

# AER REFERENCE GROUP

**Record of meeting – 1 November 2017**

1. The AER’s consumer information reference group (ARG) met for the fourth time on 1 November 2017 (see attendee list at **Attachment A**).
2. The AER’s Sarah Proudfoot (SP) greeted attendees and introduced Robyn Robinson (RR) from the Council on the Ageing (COTA Australia) who presented to the group on the topic of non-digitally reliant customers with a focus on older energy customers.
3. RR presented insights and research relating to older energy customers:

* Statistics and data from various sources including the 2016 Census; Australian Bureau of Statistics (2014-15) and the Australian Digital Inclusion Index 2017
* 1.3 million households do not have internet access at home
* 51% of people aged 65 and over use the internet predominantly for banking and social networking
* Energy issues for older Australians derived from COTA’s Energy Survey 2014/15
* Outcomes from the “Switched on Seniors’, a community education program aimed at providing South East Queensland customers with tools in making informed energy choices
* Suggested engagement preferences for older energy customers, namely:
* face-to-face communication with trusted sources (which include families, peers, community sector organisations and government)
* telephone support services and
* hard copy information.

1. The group was particularly interested in older energy customers’ engagement preferences and switching behavior.
2. SP invited further discussion on the outcomes from the BETA workshop and fact sheet design and content.
3. The AEC’s Tess Fitzgerald (TF) & Fiona Simon (FS) introduced its mocked-up fact sheet.
4. In terms of the fact sheet, the group discussed:

* producing two documents for each energy offer –
* a shorter information sheet with the key information/features of the offer and
* a more detailed energy price fact sheet (EPFS), containing more of the offer information
* The inclusion of a comparison rate on the fact sheet
* The level of detail to include in the shorter information sheet as well as the more detailed EPFS.

The next steps:

* The AER will update the group at the next meeting on the submissions received in response to the Customer Price Information review issues paper
* TF to present on the tariff comparison rate/reference price at the next meeting.

**Attachment A**



## AER Reference Group Attendees

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| Organisation | Name |
| Australian Energy Regulator | Sarah Proudfoot - General Manager, Retail Markets (Chair) |
| ActewAGL Retail | Kate Goatley - Manager, Business Projects |
| Australian Energy Council | Tess Fitzgerald - Retail Policy Manager  Fiona Simon – Consultant |
| Consumer Action Law Centre | Zac Gillam - Senior Policy Officer |
| COTA Australia | Robyn Robinson - Director |
| EnergyAustralia | Samantha Nunan - Industry Regulatory Lead, Corporate |
| Energy Consumers Australia | Sabiene Heindl - Director, Strategic Engagement |
| Origin Energy | Timothy Wilson - Manager, Regulatory Policy |
| Powershop | Michael Benveniste - Head of Commercial & Strategy |
| Red Energy | Geoff Hargreaves – Regulatory Manager |
| Uniting Communities/Uniting Care | Mark Henley‎ - Manager Advocacy, Uniting Communities and Energy Advocate, Uniting Care |

**Apologies**

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| Organisation | Name |
| Brotherhood of St Laurence | Damian Sullivan - Research and Policy Senior Manager |
| Consumer Policy Research Centre | Lauren Solomon – CEO |

**Non-member attendees**

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| Organisation | Name |
| AER | Rebecca Holland - Director, Retail Electricity Pricing Inquiry (Melbourne) |
| Department of the Environment and Energy (Cth) | Clare Valence (Canberra) |
| Essential Services Commission of Victoria | Sarah McDowell (Melbourne) |