

Board Communique: March 2018

Board Stakeholder Forum

The Stakeholder Forum was attended by 75 people from advocacy organisations, universities, policy organisations, government departments, retailers, networks, generators, professional services, other energy companies and market participants. Presentations were made and discussions were held on:

- Changing Australian lifestyles, aspirations and energy use practices and what this will mean for the electricity sector (Yolande Strengers, Centre for Urban Research, RMIT)
- The OpenNEM project and wider market data access (Dylan McConnell, University of Melbourne)
- How to give energy consumers more choice and easier access to the benefits of new energy solutions (James Seymour, Ovida)

The key theme emerging from the discussions was the importance of data to increase transparency and as a key enabler for modern consumer protections. ECA's Board thanks all the attendees for their contribution.

Board Reference Committee meeting

The Board Reference Committee convened for its first meeting in 2018 following the Board meeting. The Reference Committee discussed the challenge of ensuring consumer protection regime keeps up with a transforming energy market and offered valuable feedback on a forthcoming Energy Consumers Australia publication on the topic.

The Energy Consumers Australia Board met in Melbourne on 15 March, 2018.

The Board considered applications for Energy Consumers Australia grants funding. The Board continues to receive applications for funding in each round in excess of the total annual grants budget.

As with past grants rounds, successful applications were able to demonstrate a strong methodology for delivering a project and clearly defined outcomes for consumers. The Board considered 15 applications at this meeting, approving 6:

- RMIT – Our Grid: Concepts, strategies and relationships to engage energy consumers towards the Future Grid (\$179,650)
- South Australian Council of Social Service – *Working Poor Energy Consumers – Enhancing Support for Vulnerable Customers* (\$100,665)
- NSW Irrigators Council – *Irrigators – the flow on benefits of regionally embedded generation* (\$95,300)
- UNSW - *An expanded open source modelling tool for assessing how different network and retail tariffs, and distributed energy options, impact on small energy consumers* (\$80,600)
- Queensland Council of Social Service - *Queensland Electricity Networks Distribution Determination Process 2020 - 2025: Fair outcomes for low income and vulnerable consumers* (\$172,600)
- Queensland Council of Social Service - *Including Energy Efficiency in Minimum Rental Housing Standards in Queensland* (\$29,147)

The Board thanks all applicants for the effort that went into the applications. The Board continues to be pleased with the outcomes that the grants program is delivering for consumers.

Next Meeting

12 April, 2018, Sydney