

# Board Communique: March 2023

## The Energy Consumers Australia Board met in Canberra on 15-16 March 2023

This was the first opportunity since May 2019 for the Board to travel to Canberra to meet key stakeholders and to understand the pathways to renewable energy being supported by local innovation.

### Board Site Visits – 15 March 2023

Since their last meeting with stakeholders in Canberra, the Board noted that the ACT has achieved its target of 100% of electricity from renewable sources, and that the ACT Government has also announced its intention to complete the transition away from gas by 2045.

The Board visited the Australian National University's Distributed Energy Resources (DER) Laboratory – "DERlab". This state-of-the-art facility mirrors the electricity grid, provides a failsafe environment in which to rapidly, efficiently, and securely develop and test technologies and systems before deploying them into the live grid.

Afterwards, the Board visited the Battery Storage and Grid Integration Program (BSGIP). BSGIP undertakes socio-techno-economic research, development, and demonstration activities that support the global energy transition and help achieve economy-wide decarbonisation.

Board members also had the opportunity to discuss with key stakeholders the implications of what these proposed solutions might mean for consumers.

The Board would like to thank the DERlab, BSGIP, and the stakeholders with whom we met for the chance to learn more about ANU's research and the energy transformation underway in the ACT.

### Board Governance Meeting

The 16 March 2023 Board Governance Meeting focused on several governance and operational matters.

The CEO provided the Board with additional information about the work Energy Consumers Australia is doing to support the ACT government in exploring a national energy campaign as agreed at the Energy and Climate Change Council (ECC) meeting on 24 February 2023. The CEO also shared with the Board three key areas identified in the CEO's presentation to Energy Ministers:

- Transmission access reform
- Stepping Up: enabling consumers to benefit from the energy transition
- Unlocking the value of community storage for consumers

The Board also noted that the terms for all members of the 2021-23 Board Reference Committee end in June 2023, with the upcoming May meeting being the last for the current Reference Committee. The process to appoint the 2023-25 Board Reference Committee is underway.

The Board also reflected on the outcomes of the February 2023 Foresighting Forum. Reflections on the conversations held at the Foresighting Forum reinforced the Board's view that the diversity of consumer perspectives and taking a consumer-focused approach to the system are a strength for the emerging energy system.

With ongoing increases in energy prices and the cost-of-living crisis, concerns around energy affordability are front of mind for the Board, and the Board discussed how Energy Consumers Australia will continue to respond to this pressing issue.