

Consumer Challenge Panel - Member Biographies

Current members (April 2019)

Ms Louise Benjamin

Louise has over 20 years' experience in the legal profession, with in-depth knowledge of regulatory decision-making process. She is currently a Regulatory Consultant to Energy Consumers Australia, providing regulatory strategy advice to the CEO and senior executive team. Louise also provides analysis of National Electricity and Gas Law, AER and Tribunal determinations and other regulatory materials to support the ECA's participation in National Energy Market issues.

Louise enjoyed a distinguished legal career, culminating in a promotion to competition law partner at Allens, a regarded international commercial law firm, where she led cutting edge trade practices matters including managing pricing determinations, industry inquiries and protracted and complex access arbitrations.

Mr Chris Fitz-Nead

Chris has more than 30 years' experience in the energy industry. He has worked in senior roles in Australia and New Zealand and has been involved in all areas of the industry including retail, network and transmission pipelines, generation and electricity transmission, market development and operation, and upstream exploration and production. This experience has included commercial, legal, regulatory and executive roles with some of the major participants in the energy market in Australia as well as working in the management of gas market operators.

Mark Grenning

Until 2015 Mark was the Chief Advisor – Energy Management for Rio Tinto, leading a small specialist team with global accountabilities particularly in electricity and gas. Mark's 30 year career with Rio Tinto covered a wide range of senior roles in economic analysis, corporate and project finance, operations and project development. During his last 17 years at Rio Tinto Mark has specialised in energy management. These energy management related roles began with accountabilities in operational divisions and expanded to senior leadership roles across Rio Tinto's global operations.

Since finishing at Rio Tinto, Mark has recently completed a 6 month fixed term appointment as the Chair in Sustainable Energy Futures at The University of Queensland. He is now an Adjunct Associate Professor at The University of Queensland, a Director of the Energy Users Association of Australia and undertakes a range of energy related consultancy assignments for various organisations.

Mr Mark Henley

Mr Mark Henley was a member of the inaugural CCP and continues his role in the current iteration. He is the Energy Advocate with UnitingCare Australia and also Manager, Advocacy and Communication with Uniting Communities in South Australia. Since commencing this role, Mark has been involved in a number of AEMC, AER, Senate, DRET and Productivity Commission processes. Mark is a member of a number of energy consultative groups including the AER's Customer Consultative Group, and ESOCSA's Community Advisory Committee. He is also an inaugural and continuing member of the national Consumer Roundtable on Energy.

Mark is currently the President of the Economics Society of SA, a Member of the Standards Australia reference group regarding energy networks, member of the Australian Churches Gambling Taskforce and Chair of Innovative Community Action Networks (Education) for Adelaide East and Hills region.

Ms Bev Hughson

Ms Bev Hughson was a member of the inaugural CCP and continues her role in the current iteration. She has over 30 years of experience in the energy industry, initially working at the Victorian Gas and Fuel Corporation in a variety of management roles in market research, corporate planning, marketing and wholesale market trading. Following gas industry restructuring and privatisation of the Gas and Fuel, Bev transferred to Origin Energy Retail Limited.

At Origin, Bev had a number of responsibilities including managing the retail regulatory policy and strategy functions during a time of structural change. She was previously the national retail pricing and tariffs manager, responsible for gas and electricity pricing, including negotiating regulated pricing arrangements with state regulators in Victoria, South Australia, Queensland and NSW.

In 2012, Bev established her own consulting company, Darach Energy Consulting Services, providing advice and support services to consumer organisations on energy related matters including participating on behalf of consumer organisations in the AER's Better Regulation Program and advising consumers on various aspects of the economic regulation of energy networks.

Andrew Nance

Andrew Nance is a South Australian based energy consultant that specialises in advising and representing consumers of energy. Andrew is a past member of the Reliability Panel and previously served as Technical Director of the South Australian Government's Sustainability and Climate Change Division: advising on emissions trading, renewable energy and mandatory energy and greenhouse reporting.

Andrew has a degree in Electrical Engineering and a post-graduate degree in Energy Studies. Andrew is currently undertaking a Ph.D. in Energy Policy.

Ms Robyn Robinson

Ms Robyn Robinson was a member of the inaugural CCP and continues her role in the current iteration. She has extensive experience in the energy industry. Her previous experience includes 15 years as an Executive Manager at Queensland transmission company Powerlink. With a background in IT management, Robyn was responsible for the development and delivery of IT services for Powerlink. She also provided strategic direction and corporate governance for the organisation, and oversaw Powerlink's business performance improvement programs.

Robyn's current roles include Director at Council on the Ageing (COTA) Queensland where she is a member of the Finance and Risk Committee and COTA Queensland Policy Committee. Robyn is also an energy policy advisor and energy advocate for COTA Queensland.

Mr David Prins

Mr David Prins was a member of the inaugural CCP and continues his role in the current iteration. He is the Managing Director of Etrog Consulting, a consultancy providing advice and resources to clients in energy and utilities. David has 23 years of experience specialising in the application of effective regulation and competition in electricity and gas industries.

Much of David's recent work has focused on advice on smart metering and energy pricing and margins. He has worked with many national and jurisdictional government bodies and consumer organisations.

Mr Mike Swanston

Mr Mike Swanston has over thirty years of experience in the electricity industry as a professional engineer and senior manager, crossing the boundaries of technical design, field operations and customer Advocacy for major energy users. Mike is currently the Director of The Customer Advocate, a private consultancy company which assists regulators, governments, businesses and customers consider new technologies and changing customer energy needs in the development of effective business operations and the use of energy.

Past members

Eric Groom PSM (member until March 2019)

Eric is an economist, with over 20 years' experience at very senior levels in infrastructure regulation, primarily in the energy sector, both in Australia and overseas. He is the Principal of Mainstay Economic Consulting Pty Ltd which has provided advice to regulators in Vietnam, Philippines, and Pakistan on various issues

in tariff regulation and market development, regulatory processes, and organisational and capacity development issues.

Eric was awarded the Public Service Medal (2015) for outstanding contribution to utility regulation and reform, consumer protection, and, through the implementation and administration of GGAS, reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. He was also appointed to the World Bank/PPIAF international advisory panel on regulation.