

**Energy Consumers Australia Board Meeting Communiqué  
18 June 2015**

***ECA's Reference Committee***

The ECA Reference Committee had its inaugural meeting during the 18 June Board Meeting. The Committee's role is to advise the Board on emerging consumer issues and the development of ECA's work program, and share grass roots consumer feedback and research. It will meet three times a year.

Reference Committee members are:

Carly Allen	David Headberry
Gerard Brody	Craig Memery
Jo de Silva	Ed Santow
Gavin Dufty	Helen Scott
Kath McLean	

Discussions at the first meeting focused on the Committee's identification of key issues for consumers, possible measures to build the capacity of the sector, and how the consumer movement can help shape the development of the national energy market.

***ECA Research***

ECA currently uses the former Consumer Advocacy Panel grant guidelines, in order to minimise any disruption to advocacy during ECA's establishment. At this meeting, the Board considered the potential scope, process and timing for a review to develop the ECA grant allocation guidelines and eligibility criteria.

ECA will consult closely with stakeholders in this process. An Issues Paper will be published in late July 2015 seeking stakeholder input.

The Board received an update from the Public Interest Advocacy Centre on its proceedings in the Australian Competition Tribunal in relation to the AER's network determination for NSW distribution businesses. PIAC received a grant from ECA to support its application. As outlined in its [18 February letter](#) to the AER, the Board supported the AER's decision to reduce significantly the proposed charges of these businesses over the next five years, and will continue to monitor closely the merits review process.

The Board considered grant applications from a number of consumer advocacy organisations, in line with its constitutional function to provide grants to build knowledge and sectoral capacity supporting National Energy Market policy development and consumer education.

Grant recipients will be notified shortly of the Board's decision, which will also be published on the ECA website.

***ECA Advocacy and Stakeholder Engagement***

ECA's stakeholder engagement stepped up with the appointment of the CEO, who has held a number of meetings with representatives from consumer groups, industry, government, regulators and Ombudsmen.

Those meetings are making important contributions to ECA's evolving advocacy and research agenda, and the Board considered some potential areas for research, including on effective consumer engagement.