

Board Communique: June 2020

The Energy Consumers Australia Board met via video conference on 25 June 2020

Response to the impacts of COVID-19

The Board received an update from the CEO about the evolving experience of household and small business energy consumers being impacted by the economic downturn associated with COVID-19.

The Board was also briefed on Energy Consumers Australia's staff health and wellbeing, noting that the changes to our operating environment can be a cause of stress and anxiety.

The early results of a recent survey by Energy Consumers Australia indicate that many consumers are not aware that retailers are offering bill support and are yet to reach out for assistance. The survey indicated that levels of awareness was particularly low among small business energy consumers, indicating that outreach to that group should be a focus for the sector. The Board welcomed the "We got you" communications campaign being run by Energy Charter companies and encouraged all energy companies to get behind the effort.

Given the extent of the economic shock Australia is experiencing, and data that consumer energy use has increased, the Board remains concerned about the risk of bill shock and financial stress in the second half of the year.

The CEO also discussed the Australian Energy Regulator's recent electricity and gas distribution network decisions, which will see network component of the retail bill fall in a number of regions, creating further headroom for retailers to reduce prices for consumers from 1 July 2020.

Grants Decisions

The Board considered five grant applications. The Board approved funding for the following new grants:

- AP 1068 – Renew – DER Enablement Project 2 (\$250,000)
- AP 1074 – SACOSS – Modelling differential impacts of changes to electricity concessions (\$73,522)
- AP 1075 – ACTCOSS – ACT Energised Consumers Project (\$96,060)

The next grants round closes on 10 September 2020.

More information about the Energy Consumers Australia's Grants Program is available [here](#).