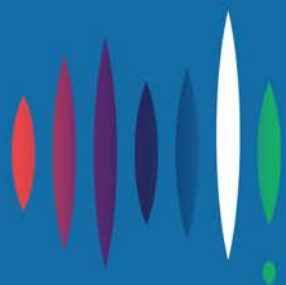


# Business Plan

Promoting the long term interests of consumers  
of energy

2018/2019



**ENERGY  
CONSUMERS  
AUSTRALIA**

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## Version history

VERSION	DATE	COMMENTS
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## About ECA

Energy Consumers Australia (ECA) is an independent body established through an initiative of the Council of Australian Governments Energy Council (COAG Energy Council) to provide residential and small business consumers with a strong and influential voice in national energy matters. It is incorporated as a company limited by guarantee and funded by consumers from levies collected by the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO).

## Our Role

ECA's Constitution<sup>1</sup>, as agreed by the COAG Energy Council, sets out our Objective as well as the Activities to achieve it.

### Objective

"To promote the *long term interests of Consumers of Energy* with respect to 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 (NEM) matters of strategic importance or material consequence for Energy Consumers, in particular Residential Customers and Small Business Customers."

### Activities

- Effectively and objectively participate in National Energy Market issues and influence regulatory activities and energy market reform to benefit consumers
- Engage and communicate with consumers and consumer advocates
- Build national and jurisdictional expertise and capacity through research, knowledge development and consultation
- Undertake robust research to build knowledge, engage and influence policy development and educate consumers in the energy markets
- Fund and manage grants to build knowledge and sectoral capacity supporting policy development and consumer education in the National Energy Market
- Create and maintain effective working relationships with key stakeholders
- Develop and apply an understanding of the distinct market differences between jurisdictions within the National Energy Market
- Frequently and collaboratively engage and communicate with representatives from the Energy Industry on issues in the interests of Consumers.

In performing these Activities, ECA must have regard to any relevant objectives<sup>2</sup> set out in the National Energy Laws.

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<sup>1</sup> [ECA Constitution](#)

<sup>2</sup> National Electricity Objective (Section 7 of the National Electricity Law)

The objective of this Law is to promote efficient investment in, and efficient operation and use of, electricity services for the long term interests of consumers of electricity with respect to—  
(a) price, quality, safety, reliability and security of supply of electricity; and  
(b) the reliability, safety and security of the national electricity system.

National Gas Objective (Section 23 of the National Gas Law)



Each of the laws includes an objective to “promote efficient investment in, and operation and use of” services “for the long-term interests of consumers.” This means that consumers should pay no more than is necessary for the energy services they need.

## Strategic Priorities for Energy Markets

The ECA Board has used information from consultations, including with its Reference Committee and the first Foresighting Forum, to identify five Strategic Priorities for Energy Markets that will promote the long-term interests of residential and small business consumers and support the move to a consumer driven National Energy Market.

These priorities will be applied in the ECA Grants Program and the Board will use these priorities to guide ECA’s work and monitor progress against associated activities in this plan.

1. **Consumer preferences and decisions drive** electricity and gas networks decisions and electricity and gas markets **outcomes**.
2. **Consumer choice is enabled through information and innovation** from retail service providers offering affordable and quality energy services.
3. **Competition is stronger** as a vibrant market for new energy services and technologies develops over the next 5 years.
4. **Consumers participate in energy markets with confidence.** Where needed, contemporary harmonised safeguards such as income support, complaints handling and dispute resolution are in place to support consumers.
5. **Consumer interests are supported through sector Governance arrangements** which promote effective competition where viable and best practice regulation of monopoly services.

**5 key areas** relating to the long-term interest of consumers, that ECA seeks to positively influence are **price, quality (service), safety, reliability and security of supply**

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The objective of this Law is to promote efficient investment in, and efficient operation and use of, natural gas services for the long term interests of consumers of natural gas with respect to price, quality, safety, reliability and security of supply of natural gas  
National Energy Retail Objective (Section 13 of the National Energy Retail Law)  
The objective of this Law is to promote efficient investment in, and efficient operation and use of, energy services for the long term interests of consumers of energy with respect to price, quality, safety, reliability and security of supply of energy.



## Our Vision and Values

### Research Engage Influence

ECA’s work plan is aligned with the Board’s Strategic Energy Market Priorities and Vision and builds on the foundational work undertaken in 2016/17. The work plan is designed to support ECA’s capacity to promote the long term interests of consumers and to provide and support strong, coordinated, collegiate evidence based consumer advocacy on matters affecting residential and small business consumers in the National Energy Market.

ECA’s work program is organised around discrete but complementary functions: Research, Stakeholder Engagement, Advocacy and Communications, Governance and Operations. In addition, a number of development projects are undertaken in the CEO’s office.

#### Our Vision

Future focused consumer driven energy markets meeting residential and small business consumers’ needs.

1. Energy markets that empower consumers through increasing competition, growing consumer choice, widespread innovation in product and service offerings, and widely available energy efficiency services.
2. Consistently available, contemporary consumer protection mechanisms including clear information, tools to manage usage and expenditure, and easy access to redress mechanisms, reflected in growing levels of customer satisfaction and trust.
3. Reduced regulatory burdens, combined with growing use of consumer/industry collaboration, to reduce associated costs for consumers.

#### Our Values

We value independence, integrity and impartiality. We are focused on being collegiate, evidence based, capable and influential to build strong national advocacy for residential and small business consumers.



## Our Environment

ECA operates in a complex environment, working with a range of public and private sector interests on difficult, systemic issues on behalf of a diverse group of residential and small business consumers.

Our ability to deliver outcomes for consumers therefore hinges on our ability to listen, share research and experience, forge partnerships and collaborate to solve problems.

### Our stakeholders

Our primary stakeholders are residential and small business energy consumers. Importantly, we set out to represent all households and small businesses, ranging from those that are disengaged, or struggle with the



affordability of energy, through to consumers who are engaged and taking advantage of new technology and service offerings

We also see ourselves as part of a strong community of advocates and researchers contributing to a shared evidence base for policy making in the long term interests of energy consumers. For ECA to perform its role, we must have strong and sustainable working relationships with all stakeholders.

Government stakeholders and regulators are critical – particularly those connected to the COAG Energy Council – since it is these elected representatives and officials that hold the policy and regulatory levers in energy markets. Our ability to constructively engage with these bodies is more critical than ever due to the scale of regulatory reform under way on various aspects of energy policy with a strong lens on affordability and sustainability.

We engage with the increasingly diverse group of organisations with an interest in energy policy that currently sit outside the energy market’s regulatory framework.

To ensure the voice of consumers is heard, we constructively engage with the media who help shape the national debates about energy policy and regulation.

<b>Consumers</b>	Residential and Small Business consumers Consumer and community organisations
<b>Energy Industry</b>	Energy Market Participants Professional and Industry Associations Next generation energy and related service providers
<b>Energy Ombudsmen</b>	Jurisdictional schemes Australia & New Zealand Energy and Water Ombudsman Network (ANZEWN)
<b>Government and Market Bodies</b>	COAG Energy Council Commonwealth policy agencies Jurisdictional Ministers, policy makers and regulators Australian Energy Market Commission (AEMC) Australian Energy Regulator (AER) Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO)
<b>Research Community</b>	Academics Grant recipients Think tanks Other experts
<b>Media</b>	Energy industry media Mainstream media New media

**ECA Context**

**Long term interests of Consumers**

Fundamental to all our work is effectively representing the long term interests of residential and small business consumers, ensuring their voice is



heard by industry, regulators and governments. The objective of promoting the long term interests of consumers of energy with respect to the price, quality, safety, reliability and security of supply of energy services is not unique to ECA. It is the overarching objective of the Australian Energy Market Agreement and the objective included in each of the three laws that give effect to that agreement. The objective in each of the three laws uses economic efficiency as the means to the end of promoting the long term interests of consumers.

This objective is met when prices are commensurate with the level of quality, reliability, safety and security of supply that consumers prefer and that consumers pay no more than is necessary for their energy services.

### Consumer Context

Across Australia, residential and small business consumers rely on energy as an essential service. Almost all homes are connected to the networked electricity grid, while almost half also rely on the gas supply network to meet their energy needs. In some jurisdictions, particularly Victoria, gas penetration rates amongst households are significantly higher. Small business consumers require reliable, quality energy services to meet the needs of their customers and operate their businesses successfully.

The core energy consumer experience for the majority of people has not changed markedly in the past ten years, as most people continue to purchase an energy-only product from a major retailer, differentiated only by pricing discounts and payment terms. However, the average energy bill has approximately doubled in the same period. And while some consumers now have digital meters, the benefits of this new technology for consumer convenience and control are not yet being realised to full potential.

This escalation in energy costs has caused consumers to question whether they are getting value for money from their energy services, and to invest in energy efficiency and on-site generation technologies to manage their consumption and gain control over their costs.

The opportunities for residential and small business consumers to use, manage, generate and store energy vary depending on where they are located, their property tenure and financial circumstances.

Vulnerable consumers or those in hardship frequently lack the financial resources to replace inefficient appliances, improve the insulation of their homes or invest in rooftop solar panels to manage increasing energy costs. Similarly, tenants usually are dependent on the landlord for opportunities to manage their consumption with energy efficient lighting or appliances, insulation or rooftop solar panels.

Meanwhile, highly engaged and comparatively wealthier residential and small business consumers are transforming how they live and work through the use of technology and digital connectivity. Many consumers are looking to engage with energy service providers through non-traditional digital channels including social media, mobile, the cloud and online peer-to-peer platforms. These residential and small business consumers are driving new opportunities for the development of the energy services market.





## Consumer Advocacy Context

In this context, there is significant demand for consumer advocates to engage, and to bring their knowledge and experience to the resolution of energy market issues. It is widely acknowledged that policy and regulatory processes are lengthy and complex, in stark contrast with the speed of technological and market developments. More effective models of consumer engagement are emerging in response to the increasing amount and complexity of regulatory change.

Much of the advocacy effort to date has reflected the experience of people who are vulnerable at one end of the spectrum and highly engaged technology adopters at the other. There is an opportunity to build on this advocacy and to develop a national consumer voice for all residential and small business consumers across the spectrum.

There is also an opportunity to support the consumer advocacy community by enabling greater collaboration and sharing evidence-based knowledge about energy market developments and their impact on the long term interests of consumers.

## Electricity Market Context

The recent history of the electricity market has been dominated by a number of policy debates. These include the costs associated with investments in new network capacity and higher levels of reliability; the implications of the rapid take-up of rooftop solar panels by households; how to understand and respond to the unanticipated fall in average demand from the grid due to energy efficiency measures and the decline of manufacturing; and efforts, with mixed results, to move to a cleaner generation mix. At the same time, new entrants with experience in retailing in the telecommunications, grocery and financial services markets have started to enter the market with innovative new energy product and service offerings.

With Australia having signed up to binding international emissions reduction commitments, and the prospect of a mass adoption of battery storage and electric vehicles looking more assured, the pace of change and pressure to respond to new circumstances is only set to increase.

With the delivery of the Finkel Review into the Future Security of the National Electricity Market (NEM) and an agreement to implement 49 out of 50 recommendations made by the report, much activity in this area is expected in the coming years. The report focusses in increased security and reliability, transition to lower emissions and cleaner energy, more efficient gas markets, improved systems planning, stronger governance and importantly, provides a clear and authoritative rationale for why consumers need to be considered as a key part of the proposed reform equation.

This changing environment creates new risks and opportunities for residential and small business consumers. Given the emissions intensity of current electricity generation, pursuing carbon reduction targets will put upward pressure on electricity prices. For this reason, it will be essential that residential and small businesses have greater opportunities to conveniently manage and control their electricity costs, through energy efficiency and demand management.



Energy affordability is a key national priority. The implications for the changing source of energy supply on network security and reliability and its impact on energy prices has been taken up by the federal and jurisdictional governments and regulators as a priority area for action. There is increasing reform focus on retailers pricing transparency, competitiveness and providing consumers real-time control over their energy consumption data and enabling them to negotiate better deals.

There are opportunities to better align pricing and incentives for investment, to help consumers benefit from the transformation underway in energy markets. These changes could also support the development of a market for next generation energy services that combine distributed generation, storage and control services with network delivered services.

Through its National Energy Productivity Plan, the COAG Energy Council is working towards improving energy productivity by a targeted 40 per cent, through a range of initiatives. The benefits of improved energy productivity will be an increase in competitiveness of the Australian economy, including small business; consumers better able to manage their electricity costs; and a reduction in carbon emissions.

### **Gas Market Context**

Changes underway in gas markets have altered the relative cost advantages of using gas compared with electricity. This has occurred as Australia has become one of the world's major exporters of gas, resulting in increases in retail gas prices for Australian residential and small business consumers, as a result of global demand.

The COAG Energy Council, drawing on reviews by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC), and the Australian Energy Market Commission (AEMC), is progressing a reform agenda under its Gas Market Reform Plan. The Finkel Review has also focused in gas market efficiency, including security over long term gas supply and improved transparency over gas industry performance.

### **Policy and Regulatory Context**

The COAG Energy Council has oversight of the sector and works in collaboration with the three market bodies established to govern the National Energy Market:

- Australian Energy Market Commission (AEMC) – the rule maker and market development adviser
- Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) – the system operator
- Australian Energy Regulator (AER) – the economic regulator and compliance/enforcement agency.

ECA has been established to promote residential and small business consumer interests and works closely with the COAG Energy Council, the AEMC, AEMO and the AER on energy matters of national significance for consumers. All four institutions share ECA's objective of the 'long term interests of consumers' and ECA is actively engaged with the market bodies to progress this objective.



The members of the COAG Energy Council are committed to the policy intent and objective of the Australian Energy Market Agreement, reaffirmed in the Council's response to the 2015 Review of Governance Arrangements for Australian Energy Markets<sup>3</sup> (Governance Review).

49 out of 50 recommendations of the Finkel Review have been accepted by the Energy Council.

The Energy Security Board with an independent Chair, Deputy Chair and the heads of the AEMC, AEMO and the AER has created a body with the responsibility for whole of system oversight for energy security and reliability of the NEM and to improving long term planning.

The ACCC is also actively interested in the affordability and competitiveness landscape and launched an enquiry into Electricity Supply and Prices. ECA provided a submission to this enquiry on behalf of energy consumers.

Jurisdictions are actively pursuing reform. The Victorian Retail Electricity and Gas Inquiry focused on sending clearer signals, empowering consumers and providing greater transparency.

The focus on Behind the Meter suppliers continues with an industry led development of a Code of Conduct for these suppliers.

Energy security and reliability remains a key focus for the COAG Energy Council and other regulatory bodies including AEMO and AEMC. A Clean Energy Target continues to remain in focus.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://scer.govspace.gov.au/workstreams/energy-market-reform/review-of-governance-arrangements>



## Looking Ahead – Summary of Strategic Priorities for 2018/19

### Context for 2018/19 Plan

**Research Engage Influence** - ECA's work plan is aligned with the Board's Strategic Energy Market Priorities and Vision and builds on the work undertaken in prior years. This plan is designed to support ECA's capacity to promote the long term interests of consumers and to provide and support strong, coordinated, collegiate evidence based consumer advocacy on matters affecting residential and small business consumers in the National Energy Market.

ECA requires a diverse range of skills in its staff and for strong coordination and a collegiate culture among those skill groups in order to achieve its objectives. Staff are organised into functional Directorates to leverage the highly skilled small team.

ECA's Directorates undertake the following activities:

- Research and Grants
- Communications and Advocacy
- Strategic Stakeholder Engagement
- Governance and Operations

ECA works collaboratively with external parties as well as between ECA divisions to achieve its goals.

**Annexure 1 provides an overview of the role and purpose of each Directorate.**

Our work is underpinned by strong and effective working relationships with stakeholders. We use evidence to engage, communicate with and influence:

- Consumers and other Consumer Advocacy Bodies
- Energy industry participants
- Regulatory and policy bodies and government

We undertake robust research, build jurisdictional expertise and fund grants to build sector capability.

We provide evidence based submissions on regulatory and policy matters.

We contribute to the work of the COAG Energy Council, working closely with the Senior Council of Officials to provide evidence and insights about customer experience in the market to inform policy. We also participate in Consumer Councils and bring a national energy consumer perspective to industry for a including those run by Retail Providers and Networks and Regulatory Working Parties.



To support our effective performance and multi-dimensional approach to positively making a difference in the long-term interests of consumers, we implement efficient and robust governance processes within ECA’s own operating environment.

**We held a Board Strategy Day in May 2017 to inform our 2018/19 Plan.** We carried out an analysis of areas that may impact consumers in the future. These are represented below.

political	economic	society	technology
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunities exist to influence policy to benefit long term consumer interests</li> <li>• Jurisdictional differences become more entrenched</li> <li>• Increasing discussion on emissions reduction policy</li> <li>• Need for national energy policy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Declining real &amp; disposable incomes</li> <li>• Potentially higher consumer energy costs as industry &amp; some consumers leave the network to become more self-sufficient</li> <li>• Move away from publicly listed companies as dominant players – increased lack of transparency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ageing population</li> <li>• Increasing inequality</li> <li>• Consumer service expectations – gap between experience in energy &amp; other sectors</li> <li>• Institutional disaffection</li> <li>• Increasing desire for consumer control</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing use of batteries</li> <li>• Greater diversity</li> <li>• Declining costs, especially solar</li> <li>• Minituarisation &amp; falling unit costs</li> </ul>



## Structure of our 2018/19 Plan

This plan is intended as information for key external stakeholders on our strategic priorities and also as a document for ECA internally on key focus areas and high level deliverables for each focus area.

**The plan consists of 3 main elements:**

1. **Strategic Focus Areas for 2018/19.**

These are areas where there is a strategic opportunity to improve consumer outcomes. **To do this, we will leverage our expertise across ECA to effect significant change in the long-term interests of consumers.**

The key areas are outlined below and are informed by:

- The outputs of the strategy day with the Board
- Current reform context and priorities for electricity, gas and regulation
- Evidence base – what our consumers are telling us – from our research, our grants program, and from our regular survey of energy consumers

2. **Business as Usual Activities (BAU) and specific Projects** – these initiatives and key measures of success are summarised in the following pages.

3. **Ad-hoc and responsive** – ECA's ability to respond to policy debates and contribute to raising awareness and building momentum on key areas impacting long term consumers' interests is critical to ECA being an effective agent of change on behalf of our constituents. Our ability to do this depends on our ability to leverage these opportunities in a timely and effective manner. Our credibility, relationships and policy and economic analysis strengths are fundamental to enabling this. *Item 3 is not expanded in further detail.*



## Details of the 2018/19 Program

### 1. STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS – CROSS DIRECTORATE INTIATIVES

FOCUS AREA - OUTCOMES FOR CONSUMERS	STRATEGIC GOAL
<b>Consumer Confidence in Retail Markets</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The policy and regulatory framework facilitates innovation that benefits consumers</li> <li>• Consumers are confidently engaging in competitive energy markets</li> </ul>
<b>Consumer Preferences Driving Network Revenue Determinations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting the evolution of business strategies that reflect consumer preferences and assist the development of the competitive market</li> <li>• Continue to foster collaborative approaches to engagement with networks, regulators and consumers</li> </ul>
<b>Consumers are Satisfied with Affordability of Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring vulnerable customers pay no more than they need to for energy</li> <li>• Energy efficiency is increasingly being integrated into all service offers</li> </ul>
<b>Consumers Confidently Participate in Energy Markets</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using a variety of approaches, advocate for legislative and rule changes to ensure the consumer protection keeps pace with market developments</li> <li>• Consumers are confident that they can pursue new opportunities in the market</li> </ul>
<b>Consumers Confident with Security and Reliability of Electricity Supply</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contribute to implementation of the Finkel Blueprint outcomes:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Increased Security</li> <li>– Future Reliability</li> <li>– Rewarding consumers</li> <li>– Lower emissions</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Work with policy bodies, jurisdictions, regulators and other market participants to achieve outcomes that reflect the long term interests of consumers</li> </ul>

We will leverage our research and analytics capability to do this.

**Success Measure:** ECA’s success in delivering outcomes for consumers identified in the above goals will be evidenced by indicators in the broader marketplace such as scores in our energy consumer sentiment survey for metrics such as value for money and confidence in the market.



## 2. SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES AND STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

The leadership of the following ECA activities and initiatives have been allocated to specific internal Directorates within ECA and details are presented under the Directorates for internal management purposes.

### Research Directorate

#### The Foresighting Forum

Each year Energy Consumers Australia convenes a Foresighting Forum, usually in February/March. The Foresighting Forum brings together the whole energy sector to work collaboratively on key issues affecting the long-term interests of consumers. We bring all stakeholders together in one room to focus on “wicked problems” with consumer interests at the centre of discussions. Each Foresighting Forum has a central theme around which participants can identify the evidence, the policies, programs and initiatives that are critical to effecting change in the long term interests of consumers.

#### Research

ECA will continue to develop a robust, relevant and comprehensive evidence base to inform policy and regulatory decisions. Our on-going research program consists of the Energy Consumer Sentiment Survey and the Small and Medium Business Retail Tariff Tracker, both of which are national surveys that are undertaken twice each year. The survey data and the retail prices are publicly available.

- **Energy Consumer Sentiment Index** is an ongoing barometer of the health of the energy services market from the perspective of consumers. It is designed to provide information on household and small business consumer sentiment with a focus on the three key areas of satisfaction, confidence and activity, including investment in distributed energy and energy management. As the survey is undertaken every six months it tracks changes in sentiment over time and detect trends which can inform energy market and policy development in the long-term interests of consumers.
- **SME retail tariff tracker** is the only national database on small business retail electricity and gas prices. Based on these prices, Energy Consumers Australia publishes our analysis of the annual electricity and gas bills of small businesses, and identifies jurisdictional differences. It is a valuable source of information for advocates, analysts and decision-makers.

#### Grants Program

- Through the Grants Program Energy Consumers Australia contributes to the building of knowledge, as well as the capacity of organisations to advocate on behalf of residential and small business consumers at national and jurisdictional levels. Energy Consumers Australia funds projects that are high quality, collaborative, innovative and deliver an evidence base to support tangible benefits for residential and small business consumers.





## Strategic Initiatives

We will continue to develop the evidence base to improve affordability for households, and in particular low income and vulnerable households, through our *Power Shift* project.

The *Power Shift* project is supported by a \$1.8m grant from the Commonwealth Government. Our approach is to identify the policies, programs and initiatives that if widely implemented would better assist consumers manage their energy bills, and build greater confidence in the energy market. We see industry playing a bigger role than it has in the past, in addition to the valuable work that has been funded over a number of years through the Australian, State and Local Governments to support improvements in energy efficiency, energy productivity and sustainability.

The Power Shift project and our advocacy and policy work will continue to contribute to the Australian Government's **National Energy Productivity Plan 2015-2030 (NEPP) initiatives** to make choice easier and support best practice services for vulnerable consumers (items 3 and 4 of the NEPP respectively).

ACTIVITIES	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	DUE
<b>Conduct and develop annual Foresighting Forum</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participant satisfaction with 2019 Foresighting Forum</li> </ul>	Mar 2018
<b>Energy Consumer Sentiment Index</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Publish the Energy Consumer Index survey</li> <li>Engage energy industry on the results and strategies to improve outcomes</li> <li>Communicate findings to governments and market bodies</li> </ul>	July/Dec 2019
<b>SME tariff tracker</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop an SME tariff tracker</li> <li>Promote the tracker with small business, industry and regulators</li> </ul>	Sept 2018 Feb 2019
<b>Grants Program supports sector needs and meets our governance obligations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grants rounds held and administered in a timely manner, achieve intended outcomes and are acquitted in a timely manner</li> <li>Process and governance continuous improvement</li> </ul>	June 2019
<b>COAG National Energy Productivity Plan 2015-2030 items 3 and 4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with Commonwealth government to achieve the work plan for the two COAG NEPP priorities</li> </ul>	June 2019
<b>Powershift Program</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Powershift program objectives are delivered and program governance obligations are met</li> </ul>	June 2019



## Advocacy & Communications Directorate

### Strategic Initiatives

- Supporting the implementation of recommendation of major policy reviews – e.g. Supporting changes to the policy and regulatory framework to facilitate innovation.
- Reframing the way energy efficiency is viewed in the energy market

ACTIVITIES	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	DUE
<b>Develop and communicate an overall assessment of the retail markets for electricity and gas</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distil key findings from ECSS, consumer consultations and other work and identify implications for decision-makers</li> <li>• Champion innovation and best practice in energy and other markets</li> </ul>	<p>Dec 2018</p> <p>June 2019</p>
<b>Network business strategy aligned with consumer preferences and needs and is consistent with the transformation agenda</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with consumer advocates, network businesses, market bodies and governments to align network business strategy with consumer preferences and needs and is consistent with the transformation agenda.</li> </ul>	<p>June 2019</p>
<b>Influence for impact - national agenda in key areas of priority</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leverage communications channels, including media, to deliver impactful messages on key priority areas and influence policy, raise awareness and generate debate to benefit consumers.</li> <li>• ECA representation at key conferences and forums</li> <li>• Finalise timely and impactful submissions using ECA voice and branding.</li> </ul>	<p>June 2019</p>
<b>Representing ECA on key NEM forums</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contributing ECA's evidence and analysis to these processes</li> <li>• Build effective relations and maintain credibility to enable influence</li> </ul>	<p>June 2019</p>
<b>Empowered energy consumer advocacy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use digital capability (e.g. video and audio production) to promote insights from ECA grant funded projects, research and other events</li> <li>• Enhance digital collaboration platforms to support knowledge sharing and collaboration for consumer advocates</li> </ul>	<p>June 2019</p>



ACTIVITIES	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	DUE
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide information that is accessible to different consumers preferences and helps energy consumers navigate the energy market and complementary to Government and industry responsibilities.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Maintain ECA's external online community and profile</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain engagement with online community</li> </ul>	<p>June 2019</p>



## Director Strategic Engagement (CEO Office)

### Strategic Initiatives

- Conduct a review of ECA's Stakeholder Map and Stakeholder Engagement Strategy to ensure they continue to be aligned with ECA's strategic priorities.
- Develop and implement a program of activities to deepen shared understanding and more effective collaboration across the energy sector including specifically with retailers, with a view to enabling streamlined approaches and expedited outcomes, that better meet the long term interests of consumers.
- Effective sector engagement – innovation and small business
- Develop an approach to assess and encourage consumer engagement practice and progress by the energy sector to increase focus on consumers' expressed preferences and concerns that costs are no more than is necessary to meet those preferences.

ACTIVITIES	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	DUE
<b>Progress stakeholder engagement and Management Framework</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistent stakeholder management principles across ECA</li> </ul>	Dec 2018
<b>Retail Engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working collaboratively with energy retailers to ensure transparent, easily-understood consumer-facing information regarding energy offers for residential and small business customers</li> <li>• Contribute to the development of Behind the Meter Code of Conduct</li> </ul>	June 2019
<b>Innovation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and engage effectively with innovations to promote and protect the long term interests of energy consumers</li> </ul>	June 2019
<b>Small Business Engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing engagement in the small business sector to provide pragmatic targeted outcomes for Small to Medium Enterprises (SMEs)</li> </ul>	June 2019
<b>Network engagement practice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Processes established and resources developed for consistently sharing knowledge, experience and our capability with network contacts</li> </ul>	June 2019



### Development Projects (CEO Office)

Development Projects within the CEO Office are focussed on engaging with, responding to and initiating work to promote the long term interests of energy consumers.

#### Strategic Initiatives

- Data portability – allowing consumers to use their data to get better outcomes, make better choices and to support market innovations
- Thought leadership to contribute towards new policy and regulatory practice focussing on consumer protection
- Expert technical perspectives on behalf of consumers to network and regulatory processes for a more dynamic market

ACTIVITIES	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	DUE
Expert advice on economic and policy analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide expert advice on a range of technical matters</li> </ul>	June 2019
Thought leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support ECA in its contributions to energy policy and regulatory landscape in the long term interests of consumers</li> </ul>	June 2019



## Governance and Operations Directorate

### Strategic Initiatives

- Develop effective governance and operations of ECA through ensuring a strong governance framework supported by operational policies and processes.
- Develop ECA’s systems and technical resources to support staff to carry out the work of the organisation.
- Develop budgets and support ECA’s management team to prudently manage ECA’s resources, budgets and people to build a sustainable and capable organisation.

ACTIVITIES	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	DUE
<b>Develop effective governance and operations</b>	• Business Plan and three-year rolling Budget	Aug 2018
	• Adhere to the timetable for reporting, risk management and policy review.	June 2019
<b>Refine ECA’s systems and technical resources</b>	• Refined systems and processes lead to efficiencies and improvements	June 2019
	• Enhance Records Management processes	June 2019
<b>Develop and prudently manage ECA’s resources, budget and people</b>	• Annual expenditure within + /- 5% of budget	June 2018
	• Bench mark Staff satisfaction	Apr 2019
	• Professional Development Program is maintained	June 2019

# Annexure 1: Role and Purpose of ECA Directorates

ECA requires a diverse range of skills in its staff and for strong coordination and a collegiate culture among those skill groups in order to achieve its objectives. Staff are organised into functional Directorates to leverage the highly skilled small team and work collaboratively to achieve ECA's objectives.

## Research Directorate

The Research Directorate is focused on building national jurisdictional expertise and capacity, building knowledge to influence policy development and educate consumers, and funding and managing grants to build knowledge and sectoral capacity.

The three areas of ongoing activity are:

- the annual Foresighting Forum
- research that builds the evidence base on the lived experience of households and small businesses in energy markets
- the Grants Program

## Grants Program

Through the Grants Program Energy Consumers Australia contributes to the building of knowledge, as well as the capacity of organisations to advocate on behalf of residential and small business consumers at national and jurisdictional levels. Energy Consumers Australia funds projects that are high quality, collaborative, innovative and deliver an evidence base to support tangible benefits for residential and small business consumers.

## Advocacy & Communications Directorate

The Advocacy and Communications Directorate uses evidence to influence policy, regulation and business practice to improve outcomes for energy consumers. The Directorate works in an open and collaborative way with individuals and organisations across the national energy market to identify issues, develop solutions and empower consumers.

ECA'S advocacy in 2017/18 will rest on two core propositions: that consumers pay no more than is necessary for their energy services as we transition to a cleaner economy and that no one is left without the energy services they need to be part of the mainstream economy and society in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Australia.

The Directorate manages the way ECA communicates with external audiences in a clear and balanced way to further its advocacy agenda and build the collective capability and influence of the energy consumer advocacy community.

## Director Strategic Engagement (CEO Office)

The Director leads engagement on the ECA's strategic priority areas with a focus on achieving innovative outcomes in collaboration with others.

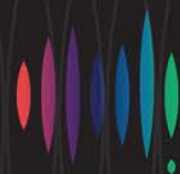
ECA's stakeholders include residential and small business consumers, consumer advocates, governments, jurisdictional and national regulators, the energy industry and energy ombudsmen.

## Development Projects (CEO Office)

Initiating work to contribute to new policy approaches, and regulatory practices to promote the long term interests of energy consumers.

## Governance and Operations Directorate

Governance and Operations is focused on building the capacity and effectiveness of ECA.



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AUSTRALIA**