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## MEDIA RELEASE

### **Household Energy Efficiency Scheme will assist families reduce power bills**

The Western Australian Council of Social Service today welcomed the announcement of a four-year, \$13 million scheme to assist low-income households with large bills to reduce their energy consumption.

“Big power bills are often the result of old and inefficient appliances, badly insulated and poor-quality housing, and a lack of knowledge on how to most effectively reduce your energy use,” said Louise Giolitto, Chief Executive Officer.

“Access to good advice on energy use, together with financial support to replace old fridges and lightbulbs can make a huge difference to families struggling to make ends meet.”

Western Australia was once a leader in this area, and WACOSS worked with community services and the WA Government to implement one of the first hardship energy efficiency programs in Australia back in 2008. The program assisted thousands of WA families before it was cut by former Energy Minister Mike Nahan in 2012.

“Having experienced Non-Government Organisations partner with Synergy, Horizon Power and Energy Policy WA to deliver this scheme is a smart move that should ensure we can both identify those households most in need *and* provide advice and support that is easily understood and taken up by vulnerable households,” Ms Giolitto said.

Recent research in the *Green Shoots* report on housing efficiency by Bankwest Curtin Economic Centre shows that WA has some of the poorest quality housing stock, and continues to build new houses that are inefficient and expensive to heat and cool.

“Providing a home energy efficiency star rating (NatHERS) can be an important step in recognising the true cost of living in poor quality housing. Ultimately more pressure will need to be put onto landlords providing sub-quality rental properties to lift their game and reduce household energy bills,” Ms Giolitto concluded.

Ends.