



Reference Committee Terms of Reference and Arrangements

1. Introduction

This document sets out the Terms of Reference and arrangements governing the Energy Consumers Australia (ECA) Reference Committee (the Committee), established under Section 16.4 of the Constitution ([Attachment 1](#)).

2. ECA Objective

The objective of Energy Consumers Australia is to promote the long term interests of consumers of energy with respect to the price, quality, safety, reliability and security of supply of energy services by providing and enabling strong, coordinated, collegiate evidence based consumer advocacy on national energy market matters of strategic importance or material consequence for energy consumers in particular for residential customers and small business customers.¹

3. Terms of Reference

The Reference Committee is established to act as an advisory group to the ECA Board on consumer energy issues. The Committee is an important part of Energy Consumers Australia's approach to stakeholder engagement and the contribution of the Committee assists ECA to achieve coordinated, collegiate, evidence based advocacy.

The responsibilities of the Reference Committee include:

- providing informed and effective advice to the Board on current and emerging consumer issues and the development of ECA's work program
- sharing grass roots consumer feedback and research, and
- responding to issues raised by the Board.

The Reference Committee, in its capacity as an advisory group, provides an opportunity for the Energy Consumers Australia Board to consult, in depth, on energy consumer issues. It is not a decision-making body.

4. Membership

The Reference Committee shall consist of up to ten members with a minimum of eight at any one time.

The Reference Committee shall include at least one member from each of the participating National Energy Market States and Territories. Members may be drawn from individuals with expertise and knowledge of consumer energy issues and the national energy market and/or their own jurisdiction, or expertise in a related industry, or other expertise of particular relevance to the work of Energy Consumers Australia.

The Committee is chaired by an Energy Consumers Australia Board Director.

5. Appointment

Members are appointed in an individual capacity. Consequently, no provision is made for Alternates to attend on behalf of a member.

¹ Energy Consumers Australia Constitution Clause 4.1(a).

5.1 Appointment Terms

Members are appointed for terms of up to two years and may be appointed for shorter periods to provide advice on specific issues. Members may be appointed for more than one term, although generally not more than three consecutive terms.

The decision to reappoint or not to reappoint any member of the Reference Committee is at the sole discretion of the Energy Consumers Australia Board.

5.2 Appointment Process

Energy Consumers Australia will call for nominations from individuals interested in appointment to the Committee. As a part of this process, current members will be asked if they are interested in seeking reappointment and, if so, will be considered for reappointment.

The nomination and appointment process will generally commence in March with appointments made in June.

In the event of a vacancy or resignation, the Energy Consumers Australia Board may appoint a member in a casual capacity until the next appointment round.

The nomination, selection and appointment process is set out in [Attachment 2](#).

5.3 Resignation or termination of appointment

A member may resign from the Committee by advising the Energy Consumers Australia Chair in writing.

Energy Consumers Australia reserves the right to terminate a member's appointment at any time for misconduct, conflict of interest or the failure to participate in two consecutive meetings.

6. Conflict of Interest

Members must advise Energy Consumers Australia if any of their external activities conflict with their position, with particular regard to Energy Consumers Australia's role as a consumer advocacy body.

7. Meetings

Meetings may be convened in any national energy market state or territory. Members may participate in person, by teleconference and, when possible, by video conference. Advance notice of meeting dates will be provided.

Committee members may suggest agenda items for consideration via the Committee secretariat and the Agenda will be circulated to the Committee prior to finalising.

Energy Consumers Australia staff including the CEO and Secretariat will attend meetings as required.

8. Reimbursement of Costs

Reference Committee Members may apply for reimbursement of reasonable costs if they attend a meeting in person. These include:

- economy class airfares, based on discount rates wherever possible
- fares to and from the airport and the meeting venue
- accommodation, with prior approval from Energy Consumers Australia, where the timing and location of meetings make it necessary to stay overnight. This is expected to occur by exception.

Members are able to request that their travel arrangements be made by Energy Consumers Australia. This can be done by providing the details of the request via email to the Director Stakeholder Engagement.

8.1 Submitting requests for reimbursement

Requests for payment are to be forwarded to the Energy Consumers Australia Secretariat within four weeks of attending the meeting. The request for payment should include member name, meeting attended, Tax Invoice for the total with a breakdown by expense category, copies of receipts and bank debit details.

9. Reporting of Meetings

Reference Committee meeting discussions are confidential however a high level summary of items covered will be published in the Board Communiqué issued after the next Board meeting.

10. Publication of Terms of Reference

These Terms of Reference will be published on the Energy Consumers Australia website.

11. Secretariat arrangements

The Reference Committee is supported by the Director Stakeholder Engagement. Contact details are provided at [Attachment 3](#).

12. Review of Terms of Reference

These Terms of Reference will be reviewed every two years and any updates advised to the Reference Committee Members prior to publishing on the ECA website.

Document Revision

DATE	CHANGE	BY WHO	VERSION NO.
09/06/2015	Original	ECA Board	1.0
15/09/2016	Major Revision following review	ECA Board	2.0
25/05/2017	Minor Revision	ECA Board	2.1

Attachment 1. Section 16.4 of ECA Constitution²

16.4 Reference Committee

- (a) The Board must establish a Reference Committee to act as an advisory group to the Board on Consumer Energy issues.
- (b) The number of representatives on the Reference Committee will be determined by the Board but until otherwise determined shall be no more than 10.
- (c) The Reference Committee shall include at least one member from each of the participating National Energy Market States and Territories.
- (d) The responsibilities of the Reference Committee include the provision of effective advice to the Board on emerging Consumer issues and on the development of the Company's work program, and the sharing of grass roots Consumer feedback and research.
- (e) The Reference Committee shall meet and otherwise carry out their functions in accordance with procedures determined by the Board, subject to the proviso that no more than four meetings are to be held in any calendar year.
- (f) Reference Committee members shall be entitled to reimbursement of reasonable costs. These costs shall be in accordance with any policy approved by the Board from time to time.
- (g) A Director will be required to chair the meetings of the Reference Committee. Different Directors may chair the Reference Committee meetings from time to time.

² <http://www.energyconsumersaustralia.com.au/documents/Constitution-Energy-Consumers-Australia-Limited.pdf>

Attachment 2. Nomination, Selection and Appointment Process

Nominations

A Call for Nominations will be circulated to Energy Consumers Australia's stakeholder networks via email, social media and the ECA website and through newspaper advertisements or any other means as appropriate.

Timing

The Nominations process will generally commence in March with Appointments made in June.

Selection Criteria

To be considered for appointment, nominees must submit a statement of claim of no more than two pages against the following criteria:

- expertise and knowledge of consumer energy issues and the national energy market and/or their own jurisdiction, or expertise in a related industry.
- capacity to contribute to consideration of consumer interests in the areas identified in Energy Consumers Australia's Strategic Priorities and Activities.
- ability to identify and share consumer feedback and research relevant to the work of Energy Consumers Australia.
- other expertise of particular relevance to the energy sector.

Decision Making Process

The Energy Consumers Australia Board will convene a Nominations Committee to review applications and make recommendations to the Board for appointment to the Reference Committee. In making its recommendation the Nominations Committee will be cognisant of the requirement to include at least one representative from each of the participating National Energy Market State and Territories and the desirability of having a committee that collectively can provide advice and share information on:

- issues impacting residential and small business consumers including vulnerable consumers;
- the experience of metropolitan, regional and remote consumers; and
- the various segments of the national electricity market including the retail, distribution and wholesale markets, new and emerging technologies and regulatory and operational arrangements.
- other issues of relevance to the energy sector.

All nominees will be advised of the outcome of their application.

Attachment 3. Reference Committee Contacts

Board Chair	Louise Sylvan elizabeth.lawler@energyconsumersaustralia.com.au
Reference Committee Chair	Virginia Hickey elizabeth.lawler@energyconsumersaustralia.com.au
CEO	Rosemary Sinclair Rosemary.sinclair@energyconsumersaustralia.com.au
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