



CUSTOMER CONSULTATIVE GROUP

Meeting Communique – 26 November 2019

1. The Australian Energy Regulator's (AER) Customer Consultative Group (CCG) met on 26 November 2019 (see membership list at page 2) to discuss current issues affecting residential and small energy customers.
2. CCG Chair, Jim Cox, welcomed the new AER Chair, Clare Savage. Mr Cox noted key areas of work for the AER since July 2019, including:
 - a. a number of enforcement actions initiated by the AER against various energy operators
 - b. work promoting hardship protections to consumers
 - c. the status of the Energy Made Easy website redevelopment; and
 - d. the extension of the Consumer Challenge Panel review; and the progression of the CCG review.
3. AER staff presented an update on recent work on vulnerability and hardship. There was then a discussion with CCG members on:
 - o research by the Consumer Policy Research Centre on regulatory approaches to consumer vulnerability;
 - o follow-up actions and monitoring of the new Hardship Guideline.
4. An Australian Energy Market Commission (AEMC) staff member provided an update on current issues/upcoming work for the AEMC, including:
 - o a draft decision on regulating conditional discounts to 'reasonable' levels
 - o customer switching rule change; and
 - o AEMO procedural change.
5. During CCG members' time, members joined the CCG Chair and the AER Chair to discuss a range of issues including:
 - a. current arrangements for consumer engagement and resourcing for consumer advocates
 - b. the communication of the Values of Customer Reliability data
 - c. the staffing levels and supply of service in rural and remote areas; and
 - d. early impacts of the Default Market Offer on consumer bills.



ATTENDEES

CCG members

CCG Chair	Jim Cox, AER Board Member
Brotherhood of St Laurence	David Bryant
Country Women's Association Australia (CWAA)	Tanya Cameron OAM
Council on the Ageing Australia (COTA)	Robyn Robinson
Ethic Communities' Council of NSW (ECCNSW)	Iain Maitland
National Retail Association (NRA)	Ian Winterburn
Public Interest Advocacy Centre (PIAC)	Craig Memery
Queensland Council of Social Services (QCOSS)	Luke Reade
Renew	Dean Lombard
St Vincent de Paul Society	Gavin Dufty
Tasmania Council of Social Service (TasCOSS)	Kym Goodes
Uniting Communities	Mark Henley

Observers

Australian Energy Market Commission	James Hyatt
Tasmanian Ombudsman	Richard Connock

AER Representatives

Chair	Clare Savage
General Manager, Consumers and Markets	Sarah Proudfoot
Consumer Engagement and Insights team	Simone Tyson, Anh Cao and Pablo Albornoz

Apologies

QCOSS	Rose McGrath
TasCOSS	Bernadette Jago
AEMC	Kate Wild
ECA	Jacqueline Crawshaw