

Gill Owen Scholarship Guidelines

The Gill Owen Scholarship supports an individual to travel internationally to research innovative ideas and initiatives that will be relevant to improving outcomes for consumers in the Australian energy market.

Dr Gill Owen was an inaugural Director of the Energy Consumers Australia Board. Dr Owen was a respected policy advocate, who brought her considerable expertise and insights to energy consumer issues in both Australia and the UK.

Reflecting her international experience, Dr Owen provided a unique perspective on Australian policy and program development, supported by her enduring commitment to social justice and better consumer outcomes. Her contribution saw improvements to the Australian regulatory framework, including in the creation of the Australian Energy Regulator's Consumer Challenge Panel. She was a guiding voice in the establishment of Energy Consumers Australia, and our early days as an organisation.

Dr Owen passed away in August 2016. Energy Consumers Australia in partnership with her husband David Green, created an annual scholarship to honour her memory.

About the Scholarship

Applications are invited for a grant of up to **\$15,000** to research innovation, policies and programs that will be relevant to achieving improved consumer outcomes in a dynamic and changing Australian energy market.

Examples of international innovation include:

- British energy transition principles, orienting towards just, flexible, and democratised smart grids, enabled by renewable energy, provided First Nations communities with examples of technical, regulatory and business solutions that can help build the capacity to pursue community-led energy access, affordability and resilience solutions.
- The Spanish response to extreme heat events in the context of critical challenges to energy systems through a wide range of responses and activities to help its population adapt to extreme heat events
- Policy initiatives, such as the US Green Button scheme – an industry-led initiative that helps consumers access their information and provide it to others
- Alternative approaches to market regulation, such as the UK Competition and Market Authority's work on digital comparison tools, or lessons from the UK smart meter rollout
- How research is informing policy and regulation – for example, how relevant learnings from the European Union's Empowering partnership on consumer behaviour and bills is helping define best practice.

Activities supported through the Scholarship

The Gill Owen scholar will engage with leading thinkers internationally and report on new insights that can be applied to challenges faced by small energy consumers in Australia. The range of overseas activities would typically encompass:

- Visiting to one or more countries to learn from energy consumer activities and experiences.
- Meetings with relevant individuals and organisations in the selected country.
- Participating in speaking engagements at conferences or similar events.

Note: Energy Consumers Australia suggest potential contacts from its network and can provide a letter of introduction to support these engagements.

To achieve impact, a range of activities are expected upon return to Australia, including:

- Written summary outlining key learnings from the visit and their relevance to the Australian energy context.
- A webinar to communicate the learnings from the project, with a focus on how these insights can benefit Australian energy consumers.
- Meetings with consumer groups, industry representatives, and/or government officials to promote the learnings.

Who can apply?

Successful applicants should be able to demonstrate most of the following attributes:

- Australian citizenship or permanent residency and aged 18 years or older.
- Hold an Australian Business Number (ABN) or be affiliated with an organisation or company that can receive Scholarship payment directly.
- Experience in evidence-based research or advocacy relating to energy consumer issues.
- Knowledge of the key issues in the Australian energy market that drive energy consumer outcomes.
- Networking and communication skills to meet people, including senior officials and academics in your chosen country(ies).

Selection criteria

Applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

1. **Relevance:** The project addresses a timely and significant issue affecting Australian energy consumers.
2. **Strategic alignment:** The issue aligns with Energy Consumers Australia's current 3-Year Strategic Plan targets.

3. **Impact potential:** The project has the potential to influence long-term outcomes for residential and/or small business energy consumers.
4. **Innovation:** The proposed research and international insights offer a fresh or novel approach to the issue.
5. **Stakeholder engagement:** The applicant has identified appropriate stakeholders to consult and collaborate with in exploring the issue.
6. **Skills and experience:** The applicant possesses the relevant experience to successfully deliver the project.

How to apply

Applicants must submit an application that addresses the following:

- What issue affecting Australian energy consumers do you intend to investigate, and why is it important to address now?
- Who are you aiming to influence through this project?
- Why is international travel essential to undertake this research?
- How will your project contribute to long-term improvements for residential and/or small business energy consumers in Australia?
- Who will you engage with to develop insights and gather knowledge?
- What skills and experience do you bring that will support the success of the project?
- Provide a proposed budget outlining expected costs.

Please note: Funding agreements will be established between Energy Consumers Australia and the applicant's organisation or personal company.

The successful applicant will be announced at Energy Consumers Australia's next *Foresighting Forum*.