

National Consumer Roundtable on Energy Communique

Hobart February 2019

The National Consumer Roundtable on Energy met in Hobart on 28 February and 1 March, 2019, this included a number of mainland as well as local (Tasmanian) representatives. The meeting considered priority consumer issues and included discussions with representatives from the Australian Energy Market Commission and the Energy Charter.

This is the first Roundtable conducted under revised arrangements which included reports and discussion lead by two “enabling groups:”

Payment Difficulties

Participants are active in the AER Hardship Guideline Review and will seek to continue engagement of broader payment difficulties frameworks post that Review.

Opportunities and Challenges of DER

Participants prioritised the National Consumer Roundtable on Energy to continue taking action on this issue.

Other Issues that were considered included:

Network Economic Regulatory Framework

Participants were unanimous that appropriate network regulation is a very high priority for consumers. The participants welcomed the AEMC presentation on the Framework Review and invited the AEMC to return with a progress update at its next meeting.

Resourcing Consumer Engagement

Participants agreed that demand on consumers has heightened over the last decade and that resourcing has not matched the level of expectation. Participants noted the work currently being undertaken by Uniting Communities in this regard and will be updated at the next meeting.

Jurisdictional Mapping

A separate document was prepared, discussed and circulated and accompanies this Communique.

Integrated System Plan/COGATI/related issues

Participants identified that upcoming AER, AEMO, ESB, AEMC, COAG EC processes critically require consumer input. The National Consumer Roundtable on Energy will take action to better enable this input.

Price regulation

The Victorian Default Offer and the ACCC DMO were discussed and a variety of views were canvassed. The National Consumer Roundtable on Energy will continue to monitor these initiatives.

The Energy Charter

Participants have mixed views about the role of the Energy Charter, some of whom have concerns over differences between practice and the intent given in the Charter. It was agreed that the National Consumer Roundtable on Energy would continue to monitor its development, with some members interested in engaging in the End User Consultative Group.

Governance

The National Consumer Roundtable on Energy endorsed a revised terms of reference for its steering committee, and endorsed terms of reference for the enabling groups and enabling group framework.