

Board Communique: May 2019

The Energy Consumers Australia Board met in Canberra on 8 & 9 May 2019

Board Stakeholder Forum, 8 May 2019

The Board met with consumer advocates, researchers, energy company representatives, regulators, and officials from the Commonwealth and ACT governments for an open discussion on priority matters for household and small business energy consumers.

The dialogue was stimulated by four presentations covering the ongoing affordability challenges many consumers are facing now, as well as issues about the transformation of the energy market over the longer-term.

- *Delivering energy consumers 'better' as the energy system transforms*, Rosemary Sinclair AM, CEO, Energy Consumers Australia
- *Energy affordability and vulnerability in the ACT Perspective*, Susan Helyar, Director, ACT Council of Social Service
- *The future of integrated energy services*, Dr Bjorn Sturmberg, Research Leader, Battery Storage and Grid Integration Program, Energy Change Institute, Australian National University
- *The ACCC Electricity Market Monitoring agenda*, Lyn Camilleri, General Manager, Electricity Markets Branch, ACCC.

Board Meeting, 9 May 2019

The Board commenced the meeting by reflecting on the key themes that emerged at the Stakeholder Forum, noting:

- The challenges energy consumers with lower incomes are facing in the ACT and nationally is evolving, and there is a need to understand population and demographic trends in designing and delivering support. There remains a pressing need for a broader, cross-sector focus extending to income support and housing to ensure no one is left behind.
- The ongoing ACCC electricity market monitoring process has highlighted the mixed progress to date on the implementation of the ACCC Retail Electricity Pricing Inquiry recommendations, and the need for a coordinated approach by governments and market bodies to secure the promised savings for consumers.
- There is a need to update policy and regulatory frameworks to reflect the significant advances in energy system integration and optimisation technology and methodologies. This included, among a number of issues, a desire for a co-ordinated approach for the investment in transmission infrastructure and its relationship to local distribution networks to optimise outcomes for consumers.

The Board then considered several governance matters.

Reference Committee 9 May 2019

The Reference Committee met for the second time in 2019. The Reference Committee discussed the following matters:

- Retail prices and policy from 1 July 2019, focusing on the Victorian Default Offer and the Default Market Offer that is being developed for other, non-price regulated NEM jurisdictions. The policy objectives and implications for consumers of the two different models were discussed, with the Reference Committee highlighting the need for implementation to be closely monitored and consumers provided with information and tools to get the best deal for their circumstances.

- What the latest network revenue determinations mean for consumers, and insights from the consumer advocates who participated in the processes. Members provided mixed feedback on the quality of the engagement and outcomes across the NEM, with concerns raised about the structure and communication of new tariff structures in some areas. The Reference Committee noted the resource demands placed on consumer advocates in a transforming market.
- The Reference Committee also discussed the New Energy Technology Consumer Code, which is being lodged with the ACCC as part of the registration process, and the opportunity for advocates to participate in the consultation process.

Please do not hesitate to contact Linda Brown, Director Governance and Corporate, on 08 9220 5500 or executive@energyconsumersaustralia.com.au if you would like to discuss the Communique further.