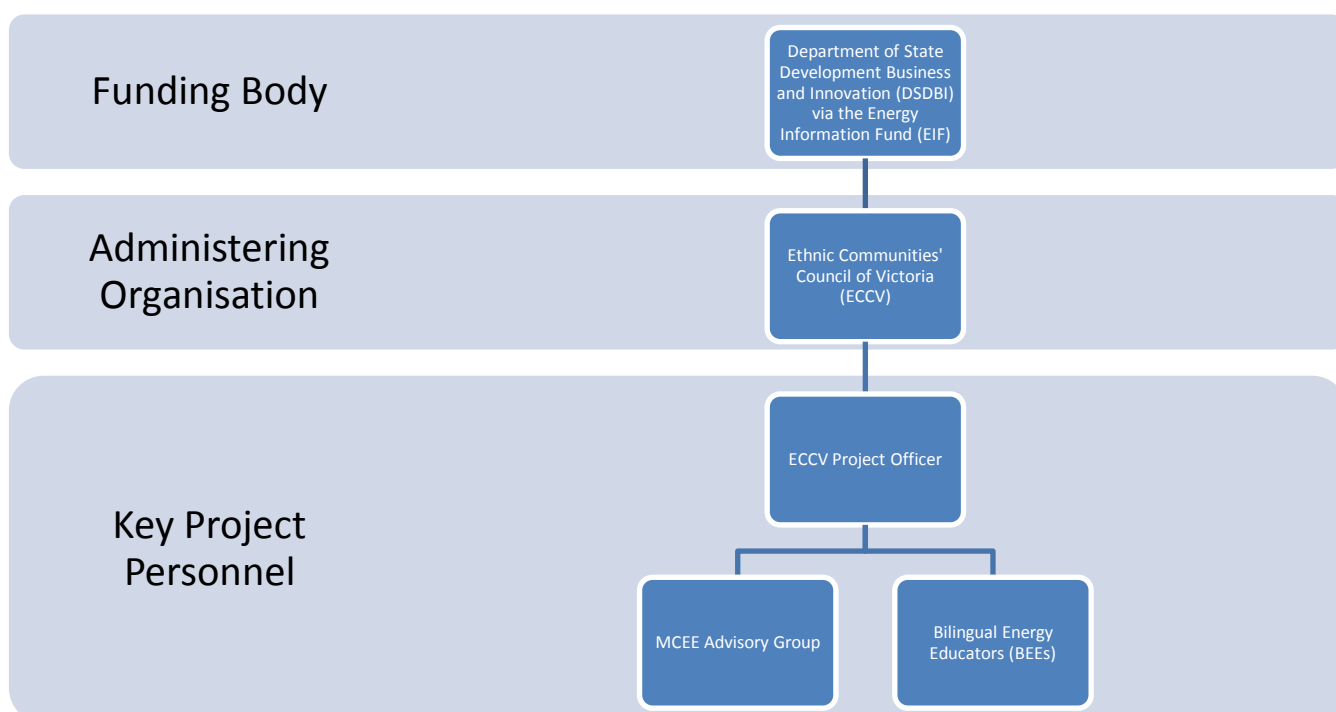


Figure 1. Project roles and relationships

1.4 Project Roles and Relationships

Figure 1 illustrates the key project roles and relationships. Both the bilingual energy educators (BEEs) and the advisory group members were appointed by ECCV.

1.4.1 Advisory Group

The advisory group comprised of representatives from each of the target communities, as well from the Consumer Utilities Advocacy Centre (CUAC) and Victoria Police. The role of the group was to assist ECCV with the delivery of community education workshops and media campaign.

The Terms of Reference were confirmed by the group members at the first meeting. A focus group discussion was facilitated by the ECCV project officers at the end of each meeting relevant to the stage of the project:

1. Identification of issues facing the communities, perceptions about renewable energy, actions currently taken by community members, and perceived barriers and enablers to the project's success. (January)
2. Promotion of energy education workshops and importance of advisory group members as experts to provide information to guide MCEE project media campaign. (March)
3. Feedback on translated resources. (May)

1.4.2 CALD Communities and Organisations

The six target communities (and corresponding languages) were Bhutanese (Nepali), Chin Burmese (Chin-Hakka), Polish, Russian, South Sudanese (Arabic and Nuer) and Turkish (Table 1). Each community was represented on the advisory group by a member of a community organisation. In all cases but the Bhutanese community, this was someone other than the BEE.

Table 1. Participating communities, language spoken and representative community organisation

Community	Language	Representative Community Organisation on Advisory Group
Bhutanese	Nepali	Bhutanese Community in Australia Inc
Chin-Burmese	Chin-Hakka	Chin-Burmese Community – Eastern Suburbs
Polish	Polish	Polish Community Council of Victoria
Russian	Russian	Russian Ethnic Representative Council of Victoria Inc
South Sudanese	Arabic/Nuer	African Communities Foundation
Turkish	Turkish	Australian Turkish Association

1.5 Project Implementation

1.5.1 Project Planning and Development

- ECCV conducted an expression of interest process which generated a response from 13 communities; 6 communities were selected to participate.
- Identification and appointment of one BEE per community (2 for the South Sudanese community).
- Development and delivery of a 3-day training session in February 2015 for 7 BEEs. One BEE dropped out due to unforeseen circumstances and a replacement was trained individually. (See Appendix E for BEE Training Evaluation Summary)
- Regular advisory group meetings were conducted which informed the project development and delivery.
- Project officers attended initial sessions with each BEE to provide support on workshop delivery and completion of evaluation.

1.5.2 Development of Resources

- A resource pack was developed with information about climate change and electricity concessions (which included briefing packs, pictorial based flipcharts, a one page summary sheet and handouts).
- All resources were translated into 7 languages by a professional translation service.

1.5.3 Community Education and Media Campaign

- In consultation with the advisory group, BEEs recruited potential individuals and groups to attend workshops.
- Workshops were delivered in one of 6 languages in and around Melbourne.
- Handouts with original graphic and practical advice about saving electricity were distributed to all workshop participants. Extra copies were made available for participants to take home for family and friends.
- Promotion of the workshops via a media campaign delivered in one of 7 languages.
- All resource materials in 7 different languages were uploaded to ECCV and CUAC websites to be freely available for use by all stakeholders. (See Appendix H)

1.6 Evaluation Framework

1.6.1 Aim of the Evaluation

A primary aim of the evaluation was to provide information to the funding body and other key stakeholders about the value and effectiveness of the project.

Due to the limited resources, the evaluation was primarily outcome focused, as opposed to process orientated. This does not mean that the process was not important, but that it was deemed more important to focus on the short-term outcomes. Whether the short-term outcomes translate into intermediate and long-term impacts should be the substance of a future evaluation program.

1.6.2 Evaluation Design

The evaluation framework was developed in collaboration between an ECCV project officer and the independent evaluator early in January 2015. The evaluation consisted of three main stages: (1) planning and development, (2) implementation and data collection, and (3) reporting and recommendations. (See Appendix B for Evaluation Approach, Framework and Timeline)

1.6.3 Evaluation Questions

As part of the planning and development stage, a program logic model was created. The overarching evaluation question explored to what extent awareness about energy use, renewable energy and climate change increased within the 6 target communities. This was supported by a list of sub-questions which guided reporting of the evaluation data.

1.7 Data Collection

A range of data was used to address the primary evaluation question. A summary of the data collected by different people across the duration of the project is presented in Table 2 (See Appendices as indicated for further information about data collection templates and raw data). ECCV was responsible for the majority of the data collection, which was passed on to the independent evaluator. The ECCV project officers were supported by regular electronic and telephone communication with the evaluator.

Table 2. Summary of data collected

Responsibility for Collecting Data	Data Source (ID ⁴)	Procedure	Data Collected
BEEs	Bilingual Energy Educator Evaluation Forms (BEE Forms) <i>See Appendix C</i>	Following each community education session, the BEE completed an evaluation form (between March 2015 and June 2015). Questions included number of participants, participant	Of 48 community education sessions conducted, 48 BEE Forms were completed by 6 different BEEs

⁴ ID is the label used in the findings section to identify the source of the data.

		response to sessions, and reflections on sessions.	
BEEs	Energy Education Participant Evaluation Forms (PEP Forms) <i>See Appendix C</i>	BEEs distributed PEP forms to each participant following each community education session (between March 2015 and July 2015). PEPs were asked to indicate their sex, age and response to 4 statements.	Of 1216 participants reported to have attended a session, 1005 (83%) completed an evaluation form
ECCV	BEE Training Evaluation Summary (BEE Training Summary)	BEEs completed an evaluation form at the training session in February 2015. ECCV project officers distributed and collected forms, and compiled a summary.	6 forms were completed (86% response rate) <i>See Appendix E for Evaluation Summary</i>
ECCV	BEE Focus Group (BEE Focus Group)	As part of the July Advisory Group meeting, a focus group discussion was facilitated by the ECCV project officers with the BEEs about their experiences of the project to date. A summary of the discussion was collated by ECCV.	A 2-page summary of focus group discussion <i>See Appendix F for Summary</i>
ECCV	Advisory Group Minutes (AG Minutes)	ECCV project officer recorded detailed minutes of each Advisory Group meeting (between January 2015 and July 2015). This included a facilitated discussion about impact and experiences to date.	4 sets of minutes for each meeting
ECCV	ECCV Media Report (Media Report)	ECCV recorded media activity within each community between September 2014 and September 2015. Media items included radio announcements and interviews, e-bulletin/news articles, and social media.	66 items of media activity <i>See Appendix G for Media Report</i>
ECCV	Project Testimonials (Testimonial)	ECCV project officers collected testimonials from people involved in the project as appropriate.	4 testimonials, 1 letter and an email
Independent Evaluator	Interviews with BEEs (BEE Interview) <i>See Appendix C</i>	Telephone and face-to-face interviews were conducted with BEEs in September 2015 by the independent evaluator.	3 interviews were conducted with 3 BEEs (2 BEEs were also ECCV project officers) 1 BEE declined to participate, 2 BEEs could not be contacted

2. Evaluation Findings

2.1 Overview of Section

This section addresses to what extent awareness about energy use, renewable energy and climate change increased within the 6 target communities. Firstly, the data relating to the community education sessions are analysed, followed by the corresponding media activity. The section concludes by highlighting the key lessons for raising awareness about energy within the CALD community.

The findings of this evaluation are based on data collected between January and September 2015. Apart from the individual interviews conducted by the independent evaluator, all the data were collected and passed on to the evaluator by the ECCV project officers. The findings of the evaluation draw on the relevant data as appropriate (the source is indicated using the ID allocated in Table 2). Direct quotes from participants or extracts from reports have been written verbatim and de-identified as appropriate.

Given the timeframe of the evaluation, it was only possible to report on the immediate, short-term outcomes.

2.2 Community Education Workshops

Since the project commenced in September 2014, a total of 1216 participants attended one of 48 energy education workshops, in one of 6 different languages (Table 3).

The number of workshops conducted ranged from 13 in the Polish community, to just one in the South Sudanese community. The average size of each workshop comprised 25 people, ranging from 8 to 110 people.

Table 3. Numbers and characteristics of participants by community

Community	No. of Sessions	Total Participants	Total PEP forms (% of total participants)	Female (%)	70+ (%)
Bhutanese	9	204	188 (92%)	68 (33%)	2 (1%)
Chin-Burmese ⁵	10	230	190 (83%)	124 (55%)	0
Polish ⁶	13	333	329 (99%)	240 (73%)	142 (43%)
Russian	6	176	50 (28%)	95 (54%)	34 (19%)
South Sudanese	1	10	8 (80%)	10 (100%)	0
Turkish ⁷	9	263	240 (91%)	156 (64%)	90 (37%)
Total	48	1216	1005 (83%)	693 (57%)	268 (23%)

2.2.1 Participant Characteristics

Overall, across all language groups (Table 3)⁸:

- The majority of participants were female (693; 57%), ranging from 33% to 100% across community groups. The Bhutanese was the only community to have a majority of male participants.
- Participants in all eight age brackets attended the sessions (from Under 15 to 70+). About a quarter of participants were over the age of 70 years (268; 23%). The percentage of participants aged over 70 ranged considerably across language groups (from 0% in the Chin Burmese and South Sudanese groups to 43% in the Polish groups).

The distribution of age and sex of participants was different across each language group (Figure 2). In the Polish, Russian and Turkish groups, participant numbers generally increased with age. For the Nepali, Chin-Hakka and Arabic groups, participant numbers peaked during the middle age ranges. Generally, there were more women than men in each age group, but this was not the case for any of the Bhutanese age groups.

⁵ Missing demographic data for 20 participants

⁶ Missing demographic data for 4 participants

⁷ Missing demographic data for 3 participants

⁸ Demographic data were incomplete for 27 participants

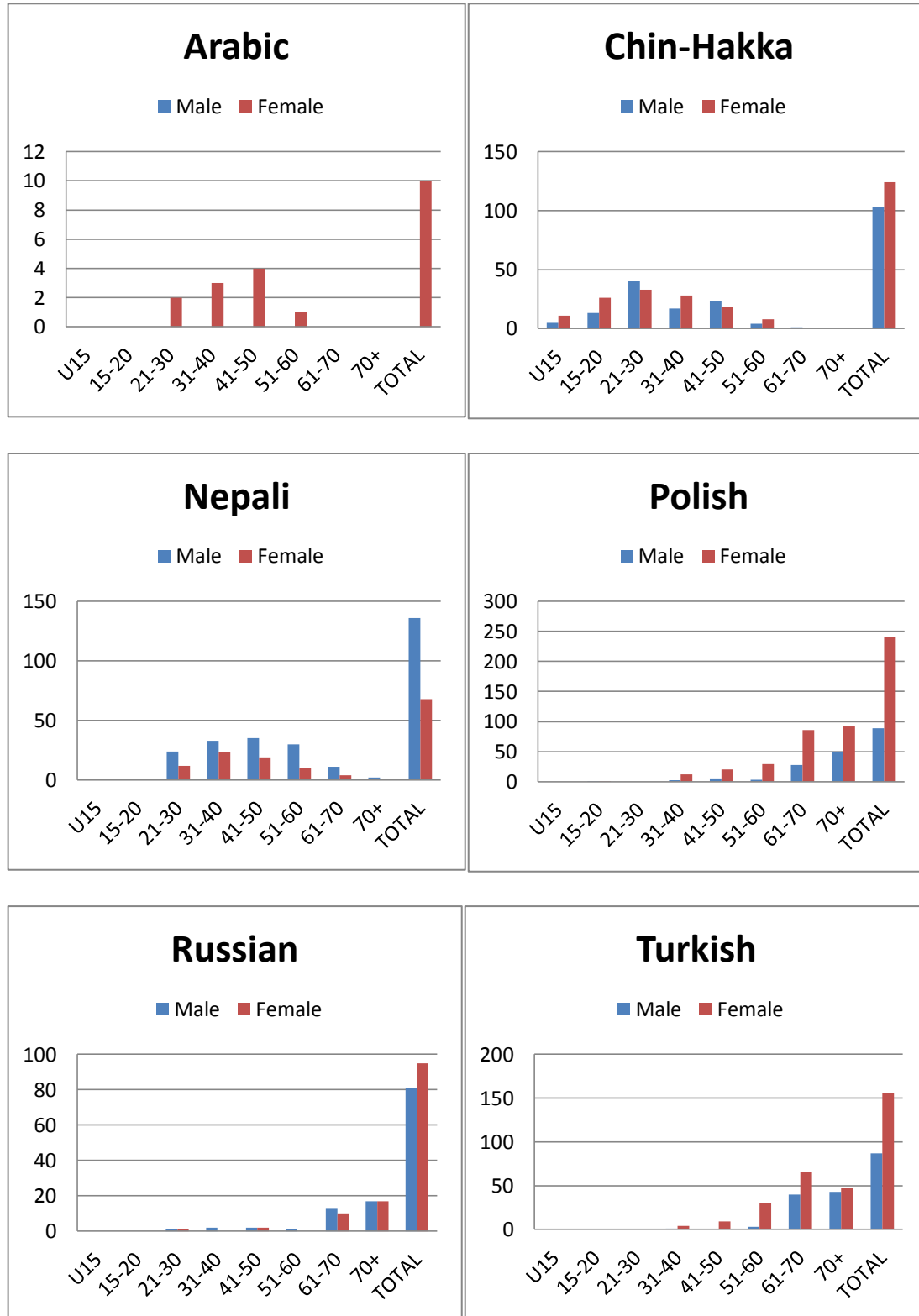


Figure 2. Participant characteristics by language group

2.2.2 Participant Evaluation of Community Education Sessions

Of 1216 participants reported to have attended a session, 1005 (83%) completed an evaluation form. The form comprised four statements about the session to which participants were asked to indicate their response.⁹

Overall, the majority of participants reported to (Figure 3):

- Have not used the Switch On website before the session (954; 95%); 39 (4%) said they had used it before the session.
- Learn new things as a result of the session (982; 98%)
- Have an intention to tell friends and family about saving electricity (975; 97%)
- Have an intention to reduce their energy use after today (991; 99%)

Participant responses to all four statements were generally the same regardless of language spoken. Of the 39 people who said they had used the Switch On website before the session, 17 were Polish, 13 Nepali, 6 Russian, 2 Chin-Hakka, and 1 Arabic-speaking.

While it was beyond the scope of the evaluation to gather qualitative feedback from participants, one BEE sought written testimonials from some participants. This feedback referred to the benefits to their community for participating in such a useful program, and an indication that participants were applying the information:

My power planner website helped me to change energy provider and save on electricity bills (Testimonial from Workshop participant)

Additional feedback from a seniors club presidents meeting indicated that 3 members had also changed energy provider subsequent to the workshop.

⁹ Participants could respond 'Yes' or 'No', by marking the respective end of the continuum. If participants made a mark in the middle of the continuum their response was recorded as 'Don't Know' (DK) (which could also be interpreted as 'unsure' or 'yes and no'). If participants did not mark the item, their response was recorded as 'Not Available' (NA).

2.2.3 Bilingual Energy Educator Perception of Participants' Response to Sessions

The following analysis is based on the evaluation of 48 sessions conducted by 6 different educators. In relation to participants' general response to their sessions, educators (Figure 3):

- Strongly agreed that the session was effective at increasing participants' awareness of electricity use (37 sessions; 77%)
- Strongly agreed there was a lot of positive interaction between the participants (33 sessions; 69%)
- Strongly agreed that participants asked a lot of questions (18 Sessions; 38%)
- Disagreed or strongly disagreed (33 sessions; 69%) that some participants were disengaged in the session

No session was perceived to be ineffective at increasing participants' awareness of electricity use. Overall, these data indicate that the educators thought the sessions were extremely effective at increasing participants' awareness of electricity use, and participants interacted well and asked lots of questions. In only one session, an educator thought that some participants were not engaged.

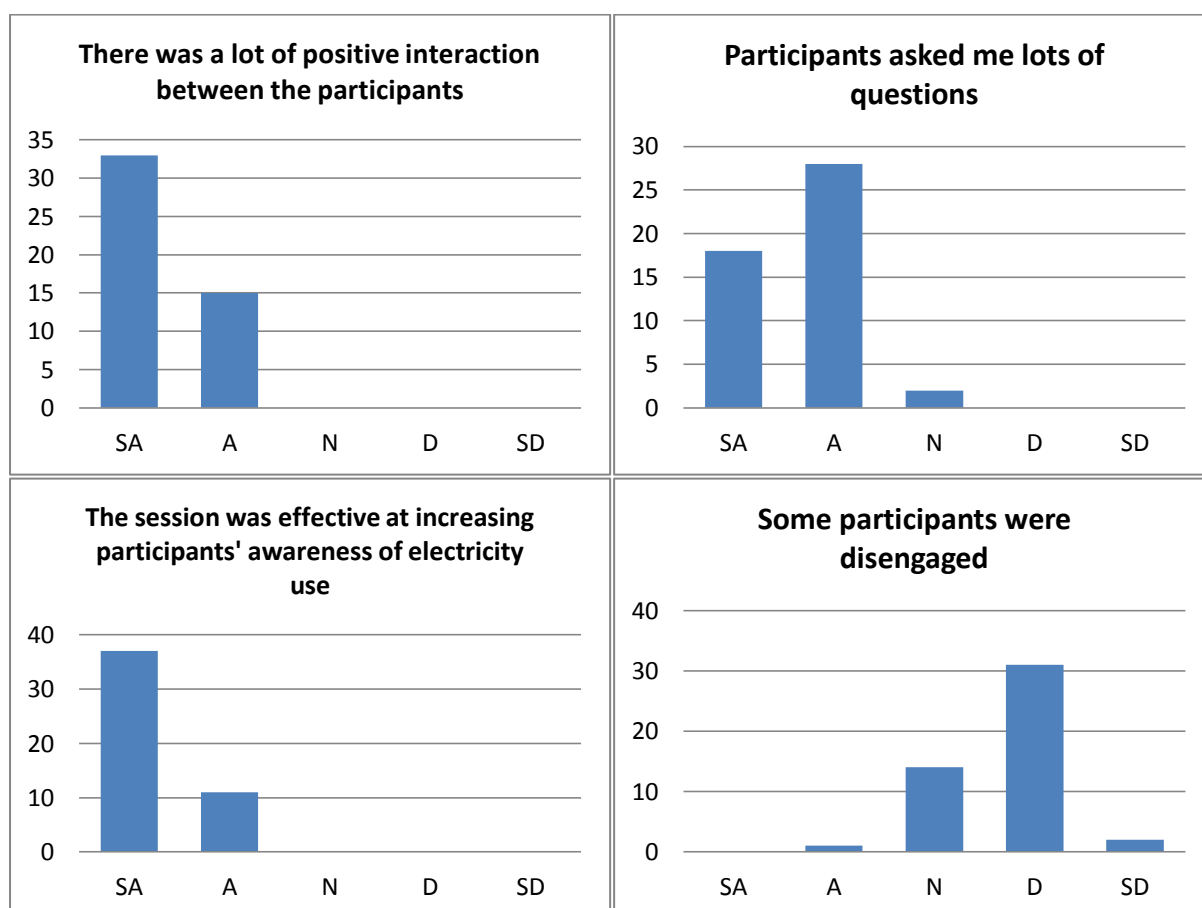


Figure 3. Bilingual energy educator evaluation of sessions

2.2.4 Educators' Qualitative Responses to Energy Education Sessions

Regardless of the community, participants appeared to have a similar response to the sessions, which was one of interest and engagement with the material. Many similar experiences were shared by participants (e.g. door knocking requests to change providers, high electricity bills and service charges, difficulty reading bills) and lots of questions were asked (e.g. about available concessions, how to change their provider).

Awareness about energy consumption ranged across the groups. In a couple of the Bhutanese groups, the extent to which a hot water system contributed to the energy bill was a revelation:

They did not have any idea about how much electricity is consumed in hot water system. They were surprised to know that limiting showering time to 4 mins could impact on their electricity bills. (BEE Form, Bhutanese session no. 7)

In contrast, the following Russian group (all over 60 years with good English proficiency) demonstrated a good understanding about energy consumption but there was still evidence that the session was useful:

Participants wrote down the Switch On website details and requested that more copies about flexible timing tariffs could be provided. The group was very advanced and showed a lot of knowledge about the subject but the new thing for them was a Switch On website as an option to compare and make a choice. (BEE Form, Russian session no. 2)

Many of the BEEs reported that participants had not heard about flexible pricing options and the utility relief fund. Feedback from a seniors' group meeting illustrated the extent of this lack of knowledge:

Out of 300 participants only 2 knew about Utility Relief grant we need more information about available grants and financial relief available to CALD communities in their ethnic languages. (Notes from seniors groups presidents meeting recorded by BEE)

Participants were asked to bring an electricity bill with them to the session. When this happened, BEEs reported that they could provide direct and specific feedback and use it as a practical example of how to read the bills and what information could be entered into the My Power Planner online tool. Some BEEs suggested that having Wifi access would have been useful, as they would have been able to demonstrate using My Power Planner in real time.

Participants' ranged considerably both with respect to English proficiency, as well as their computer and internet literacy. Poor English proficiency was often noted to present barriers in reading bills and speaking to energy providers about their consumption. Poor computer and internet literacy meant that workshop information was more challenging to relay. There was evidence to indicate that some participants often asked their children to assist them to use the internet. No doubt children hearing the information may have resulted in them assisting their parents and other family members to reduce their energy consumption, but there was no evidence that this occurred.

While the focus of the workshops was on how to reduce energy consumption, and how to use My Power Planner to review individual energy providers, information about renewable energy

and climate change was also provided. There was evidence to indicate that climate change was a new concept for some of the communities, particularly for those communities with high numbers of refugees who have not been long exposed to living in a more developed country.

2.3 Media Activity

One of the key aspects of the project was to disseminate information more broadly to the community via a variety of media outlets. In addition to promoting the workshops, key messages about energy use was also relayed. At the March Advisory Group meeting, the group suggested a combination of the following resources would be appropriate to promote the MCEE project:

- Ethic community newspaper
- Community SBS radio
- Social media, Facebook
- Word of mouth
- Fliers at the places of worship
- Recommendation by informal community leaders

ECCV reported 66 items of media activity were generated across all 6 communities over the life of the project (Table 4, and see Appendix G for the full Media Report). About a half were via social media, with the remainder being flyers and articles posted online (newsletters and websites) or in printed newsletters.

Media items varied in number and type across each community and this was reported to depend on the channels available. Media activity within the Polish community was the most prolific with a good spread across different media platforms. Social media was a popular outlet of choice for all communities, apart from the Turkish community where it wasn't used. The fewest number of media items was circulated within the South Sudanese community.

Printed resources were distributed at every workshop apart from the South Sudanese. The total number of printed resources distributed to the communities was not known.

There was evidence to indicate that BEEs also made direct contact with community members by phone to spread the word.

Table 4. Media activity by language

	Bhutanese	Chin-Burmese	Polish	Russian	South Sudanese	Turkish	ALL
Radio Interview	NA	NA	1	0	0	1	2
Radio/Community Announcement	0	0	2 ¹⁰	0	1	0	3
Article (Newspaper/Online)	3	3	4	1	0	1	12
Flyer in newsletter or online	0	1	7	1	0	0	9
Community organisation/ ECCV website	0	0	5	0	0	7	12
Social Media (Facebook)	7	6	7	6	2	0	28
Total	10	10	26	8	3	9	66
Distributed hard copy resources ¹¹	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	-

2.4 Awareness of Energy Related Issues Amongst Educators

In addition to raising the awareness of workshop participants and other community members, there was also evidence to indicate increased awareness and understanding about energy consumption, renewable energy and climate change amongst the BEEs.

The evaluation of the 3-day BEE training workshop clearly showed that participants felt the workshop had increased their knowledge of energy issues (Appendix E), even for those with a good base knowledge:

Presentation by Elle was excellent and very informative even for a person (me) with energy background. (BEE Training Evaluation Form)

Furthermore, the educators themselves were also using the resources to make changes:

Having get to know switch on website I managed to change my electricity provider (BEE Training Evaluation Form)

¹⁰ One announcement was fortnightly for 5 months

¹¹ Total number of resources distributed is unknown

Another BEE also talked about how she undertook additional research to find out, as a result of one workshop, how her country of origin fared in relation to renewable energy sources.

Unfortunately it wasn't possible to interview the advisory group committee about their experiences of the project. It is expected that, for the community organisation representatives, their knowledge about energy also increased. Perhaps also, for members representing mainstream organisations, knowledge about the experiences of people from CALD backgrounds and the associated barriers to accessing information also increased.

2.5 Key Lessons

Based on the data, a number of key lessons were identified which could inform the future roll out of the project and other similar initiatives.

2.5.1 Project Confirmed Extent of Bill Stress and Lack of Knowledge within CALD Communities

Bill stress and lack of knowledge about energy saving was a major issue identified at the first advisory group meeting (AG Minutes, January):

- Elder members struggling to pay their electricity bills/difficulty coping with stress related to bill
- Reluctant using heaters during winter for fear of having high electricity bill
- Electricity companies/providers ignoring concession cards which allow members to receive concession on their energy bill
- Electricity companies pressuring members to sign contracts without advising them to cancel their existing contracts (major issue for those experiencing language barriers).
- Not aware of renewable energy resources (lack of knowledge)

These issues, and more, were raised by participants in the workshops confirming the extent of bill stress and lack of knowledge within the community. In particular, one BEE noted the difficulty participants had in accessing financial hardship support due to:

- Unavailability of the Utility Relief Grant Form
- Lack of skills to fill out hardship form
- Lack of knowledge about concessions among CALD Communities (BEE Focus Group)

Furthermore, *"only 2 participants out of 300 knew about Utility Relief grant scheme"* (BEE Focus Group) indicating a great need for more education and dissemination of resources amongst the communities.

2.5.2 Smaller Groups Worked Better to Communicate Information

The project target was to recruit 1200 participants across 6 communities into the workshops, and this was achieved. However, the original intention was to facilitate 20 workshops with around 50 participants in each session. Midway through the project, this target proved to be unrealistic, and it was deemed more feasible to conduct a greater number of workshops with smaller group sizes. The difficulty recruiting bigger groups was partly due to the strategy

employed, which relied on access to existing community group infrastructure (i.e. groups are generally smaller than 50 people).

Despite this unanticipated change in the approach, delivering information to smaller groups was actually perceived by the BEEs to be more effective, because participants were better able to engage with the material and ask more questions.

2.5.3 Reaching Newer Communities Required Different Strategies

While people from all the communities heard information about energy use, the BEEs reflected that reaching newer (less established) communities was more of a challenge. Unlike established communities where they often have fixed meetings and communication channels to promote events, the newer and emerging communities lacked these networks and communication infrastructure (AG Minutes, July 2015). Therefore, media campaigns were very much determined by existing media platforms and tailored to each community. This meant that in the newer communities, media campaigns were mostly done via social media (e.g. Facebook) and even via telephone calls to key community members. Unfortunately, it was not possible to evaluate which media channels worked most effectively for which communities.

2.5.4 Technology and Language Were Barriers to Accessing Energy Information

The Switch On website is only accessible to people proficient in English as well as those who have access to a computer with the relevant skills. Therefore, while BEEs could relay information about the online tool to community members in their own languages, it is not known how much of this information was actually understood. Furthermore, a large number of participants potentially were not able to apply the information to use the tool on their own. This appeared to be particularly the case for older participants, who typically have limited formal education.

2.5.5 A Range of People and Organisations within each Community Should be Targeted

It is commonly known that many older family members ask or rely on younger family members to assist them, particularly with translating or interpreting information, or to use a computer. While it is possible that some participants upon hearing about the information requested assistance from family members to access the online tool, it confirmed the importance that such initiatives target the younger generation as well. Moreover, in a couple of Bhutanese sessions, it was actually noted that children were "*the main consumer of the electricity. So children should be educated on energy saving option*" (BEE Form).

Furthermore, a number of other people could potentially have been engaged with the project to support the ongoing dissemination of information and ultimately the project's sustainability. For example, if bilingual Home and Community Care workers, religious leaders or other key community members were educated, via their ongoing community work they would potentially continue to pass on relevant energy-related information and resources.

2.5.6 Personnel Determined Project Success

People from all 6 communities heard information about electricity usage, renewable energy and climate change in their preferred language. However, there were unexpected challenges rolling out the project with the South Sudanese community, resulting in only one session being delivered. The primary reason for this was the unexpected inability of both trained BEEs within

the community to continue in their role, as well as the lack of ongoing funding for the respective community organisation.

The design of the project was such that the BEE was integral to the functioning and eventual success of the project. The BEEs not only delivered the information, but they were also responsible for recruiting the groups (with assistance from the advisory group) and implementing the media campaign. Therefore, the project outcomes were likely to be influenced by the BEEs experience, skills, flexibility and existing networks. For example, greater numbers of participants were available to attend workshops due to the ability of two of the BEEs to hold workshops on the weekend, which catered for people who working during the week.

Awareness about electricity usage, renewable energy and climate change amongst the educators also increased and, on account of their role and status in their respective communities, provides a promising avenue for ongoing communication of the project's key messages.

2.5.7 Translated Resources are a Useful Legacy to Leverage Project Outcomes

The resource pack developed as part of the project has a wealth of information about climate change and electricity concessions as well as 4 resources in 7 community languages. There was a positive response from the advisory group and the BEEs about the clear messages, images, quality and ongoing value of these resources beyond the life of the project. Furthermore the resources have been made available on both the ECCV and CUAC website for other stakeholders to access. While this has the potential to be a useful resource, for maximum impact it requires ongoing and active promotion.

2.5.8 Project Outcomes and Sustainability Limited by Short Time Frame and Small Scale

This was a one-year project, with the roll out of education workshops occurring over a period of only 2 months. Given the scope and available resources, the reach of the project was commendable. However, the positive feedback and ongoing inquiries to the community organisations about access to more sessions were indicative that there was more demand for the information than could be delivered. In addition to the 6 communities chosen, the following communities also expressed interest to be involved in the program: Nepalese, Maltese, Iraqi, Tamil, Afghani, Chinese, Macedonian and Italian.

Funding had already been invested in translating the resources, educating the BEEs, and generating media activity. With only a little more investment there would have been greater potential for impact – otherwise known as economy of scale. Moreover, with ongoing proactive dissemination to multiple communities over a longer period of time, the message is likely to have been further reinforced. While there were some indications that information about electricity usage would continue to be relayed and awareness increase, without active dissemination it is unlikely to result in ongoing change and sustainability of the modest outcomes achieved to date.

Another issue, for one BEE, was that one session was insufficient and participants “*easily forget the information*” (BEE Focus Group). The range in knowledge amongst the communities was huge, with the clear focus on understanding energy usage and reducing bills. To more effectively increase knowledge about climate change and renewable energy, particularly for

those for whom it is a very new concept, it is likely that further work and additional strategies are required.

2.5.9 Greater Leadership and Collaboration Required for More Impact

The advisory group, while held on a bimonthly basis and useful to some extent, could have been better utilised. Membership and attendance was inconsistent across meetings which provided little opportunity to forge relationships and lay solid foundations for ongoing work. Implementing more formal mechanisms to support the building of partnerships may prove fruitful in the future, particularly to develop ownership of the project objectives within communities. Giving community organisations more responsibility for tailoring activities and administering funds should be considered in the future roll out of similar initiatives.

3. Evaluation Conclusion

In total, 1214 participants attended 48 community education workshops. People from 6 communities heard information about electricity usage, renewable energy and climate change in their preferred language. Eight bilingual energy educators were trained, and a suite of resources were developed and translated into 7 different community languages, which will continue to be available online.

Given the scope and limited resources, the value and reach of the project was commendable. There was evidence to indicate that awareness of energy use, renewable energy and climate change increased amongst members of the 6 target communities. Furthermore, that people were using the information to reduce their energy use and change electricity providers.

However, there was evidence to indicate that there was more demand for the information than could be delivered. Further, due to its small scale, the project did not perhaps reach its full potential. With slightly more investment of resources, to reach out to more communities, reinforce the project messages and develop stronger linkages and collaboration, greater impact could have been achieved. Given the diversity in demographics and infrastructure available within each community, the model was perhaps not flexible enough to achieve maximum benefit.

The evaluation was also small in scale and limited by resources. Given the short timeframe of the evaluation, it was only possible to report on the immediate, short-term outcomes. It was not possible to make any firm conclusions about the likelihood of ongoing impact and sustainability of the outcomes. With the exception of the translated resources, there is little evidence to indicate that project messages will continue to be relayed, without incentives to continue active dissemination. More resources will be required in order to capitalise on the moderate progress achieved to date.

If one of the Department's objectives is to enable more people from CALD backgrounds to make informed decisions about electricity, the evaluation highlighted the importance of considering the capacity of the energy sector to better understand and respond to community needs and literacy.

4. Strengths and Limitations of the Evaluation

This evaluation drew on a range of multi-faceted data sources. However, it was limited in scope and depth, due to limited resources, and heavily reliant on data collection and interpretation by ECCV project officers.

Given the peer education model has been implemented and evaluated for a range of other topics, it meant that previous evaluation questions and data collection templates could be easily adapted, saving precious time and resources.

While there was a high participant response, it would have been very insightful to access qualitative data about participants' experiences at various time points after the sessions.

With additional resources, ideally the evaluation framework would be developed in collaboration with key stakeholders, and extended to assess the long-term impact and effectiveness of the project.

5. Recommendations

The recommendations listed in this section are derived from the findings of the evaluation and are categorised in three parts. Given the resource implications, each recommendation must be considered on a case by case basis.

5.1 Project Design and Management

- Community education is just one vehicle to raise awareness about energy usage in culturally diverse communities. Consider facilitating complementary initiatives to engage other relevant stakeholders and institutions, such as local government, Home and Community Care workers (particularly bilingual workers), schools and religious leaders.
- Consider convening community reference groups to tailor resources and media campaigns specifically to each community.
- Ensure BEEs are integral to the community and preferably work in a community organisation to maximise potential sustainability of outcomes.
- Consider incorporating follow-up or refresher sessions with the same groups and communities into the project design to maximise potential impact and embed learning.

5.2 Evaluation

- Monitor downloads of in-language resources as an indicator of ongoing usage and awareness.
- Long-term research and evaluation of CALD community needs and understanding about energy issues, as well as the ongoing value and use of translated resources.

5.3 Policy and Planning

- Develop strategies to encourage the ongoing use and leverage of resources developed by this project (MCEE handouts, flipcharts, Animoto movie, trained energy educators) by other communities and organisations.
- Apply findings from this and other related projects to develop the cultural responsiveness of utility companies with the aim of improving awareness, communication skills and how to use interpreters.
- Develop formal mechanisms to support the building of partnerships and links across the ethnic and energy/utility sectors, particularly to develop ownership of the project objectives within communities and their organisations.
- Consolidate findings from other EIF grant recipients, particularly with a CALD focus, to gain insight about the most effective models to bring about changes in energy usage and knowledge.

Appendices

Appendix A. Project Objectives and Outcomes as Identified by ECCV

Appendix B. Evaluation Approach, Framework and Timeline

Appendix C. Data Collection Templates

- Bilingual Energy Educator Evaluation Form
- Participant Evaluation Form
- Interview Schedule for BEE Interviews

Appendix D. Data Management, Analysis and Report Writing

Appendix E. BEE Training Evaluation Summary

Appendix F. BEE Focus Group Feedback

Appendix G. ECCV Media Report

Appendix H. Links to MCEE Project Resources

Appendix A. Project Objectives and Outcomes as Identified by ECCV

Project Objectives

Seven measurable project objectives were identified at the project outset:

- Establish an advisory group with representatives from each of the six participating ethnic communities to collaborate with ECCV and inform the development of resources and a community education program relating to energy use in the home.
- Develop a MCEE community education program and develop/tailor existing resources, based on the input and guidance from the MCEE advisory group, tailored to meet the cultural needs of the six participating ethnic communities.
- Employ 6-12 bilingual energy educators (BEEs), as identified by the MCEE project steering committee, to be trained to deliver community education programs to their respective community, targeting planned community activities and social support programs to deliver workshops.
- Deliver 24 community education workshops across the six ethnic communities (a minimum of four workshops for each of the six communities attended by a minimum of 50 participants each).
- Create support materials for workshops translated into six different languages including briefing packs, pictorial based flip charts and a one page summary sheet.
- BEEs to promote the community education program through community media, newspapers, newsletters, websites and radio programs.
- Document project findings and develop a report detailing the process, products and the outcomes of the community education program, including evaluation and suggestions regarding future recommendations and the next step of the project.

Project Outcomes

- Dissemination of bi-lingual information to six communities to increase awareness of :
 - i. Why household energy costs are rising (electricity and gas);
 - ii. Alleviating the impact of rising energy costs on families by promoting flexible pricing, an understanding of how to measure energy use and understand utility bills and what to look for when choosing your household energy supplier;
 - iii. Reducing energy consumption in the home by increasing understanding of energy efficiency and renewable energy.
- Conduct a workshop series with six culturally diverse communities in-language to:
 - i. Empower these communities to reduce their household energy costs and climate change emissions;
 - ii. Link these communities with information and services that can assist them to reduce their household energy bills, and
 - iii. Establish energy ambassadors in each community
- Utilise ethnic media channels, including newspapers, newsletters, social media platforms and radio formats, using articles, interviews and advertisements, to engage a broader community interest in reducing energy, understanding energy bills and reducing climate change emissions.

Appendix B. Evaluation Approach, Framework and Timeline

ECCV employed an independent consultant to conduct an evaluation of the project. The consultant provided independent advice and guidance to support the evaluation of the MCEE project for a 9 month period from January – September 2015 (see Table B1). The contractor liaised directly with an ECCV project officer. Primarily the contractor was a reference point for the project officer to finalise the evaluation framework (including the key evaluation questions and data gathering methods).

Table B1. Project Deliverables

Activity Description	Outputs/Deliverables	Delivery Date
Advice	Advice regarding the conduct of an initial project focus group with the advisory group	Prior to first steering group (29 th January)
Feedback	Feedback on the evaluation framework (program logic, questions, data collection)	January - February
Advice	Advice regarding the development and administration of data collection forms to be completed by workshop participants and BEEs	Prior to BEE training (6 th February)
Guidance	Guidance regarding data entry of evaluation forms	February - March
Data Collection and Analysis	Conduct end of project interviews with BEEs and project officer and project coordinator and analyse	August - September
Analysis	On receipt of the data file from project officer by 31 July, analysis of the community workshop data (BEE and workshop participant forms)	August 2015
Final Report (Draft)	Prepare an evaluation report (~20 pages) which incorporates the community workshop and interview data	11 September
Final Report	Final report submitted and signed off by ECCV	24 September

MCEE Project Evaluation Timeline

Objectives	Tasks/Milestones	Timeline / Deliverables								
		Jan - 15	Feb - 15	Mar - 15	Apr - 15	May - 15	Jun - 15	Jul - 15	Aug - 15	Sep - 15
Appoint evaluation consultant	Send out 'Expression of Interest' to select evaluation consultants									
	Select consultant									
	Review evaluation logic and project design									
Bilingual Energy Educator's (BEE's)	Review pre-knowledge of BEEs questionnaire									
	Evaluate BEEs after 3 day training questionnaire									
	Do data entry of BEEs training questionnaire									
Community workshops	Review surveys for community workshop participants									
	Review satisfaction surveys									
	BEEs to do data entry of pre & post data & satisfaction levels data									
Project evaluation and final report	Review data from surveys & write a summary report									
	Conduct interviews with PO, PC, BEEs & SC & do summary report									
	Review final evaluation report									

MCEE Project Timeline

Objectives	Tasks/Milestones	Timeline / Deliverables											
		Oct- 14	Nov- 14	Dec- 14	Jan- 15	Feb- 15	Mar- 15	Apr- 15	May- 15	Jun- 15	Jul- 15	Aug- 15	Sep- 15
Establish MCEE Steering Committee (SC)	Send 'Expression of Interest' form to identify communities interested in participating in the project												
	Get approval from DSOBI for final selection of communities												
	Establish steering committee group												
	Steering committee to meet bi-monthly												
Bilingual Energy Educator's (BEE's)	Recruit bilingual energy educators in consultation with SC												
	Train BEE's to deliver community education program												
	BEE's to deliver community education workshops												
Translate, publish and disseminate resources	60 briefing packs												
	6 pictorial based flip charts												
	2400 single page brochure												
Ethnic community media	Publish editorial articles in 6 c'mty newspapers, newsletters or websites												
	Conduct radio interviews												
	Publish paid advertisements in 6 languages												
Deliver community education workshops	Promote workshops and confirm bookings												
	Organise logistics for workshop sessions												
	Deliver up to 24 community education workshops to each of the communities												
Project evaluation and final report	Set measurable targets and outcomes in consultation with SC												
	Collect data												
	Complete draft report												
	Complete final report												

Multicultural Communities' Energy Education Project Evaluation Framework

	OUTCOMES	EVALUATION QUESTIONS	DATA COLLECTION
Ultimate	Raised awareness of participants across the MCEE project about energy use, climate change & renewable energy.	LS1 To what extent are householders engaged in the project demonstrating improved awareness about sustainable energy use?	Evaluation form of all community workshop participants across 6 CALD communities. Interview BEE's
Intermediate	Raised understanding of how to use My Switch to identify an appropriate energy provider for project participants household energy needs.	LS2 What evidence is there of increases in awareness and understanding among MCEE participants (inc BEEs & SC)? LS3 What evidence is there of increases in awareness and understanding is there among general workshop participants?	MCEE program evaluation processes. Evaluation of all community workshops – handout sheet. BEE Evaluation summary
Immediate	Engage with 6 CALD communities on understanding energy bills and energy use. Deliver 24 community workshops held across 6 CALD communities on understanding energy bills and energy use. Deliver the following translated resources in 6 languages: 6 x flip charts, 60 briefing packs and 2400 one pager resource Publish 24 print or radio editorials across 6 CALD communities media platforms Identification of communities needs and wants regarding access to information about household energy use and energy utility bills.	LS4 Was an EOI process held – how many requests submitted, what were the criteria for selection of communities? LS5 Have community workshops been held – where and to what extent? LS6 Have communication resources been developed, published and distributed? LS7 Is there evidence of community needs assessment?	Project records for these questions including media reports & comms. Final interviews (July-August) Steering Committee meeting minutes Focus Group (29/1/2015) EOI process (PO notes)

Appendix C. Data Collection Templates

MULTICULTURAL COMMUNITIES' ENERGY EDUCATION PROJECT BILINGUAL ENERGY EDUCATOR (BEE) EVALUATION GUIDE

EDUCATOR: *Insert your name*.....

PEER EDUCATION SESSION DETAILS:

ID no:

Date		Time	
Language			
Session Location		Expected no. of participants	
Organisation / Group			
Contact Person		Contact Phone	
Other Relevant Information			

Thanks for your accurate and honest feedback. It is important for us to know who attended these sessions as well as any issues arising in order to develop better sessions in the future. Please pay close attention to participants' behaviour and listen intently to what they say.

1. Please *estimate* the age and gender of each participant: *(if not recorded on participant forms)*

	Under 15	15 – 20	21 – 30	31 – 40	41-50	51 – 60	61 – 70	70 +	Total
Male									
Female									

2. What was the group's general response to the session? *(Tick as appropriate)*

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	NA
There was a lot of positive interaction between the participants						
Participants asked me lots of questions						
Some participants were disengaged						
The session was effective at increasing participants' awareness of electricity use						

3. What issues and experiences did participants share about electricity bills? (Why were they raised?)

4. Please note any issues you had conducting the session: (What worked? What didn't work?)

5. Can you think of any way the session could have been improved to make it better for the participants in this group?

6. Did any participants ask for further information or take home leaflets? Please provide details. (How many? What information did they ask for?)

7. Please provide further comments about group's general response to the session:

(e.g. Why did participants interact well, what questions did participants ask, why did they ask questions?)

8. List participant/s who are interested in being contacted for a follow-up media interview:

Name	Contact Details

Participant Evaluation Form

Workshop participant evaluation forms were two-sided. One side was in English, the other side was in one of 6 community languages. After each session participants were invited by educators to complete the evaluation form. The form comprised four statements about the session that participants were asked to indicate a response to. Participants could respond 'Yes' or 'No', by marking the respective end of the continuum, or if they were unsure they made a mark in the centre. On the translated versions the faces were replaced with the words 'Yes' and 'No' as appropriate to avoid any confusion about the expressions.

< 15	15 - 20	21 - 30	31 - 40	41-50	51 - 60	61 - 70	70 +

M

F

Language	Initials	Session No.

I have used the My Switch website before today

NO ← ————— ————— → YES

I learned new things today

NO ← ————— ————— → YES

I will tell my friends and family about saving electricity

NO ← ————— ————— → YES

I intend to reduce my household energy use after today

NO ← ————— ————— → YES

Interview Schedule for BEE Interviews

1. Overall, what would you say was the best thing that happened as a result of the project?
2. The aim of the project was:
 - To develop and deliver a community education program that will give practical advice on how to reduce costs and energy use on household electricity bills and raise awareness on renewable energy and climate change among six culturally and linguistically diverse communities in Victoria.

To what extent do you think the project achieved this aim?

3. To what extent do you think participating ethnic communities will continue to talk about and take action around energy use, renewable energy and climate change?
4. What worked well/not so well in the project? What could have been better? What are the lessons for the future?

Appendix D. Data Management, Analysis and Report Writing

As indicated in Table 2, a range of data was generated to inform the evaluation.

Face to face and telephone interviews were audio-recorded upon consent of participants. Summaries were written shortly after each interview, and audio recordings were reviewed as appropriate, and selectively transcribed. The purpose of the recording was to ensure accuracy of the data, particularly in relation to the use of verbatim quotes. Grammatical or typographical errors were not amended in any quotes or written text produced as part of this project.

Depending on their role in the project, participants often had different perspectives and insight, and they were encouraged to express their views and opinions. In reporting the data, the aim was to illustrate the range of these perspectives, and it was noted as appropriate in the findings whether these opinions were commonly held or rather just the opinion of an individual.

Bilingual energy educator evaluation data (BEE forms) were selectively transcribed and collated under a range of categories (e.g. questions asked by participants, evidence of raised awareness, barriers to effective delivery, and lessons learned).

Quantitative data (BEE and PEP evaluation forms) were primarily managed using Excel Software, and descriptive statistics were used to present and analyse the data.

In reporting the data, participants remained anonymous to a degree. However, in order to provide a context for their responses, their role in the project was identified. The source of all data was identified as appropriate in the findings (the ID labels are as listed in Table 8). The respective community of a participant may or may not be reported in the findings. The label was not provided if the content of the data was deemed to identify an individual or potentially stigmatise a community. Furthermore it was not the purpose of the findings to draw comparisons across the community groups, which may also serve to stigmatise communities.

Quantitative and qualitative data were generated in collaboration with a range of people (as identified in Table 2). However, the data are presented, analysed and interpreted by the evaluator alone. This interpretation is informed by the evaluator's experience and interaction with the project team.

All project data will remain with ECCV at the conclusion of the project, apart from the interview summaries and recordings to protect participants' privacy.

Appendix E. BEE Training Evaluation Summary

13/02/2015 (6 out of 7 participants in attendance completed an evaluation form)

- 1) **Before** I attended the BEE Training my knowledge of **energy issues** was:
- 2) **After** I attended the BEE Training my knowledge of **energy issues** is:
- 3) **Before** I attended the BEE Training my knowledge of **community media campaigning** was:
- 4) **After** I attended the BEE Training my knowledge of **community media campaigning** is:
- 5) I have come away with new ideas for how I can engage my community around issues to do with electricity bills:

Q#	Knew nothing 1	2	3	4	Knew a lot 5
1)	0	1	2	3	0
2)	0	0	0	0	6
3)	0	1	1	2	2
4)	0	0	0	0	6
5)	0	0	0	2	4

- 6) The best thing about the training was:
 - The training session was very effective, interesting and knowledgeable. Switch on website is the best way to compare the provider. Having get to know switch on website I managed to change my electricity provider
 - Learning about the energy issues
 - Learning how to run community media campaign
 - Learn new things is always good
 - I like working with people, learning new topics is good for them
 - Knowing other people from different communities
 - Knowing about solar energy
 - Knowing about ECCV and green energy and aims of switch on website
 - It was very detailed and inclusive also good explanation about electricity usage and the different opinions options people could do to save on their electricity consumption
 - Interactive workshops with people from different backgrounds
 - Presentation by Elle was excellent and very informative even for a person (me) with energy background

- 7) The following could have improved the training:
 - More training days
 - More media practice and guidance
 - Gaining more information in general for other communities like Sudan in general
 - More sessions
 - Speakers from different communities
 - Thank you for giving me an opportunity
 - Maybe some guest speakers representing communities

Appendix F. BEE Focus Group Feedback



Feedback Form BEE's Summary

Date: August 2015

1. What did you like MCEE about project resources and workshop presentation?

- The resources simple and useful, the community can find the information easily.
- The workshop presentation educational, but I think one of session not enough and they can easily forget the information
- Great resources with relevant information and graphics
- Great response from polish community with 13 workshops booked and over 300 participants present
- Easy access to resources with resources available on line and hand print format
- Positive response from community, especially senior , volunteer and carer groups
- Overall the workshops were perceived as highly successful. Consultation with newly arrived communities to discuss the information needed on energy bills was very much satisfying. It is also seen as an opportunity for community to obtain the information's in their first language.
- The workshops were well received and participants were keen to participate and learn about the energy options available.
- The enthusiasm from the participants was great.

2. What did you like about MCEE project

- Generally good project and give opportunities to community got the information's in their first language.
- Great resource material available in ethnic languages and with easy access
- Good coverage in polish radio SBS and local paper and social media
- Great information about energy saving relevant for all members of the community
- Very positive feedback from seniors from polish community
- Very informative awareness campaign in local ethnic media
- The project was seems to be very successful.
- This project not only helped people choose the best electricity provider to save money on household bills but enhanced participants' understanding of energy efficiency, renewable energy and climate change.

- The development of resources in community first language was very energy educational.

3. What can we do better/ improve for the future project?

- It was the short term project, if it is ongoing project you may think about the regular in-service for the educator.
- Also you may consider!! Majority of the community members don't have computer skills eg: My Switch website not much helping them they must ask for help.
- I think community profile its important to shape the project as an educator we dealing with low literacy people information need to be suitable for the people not above their capacity
- Not enough time for presentation with all senior groups at least 12 moths needed to provide service for the whole community
- This program should be from 1 to 2 years long to satisfy need of the whole polish community
- Requests from other ethnic communities for resources
- Only 2 participants out of 300 new about Utility Relief grant scheme, there is great need for more ethnic education and resources in all CALD communities
- The time-frame for the project appeared to be very short as only two months is not sufficient to deliver energy workshops in community groups.

4. What do you think was the most significant impact of the project to date?

- a) Raise awareness about energy providers - 1
- b) My Switch
- c) Climate change - 1
- d) All of the above- 2

Appendix G. ECCV Media Report

POLISH COMMUNITY

Ethnic radio

- Fortnightly community announcements from 28.02.2015 till 25.7.2015 Polish SBS radio about MCEE workshop calendar
- 27.5.2015 Polish 3ZZZ community announcement advertising MCEE project and workshop dates
- 26.6 Polish radio SBS radio interview with Bilingual Energy Educator Janina Dytman 14min about MCEE project

Media resources

- MCEE Workshop flyer in polish, published in Polish Weekly 18.3.15, PCCV Polish Community Council Bulletin March 2015, Saturday School newsletter March 2015, PCCV Facebook, hard copy of flier distributed on Polish Sports Festival in Albion 22.2.2015 and send to 27 Polish Senior Clubs
- MCEE Media campaign flyer in polish, published in Polish Weekly 22.7.15, PCCV Bulletin July 2015, PCCV Facebook and PCCV website
- Newspaper article about project in polish community, published In Polish Weekly 22.7.15, PCCV Bulletin July 2015, PCCV Facebook and PCCV website
- MCEE handout in polish promoted in PCCV website and Facebook
- MCEE Flyer in polish about Flexible pricing promoted in PCCV website and Facebook
- MCEE Flipcharts in polish about Flexible pricing promoted in PCCV website and Facebook
- MCEE project 2 Animoto movies posted on ECCV Facebook and Twitter promoted on PCCV Facebook

TURKISH COMMUNITY

Ethnic radio

- 5.6 Turkish radio 3ZZZ radio interview with Bilingual Energy Educator Betul Kinali about MCEE project

Media resources

- MCEE Workshop flyer in Turkish, hard copy of flier in Turkish Senior Clubs
- MCEE Media Campaign flyer in Turkish, published in Turkish Association website
- Newspaper article about project in Turkish community, published Turkish newspaper 25.6.15,
- MCEE handout in Turkish promoted in ECCV and Turkish Association website
- MCEE Flyer in Turkish about Flexible pricing promoted in ECCV and Turkish Association website
- MCEE Flipcharts in Turkish about Flexible pricing promoted in ECCV and Turkish Association website

BHUTANESE COMMUNITY

There is no Bhutanese Ethnic Radio in Melbourne

- MCEE Workshop flyer in Nepali, published in Bhutanese Community in Australia Inc. (BCA) Facebook, hard copy of flier distributed to community groups
- Article about the project published in Bhutanese E-news (Bhutan News Network)
- MCEE Media campaign flyer in Nepali, published in BCA Facebook
- Newspaper article about project in Nepali Newspaper (The Nepali Times Melbourne)
- MCEE handout in Nepali promoted in BCA Facebook
- MCEE Flyer in Nepali about Flexible pricing promoted in BCA Facebook
- MCEE Flipcharts in Nepali about Flexible pricing promoted in BCA Facebook
- MCEE project Animoto movie posted on ECCV Facebook and promoted on BCA Facebook
- Editorial news article about the project in ethnic newspaper

CHIN BURMESE COMMUNITY

There is no Chin Burmese radio.

- MCEE Workshop flyer in Hakka, published in Chin Burmese Community group, hard copy of flier distributed among community groups
- Article about the project published in Burmese E-news
- MCEE Media campaign flyer in Chin-Hakka, published in Burmese group Facebook
- Newspaper article about project in Chin Burmese Newspaper
- MCEE handout in Nepali promoted in Burmese community group Facebook
- MCEE Flyer in Nepali about Flexible pricing promoted in Burmese community group Facebook
- MCEE Flipcharts in Nepali about Flexible pricing promoted in Burmese Community group Facebook
- MCEE project Animoto movie posted on ECCV Facebook and promoted on Burmese Community Facebook
- Editorial news article about the project in ethnic newspaper

RUSSIAN COMMUNITY

- MCEE Workshop flyer in Russian, published in Russian Ethnic Rep Council of Vic (RERC), hard copies of resources distributed to all 45 member organisations
- MCEE Media campaign flyer in Russia published in Facebook
- Newspaper article about project in RERC
- MCEE handout in Russian promoted in RERC Facebook
- MCEE Flyer in Russian about Flexible pricing promoted in Facebook
- MCEE Flipcharts in Russian about Flexible pricing promoted
- MCEE project Animoto movie posted on ECCV Facebook and promoted on Facebook

SOUTH SUDANESE COMMUNITY

- 3ZZZ ethnic radio announcement about the project
- MCEE Media campaign flyer published in Facebook
- Resource published in Facebook

Appendix H. Links to MCEE Project Resources

The following links and resources were promoted as part of the project.

- The Energy Information Fund website, managed by Consumer Utilities Advocacy Centre (CUAC), is a repository for all the different project's resources:
 - <http://energyinfohub.org.au/>
- Switch On Website is a good source of information for energy saving tips and energy providers:
 - <http://switchon.vic.gov.au/>
- My Power Planner webpage which helps households save money on their electricity bill by selecting the most competitive electricity provider:
 - <https://mpp.switchon.vic.gov.au/>
- The handouts, flipcharts, and flexible pricing flyer in 7 different languages are available to download at the ECCV website:
 - <http://eccv.org.au/projects/multicultural-communities-energy-education-project/>
- MCEE project Animoto video is on ECCV Facebook page:
 - https://www.facebook.com/ethnicvic/videos/889999691066439/?autoplay_reason=all_page_organic_allowed