

Board Communique: August 2017

The Energy Consumers Australia (ECA) Board met in Sydney on 24 August 2017.

Stakeholder forum

The Board meeting was preceded by a Stakeholder Forum on 23 August. The forum received presentations from:

- KPMG, about the Thwaites/Mulder/Faulkner review of Victorian retail markets
- Sun Powered Rentals, about their new model for solar ownership by renters
- The Total Environment Centre, about the local energy future
- The University of NSW, about the part renewables can play in improving energy affordability for low-income consumers.

Following the presentations, the ECA Board and staff heard from the broad range of NSW stakeholders in attendance about their key energy market concerns, including:

- the negative impacts of recent price rises on residential and small business consumers, including low income and vulnerable consumers
- issues relating to current market structures and their impact on costs
- the potential for consumers to benefit from innovation and the challenges that must be overcome for this to occur, including policy uncertainty and regulatory barriers

Board Meeting

In addition to standard governance matters, the key focus of the Board meeting was the outputs of six recent ECA grants. The Board received presentations from:

- The National Irrigators Council, on research and analysis undertaken to support its submission to the Australian Competition Consumer Commission's inquiry into electricity prices and supply
- RMIT University, on their smart home control project, which explores potential for enabling technologies in vulnerable and disadvantaged households
- The Queensland Council of Social Services, on their work to advocate on behalf of low-income and vulnerable energy consumers in that state
- The Total Environment Centre, on their submission to the Independent Review into the Future Security of the National Electricity Market (the Finkel Review)
- St Vincent de Paul Victoria and Alviss Consulting, on recent tariff-tracking and price analysis in NSW, Queensland, South Australian, the ACT and Tasmania
- Bundaberg Regional Irrigators Group, on the feasibility of rural electricity users in regional Queensland (especially irrigators) going "off grid".

Next Meeting

The next Board meeting will be held in Sydney on 21 September 2017.