



CUSTOMER CONSULTATIVE GROUP

Meeting Communique - 17 July 2018

1. The Australian Energy Regulator's (AER) Customer Consultative Group (CCG) met on 17 July 2018 (see membership list at page 2) to discuss current issues affecting residential and small energy customers.
2. CCG Chair, Jim Cox, noted the key areas of work for the AER since March 2018, including:
 - a. a focus on retailers' compliance with hardship and disconnection obligations
 - b. enforcement action in relation to life support obligations
 - c. work to address ongoing challenges and poor customer experiences arising from the new metering contestability framework, including engagement with the sector to address delays in meter services
 - d. findings and observations in relation to wholesale electricity prices since the Hazelwood closure
 - e. the domestic gas market
 - f. customer and stakeholder engagement in relation to network decisions and by network businesses, including the trial of the New Regulatory Process (New Reg) by AusNet
 - g. reviews of the regulatory tax approach and into measures of profitability that could be applied to the electricity and gas businesses the AER regulates.
3. Members acknowledged the AER's approach to engage customer groups on a broad range of work and identified some potential areas for further consideration in relation to the AER's work on the value of customer reliability (VCR) and metering.
4. Staff from the AER's Retail Markets Branch presented on the new design of Energy Made Easy (EME) and members suggested some additional features the AER could consider as part of the EME redevelopment project.
5. AER staff presented on the 'New Reg' trial project and consumer engagement in the new AER structure.
6. During Members' time, AER Chair Paula Conboy and members discussed a number of key issues including:
 - a. the Integrated System Plan and regulatory investment tests (RIT-T & RIT-D)
 - b. the importance of including a consumer perspective in the AER's decision making processes
 - c. ways to facilitate consumer engagement with EME for consumers who cannot engage online, including the AER Inquiries function.
7. AER staff presented on the review of the Rate of Return guideline.



ATTENDEES

CCG members

CCG Chair	Jim Cox, AER Board Member
Care FCA	Eileen Newmarch
Country Women's Association Australia	Dorothy Coombe
COTA Australia	Robyn Robinson
Public Interest Advocacy Centre	Tim Harrison
St Vincent de Paul Society	Gavin Dufty
Tasmania Council of Social Service	Bernadette Jago
Uniting Communities	Mark Henley

Observers

Australian Energy Market Commission	Michael Bradley
Energy and Water Ombudsman VIC	Cynthia Gebert

AER Representatives

AER Chair	Paula Conboy
AER Retail Markets General Manager	Sarah Proudfoot
AER Retail Markets	Trang Nguyen
AER Retail Markets	Meg Zerafa

Apologies

Alternative Technology Association	Dean Lombard
Ethnic Communities Council NSW	Iain Maitland
National Retail Association	Ian Winterburn
Queensland Council of Social Service	Rose McGrath
Energy Consumers Australia	