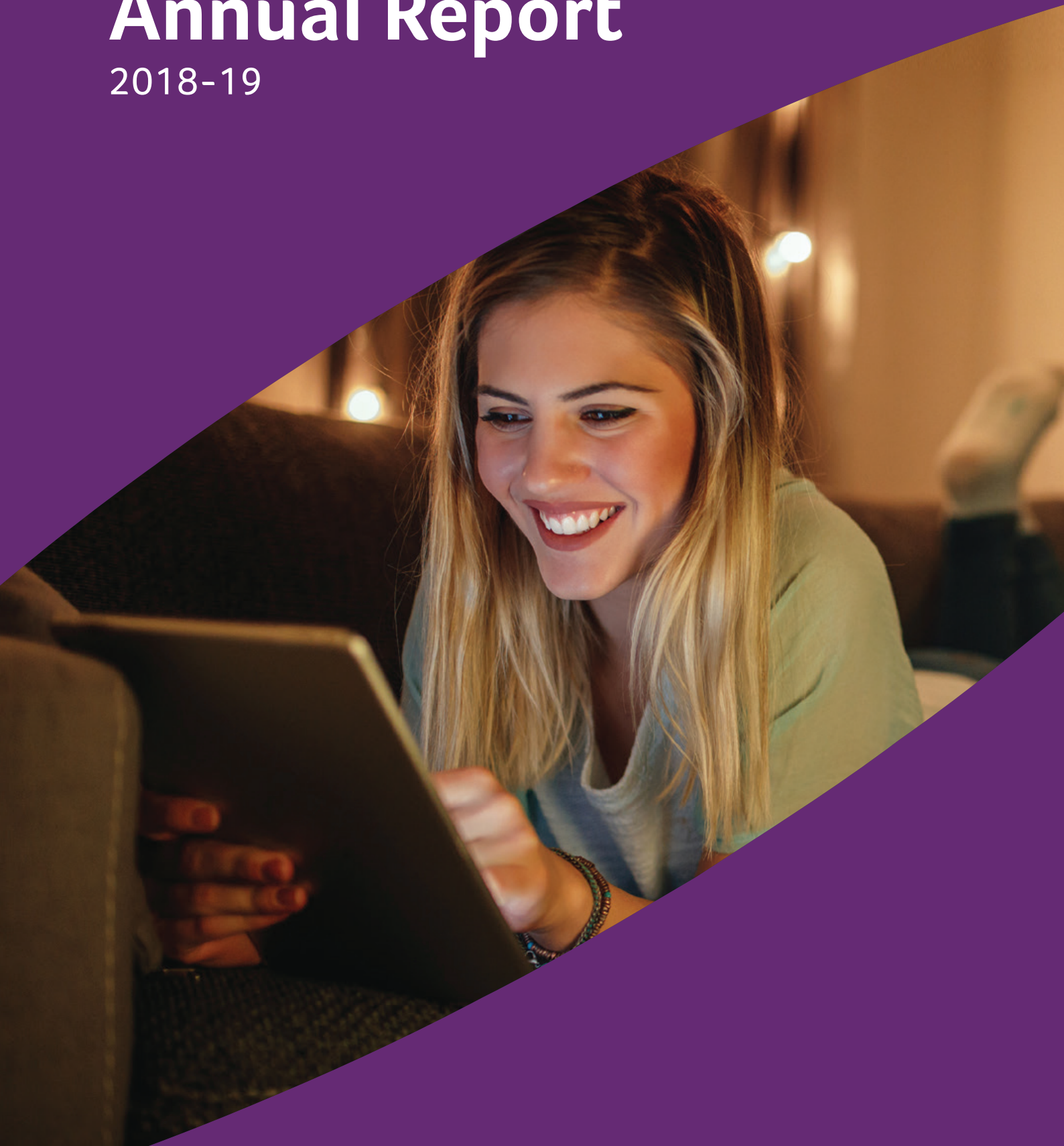




# Annual Report

2018-19



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“ I think I have the same problem as other pensioners. I can only put my heater on for one hour a day and have to wrap in a blanket as the bills are so high.

- Household consumer, Leopold, Victoria

“ Our electricity bill is of increasing concern. We have installed solar panels and a Rinnai solar electric hot water system. I monitor our meter daily, sometimes 2-3 times a day and keep a record.

- Household consumer, Otway Ranges, Victoria



“ I've looked into solar. I have not got the roof space to put enough solar on to really give me any benefit for the cost of it. You can't turn freezers off and on because it all comes under safe food program, and things have to be kept at -18 degrees constant.

- Small Business owner, Mt Isa, Queensland



“ We painted our roof white in an effort to get our electricity bills down.

- Household consumers, Mt Isa





## FROM THE CHAIR

There is no doubt that the outcomes for consumers in the energy sector are poor. Affordability is a major problem and consumers don't feel that services engage them as individuals, with tailored responses to their needs. They also feel there is a lack of information and resources to help them. Yet they have done an enormous amount through their own ingenuity, creativity and resourcefulness to adapt to high energy prices and try to manage their energy use.

Early in our organisational life, we identified that these issues could be traced back to deep-seeded systemic problems, and right at the centre of these was a failure to listen to consumers' voices – indeed this was recognised by government and was part of the rationale for our establishment as an organisation in the first place.

For the past four years, we have been talking about the need for a fundamental reset in the thinking about what is in energy consumers' long-term interests. That reset needed to start with better listening – directly – to the voice of consumers, so we went about building a research and engagement approach that allows us to listen carefully, and then carry those voices into the arena of public policy and sector decision making.

The voice of consumers has shaped our approach to prioritising our work based on three core principles:

Consumers want to see much better value for money for their energy services; they want energy to be individualised around their needs; and they want the system to be optimised so that we're being smarter about the way we create and deliver energy. We have carried those priorities into the important review work that has happened over the past two years – both nationally and in jurisdictions – the *Finkel Review*, it now shapes our approach to working with industry, regulators and governments in reform implementation.

Because we take an evidence-based approach to advocacy, I am particularly proud to say that in 2019, virtually all of our research streams are now embedded into the regulatory and decision-making processes of government and regulatory bodies. The *Energy Consumer Sentiment Survey* now informs the *Retail Competition Review*, the *State of the Energy Market* reports, the AEMO's National



Forecasting and the Energy Security Board's *Strategic Energy Plan*; while our *SME Retail Tariff Tracker* was a key input to the ACCC review.

Plugging the consumer voice into the regulatory framework in this highly structured way will underpin long-term structural and cultural change that must happen in the energy sector.

We have had some wonderful contributors at all levels of our organisation, and we bid farewell to three Board members this year and warmly welcomed three new members. I would like to thank Steve Graham, Catherine Cooper and Clare Petre who each made enormous contributions to our organisation from our establishment. Much of the success we've had would not have been possible without them. Our new Directors - Chris Spangaro, Helen Garnett and Gavin Dufty - bring exciting and unique perspectives to our strategic direction. The Board also thanks the outgoing Reference Committee for all their hard work, commitment and insight on issues affecting energy consumers nationally and in their jurisdictions.

On a poignant note, the untimely death of our founding board member Gill Owen prompted the establishment of an international scholarship in her name, to encourage innovative

ideas and initiatives that will improve outcomes for energy consumers. This was a fitting tribute to Gill's tireless energy and the exceptional intellect that she applied to improving outcomes for the vulnerable. The first *Gill Owen Scholarship* was awarded this year for a project focussed on regulatory and advocacy approaches to increase the benefits of competition in Australia's retail electricity market. We look forward to seeing the results of his work.

Finally, I want to again commend the incredible work of our staff in 2018-19. Led by our CEO Rosemary Sinclair, they have navigated fast moving change this year and delivered excellent work in progressing our priorities with a clear eyed and determined focus on the consumer interest.

**Louise Sylvan AM**  
*Chair*  
Energy Consumers Australia

***"Because we take an evidence-based approach to advocacy, I am particularly proud to say that in 2019, virtually all of our research streams are now embedded into the regulatory and decision-making processes of Government and regulatory bodies."***





## FROM THE CEO

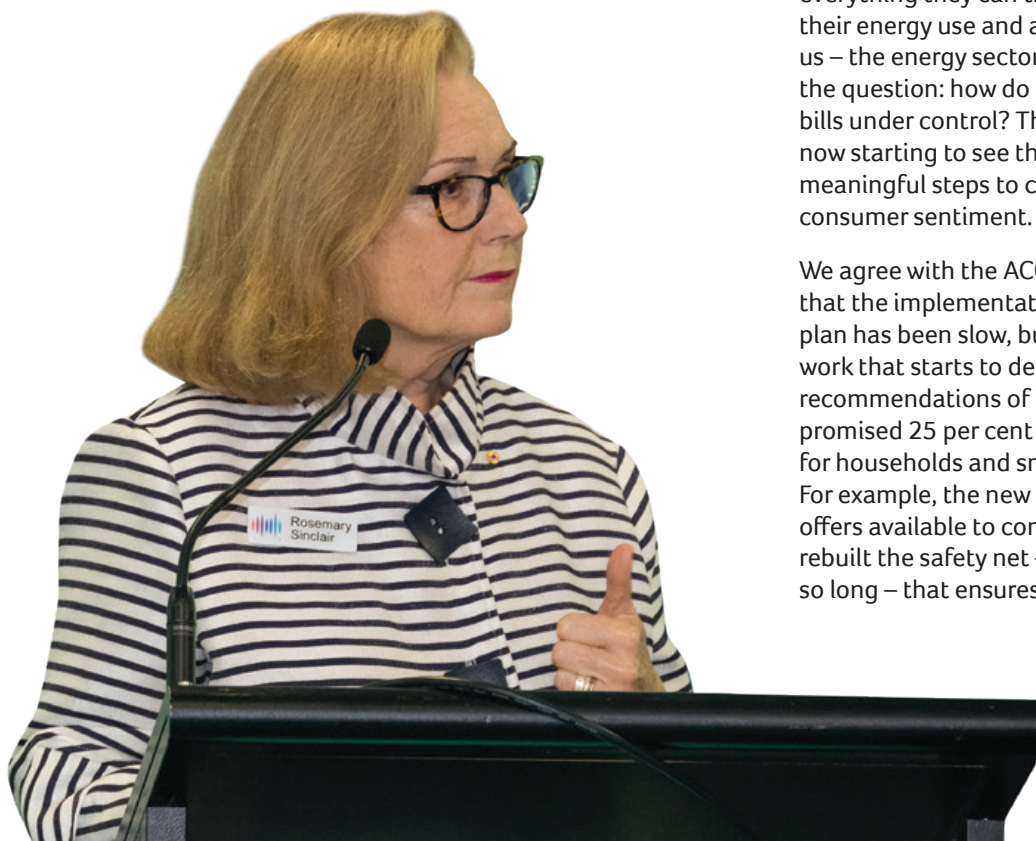
Following an extensive period of review in the energy sector from 2016-2018, this year saw us take some early steps in the transformation and modernisation of Australia's energy system. This transformation has been happening for some time, with many more consumers taking matters into their own hands after a decade-long period of energy price rises.

When we think of that consumer-led change in the energy sector, usually solar panels, batteries and other technology come to mind, but the reality is that not all consumers can afford these technological investments. My reference point for consumer-led

change comes from our *Community Listening Project* this year, where consumers in Mount Isa told us stories about painting their roof white to reduce their reliance on power. Talk about painting a picture!

Consumers are telling us they've done everything they can think of to reduce their energy use and are looking to us – the energy sector – for answers to the question: how do I get my power bills under control? Thankfully, we are now starting to see the sector take meaningful steps to catch up with consumer sentiment.

We agree with the ACCC's assessment that the implementation of its reform plan has been slow, but we have seen work that starts to deliver some of the recommendations of its review, which promised 25 per cent price reductions for households and small businesses. For example, the new default market offers available to consumers have rebuilt the safety net – absent for so long – that ensures households





and small businesses won't fall onto unjustifiably expensive deals when their contracts expire.

With so much reform underway, we have focused our work where we have the biggest chance to impact consumers' energy bills by bringing the problems underlying high energy prices to the surface and amplifying their concerns and preferences in the myriad of reform processes underway. In doing so, we have kept a laser-like focus on three key tests, built from what consumers are telling us they want from energy: Will a proposed change better optimise our energy system? Will it deliver a more individualised outcome? And ultimately, the most important test, will it lead to more affordable power?

Given where we are in the regulatory cycle for network companies, we rolled up our sleeves and did the hard work with these businesses to identify savings in their revenue proposals before they went to the Regulator, a step networks have not been prepared to take previously, which is emblematic of positive cultural change.

In the case of Ausgrid – which services the Sydney and Hunter regions – this saw a final decision was more than \$1 billion lower than the initial proposal submitted to the Australian Energy Regulator for the 2019-24 period, wiping around \$150 off many individual consumers' bills. With Ausgrid the first cab off the rank for the next period, this sets a precedent for similar savings in other parts of Australia.

We also saw green shoots of cultural transformation in the sector with *The Energy Charter* launched by energy companies to publicly hold themselves

to account in re-orienting their businesses around the consumer. We played an important steering role in the development of the Charter and agreed to host the Accountability Panel because we think it's important that consumer representatives ensure it delivers real outcomes – that energy companies 'walk the talk', when it comes to culture change.

As we roll into another big year, we will continue to work with government and industry to realise the potential of the review work done by our Chief Scientist and the ACCC, but we will also chart an ambitious course for consumers, lifting our vision to the long term. With so much work underway, we must keep our eye on the big picture modernisation of our energy system, including in how we integrate energy and environmental policy to provide certainty for the road ahead.

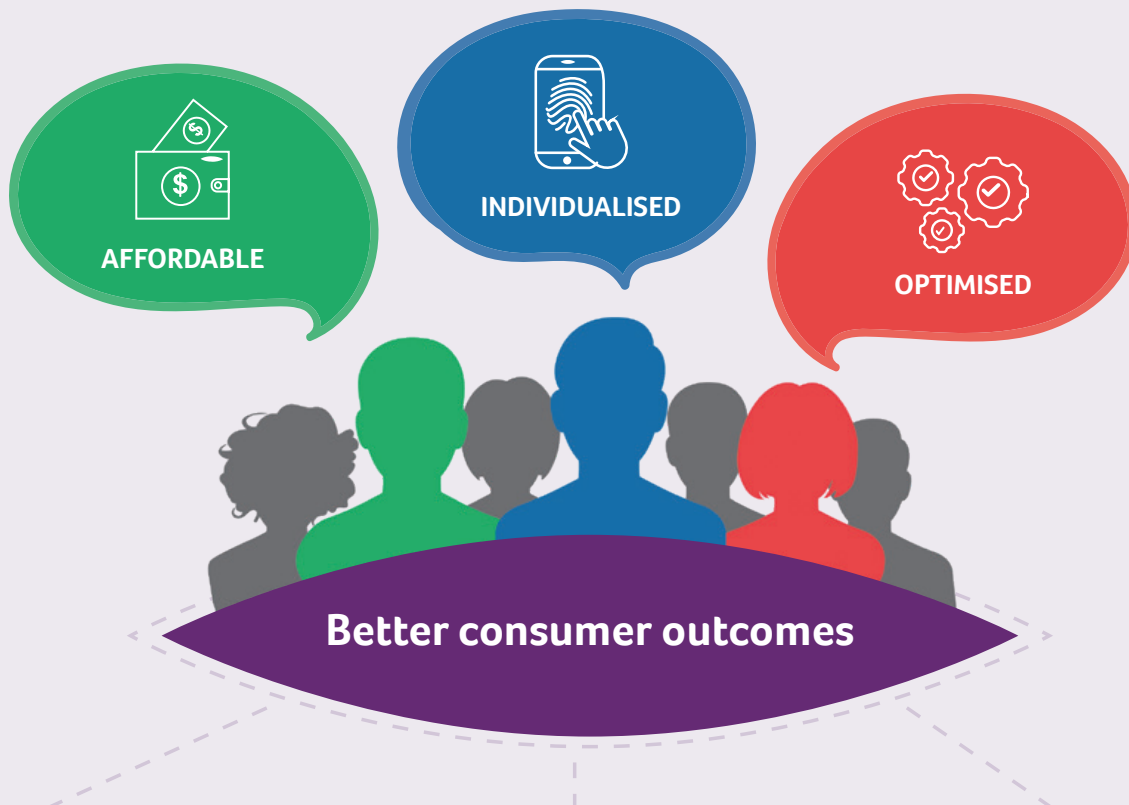
We also look forward to receiving the final review of Energy Consumers Australia, which is scheduled under our Constitution, and future Annual Reports will outline progress against the review recommendations.

I want to thank all of my staff for their determination and commitment to our task, as well as our many stakeholders – particularly other advocates. I'd also like to take this opportunity to thank the Energy Consumers Australia Board who have been a rudder for this organisation since its establishment and I look forward to that continuing with several new Board members recently appointed.

**Rosemary Sinclair AM**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Energy Consumers Australia

***“With so much reform underway, we have focused our work where we have the biggest chance to impact consumers' energy bills by bringing the problems underlying high energy prices to the surface and amplifying their concerns and preferences in the myriad of reform processes underway”***

# CONSUMER VISION FOR THE MARKET



## Affordable

*Affordability must be a constraint on all our investments and decisions about energy – an explicit criterion in our decision-making up and down the supply chain.*

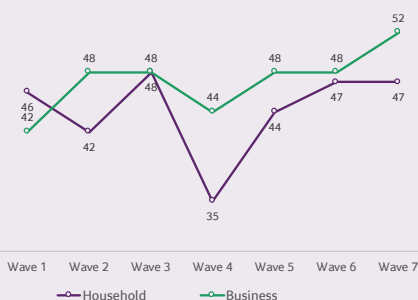
## Individualised

*Energy services must be built around individuals to reflect their unique circumstance; enabling people to manage their own use and costs.*

## Optimised

*Existing and future investment in the power system – networks, generation and retail – must be optimised based on consumers demands. Key to optimising our energy system is providing genuine choice and control to households and small businesses, rewarding their flexibility and embracing them as partners for change.*

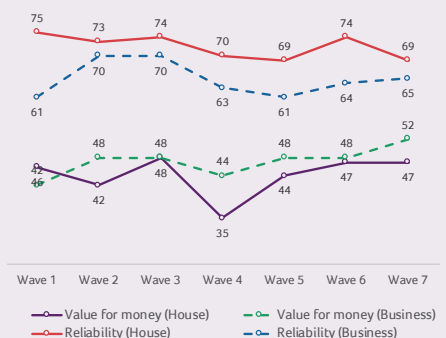
"How would you rate the overall value for money of the products and services provided by your electricity company in the last 6 months?" (% 7 out of 10 or higher)



"How confident do you feel that there is enough easily understood information available for you to make decisions about energy products and services?" (% 7 out of 10 or higher)



Consumer satisfaction with value for money and reliability





# OUR IMPACT AND INFLUENCE

Work throughout 2018-19 that made the energy system more affordable, individualised and optimised for consumers.

**NATIONAL** We worked hard with the ACCC, and now with Governments, on the implementation of the ACCC Review recommendations, with a win for consumers this year being the new default market offers available to consumers which effectively rebuilt the price safety net.

The CSIRO used our Foresighting Forum 2019 to launch its End User Data Model - a central online data platform that will provide publicly accessible fine-grained energy-use data, capturing not just measured consumption, but also key demographic and technological facets of Australian consumers.

**QLD** In November 2018, we travelled to Mt Isa to gather first-hand accounts to better understand the lived experience of energy consumers in the region as part of our Community Listening initiative.

**NSW** After strong engagement, Ausgrid agreed to make its engineers available to our expert to interrogate its latest revenue proposal. Together with the AER and other advocates, we identified savings for consumers which were incorporated into Ausgrid's final proposal wiping \$150 off many consumers' bills.

**ACT** We funded the ACTCOSS to ensure consumer participation and representation in decisions that impact ACT customers.

**SA** We engaged an expert to review the proposal for major investment in new transmission interconnectors between NSW and South Australia. This work challenged the initial plans for network investment and presented less costly alternatives to Electranet, to be considered as part of the regulatory process.

**TAS** We supported stakeholders to pursue an expert review of proposals for investment in the Tasmania-Victoria interconnector.

**VIC** Our work with the Regulator and network led to an innovative new process of live consumer engagement, launched by AusNet services, trialled in their distribution network revenue determination.

## RESEARCH

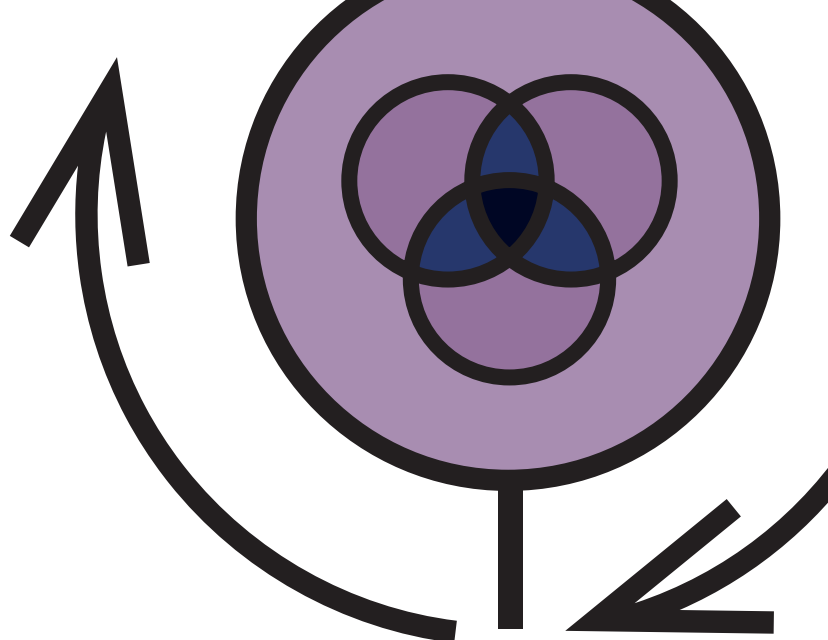
### - Evidence for influence and impact



This year we continued to invest time understanding the current experience of households and small businesses in the National Energy Market and how best to support consumers in managing their energy use and costs.



Our research base continues to grow – both in terms of the program of work and its impact on the decision making of government and energy businesses.



As noted by the Chair in her introduction, our *Energy Consumer Sentiment Survey* now informs specific work by most of the major energy market and regulatory bodies, including:

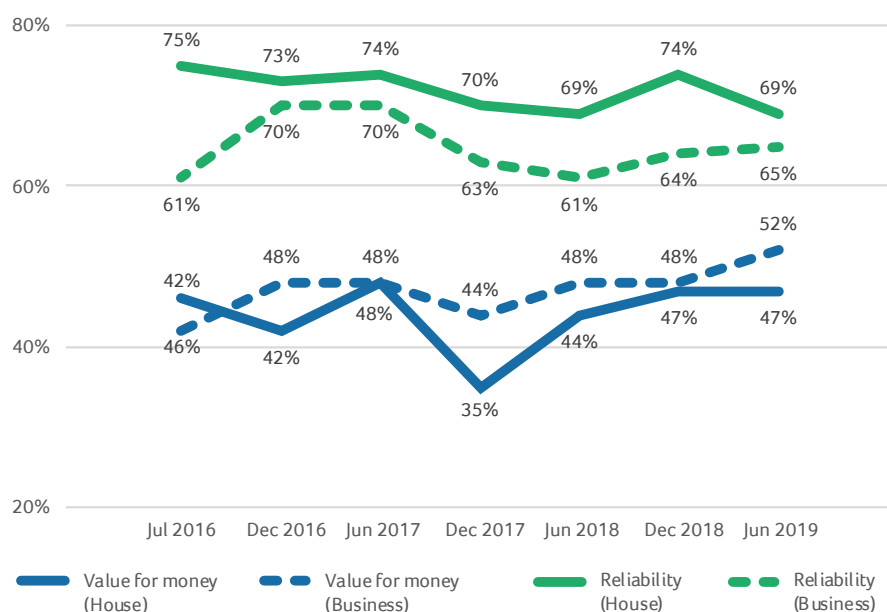
- the Australian Energy Market Commission's *Retail Competition Review* which supports government decision making about deregulation,
- the Australian Energy Regulator in its annual reporting in the state of the energy markets and the performance of retail markets,
- the Australian Energy Market Operator's National Forecasting, and
- the Energy Security Board uses our data on technology uptake as an indicator of consumers actively managing energy demand in their *Strategic Energy Plan*.

The Survey also informs our work on specific regulatory reforms, such as the AER's review of the *Rate of Return Guideline* which was finalised this year. In this process, the Survey proved critical in demonstrating that consumers currently have a much higher concern about price than they do about reliability.



*The Energy Consumer Sentiment Survey is the nation's leading survey of households and small businesses undertaken twice a year that measures whether the energy market is working from the perspective of consumers.*

Figure 1:  
Consumer satisfaction with value for money and reliability



*Consumer confidence that the market is working in their interests remains low at around 30% for households*



The Survey is now complemented by our Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) *Retail Tariff Tracker* which has matured to become an integral part of our work program and provides a unique, publicly available data set that is also widely used by decision makers. For example, the ACCC used the SME *Retail Tariff Tracker* in its *Retail Electricity Pricing Inquiry*.

### What consumers are telling us

The *Energy Consumer Sentiment Survey* is the nation's leading survey of households and small businesses undertaken twice a year that measures whether the energy market is working from the perspective of consumers.

We published three reports of the results from the Survey this year – the June 2018 results were reported in September; while the December 2018 and June 2019 results were also released.

We continue to see a very big gap between the level of satisfaction with reliability and affordability and this can be seen clearly in Figure 1. Other key results from the most recent survey (June 2019) are:

- Satisfaction with value for money for electricity services is essentially unchanged in NSW and Victoria, but up in all other states and territories, most notably up 10 per cent in Queensland (to 55 per cent) and up eight per cent in South Australia (to 46 per cent). This still leaves every states and territory behind all other comparable services.
- This upswing in household satisfaction with value for money outcomes is reflected in confidence the market is working in consumers' interests with most states steady or improving, off a low base. Queensland saw the biggest increase on this measure, up 15 per cent to 36 per cent.

- Nationally, small businesses' satisfaction with electricity on all measures is up relative to a year earlier and the gap is closing with comparable services.
- Consumer confidence that the market is working in their interests remains low at around 30% for households, while it has increased among small businesses (from 36% to 42%).

### Shining a light on small business energy bills

The data provided in the *SME Retail Tariff Tracker* project is the only available information on small business retail bills. It was pivotal in the analysis undertaken by the ACCC in its *Retail Electricity Pricing Inquiry*. The data is open source, and it can be used as a "comparator" of retail offers by small businesses.

We released our most recent report of this project in June, which showed the impacts on bills of the price reductions that were announced by major retailers to take effect from 1 January 2019.

Small business electricity bills were lower in every jurisdiction in June 2019, compared with a year earlier except in the Northern Territory where they remained largely unchanged.

Small business gas bills were higher in the ACT and Victoria (where gas usage is more widespread) compared with a year earlier, as well as in Tasmania and South Australia. Small business gas bills were lower in Western Australia, Queensland and NSW in June 2019, compared with a year earlier.

### Further research impacting national reform

Understanding consumer decision making was pivotal to our work in two specific areas of national reform, and

**The Survey proved critical in demonstrating that consumers currently have a much higher concern about price than they do about reliability**





we extended on the *Power Shift* work (addressed in the next section of this report) with specific research-based advocacy targeted at:

- electricity distribution network tariff reform, and
- the AER's estimation of the value of customer reliability, which informs network investment decisions, and the reliability settings that signal investment in new generation.

We prioritised these reform areas given their significant impact on the issues consumers tell us matter most to them – particularly energy affordability, control and choice.

### Partnerships with purpose

In 2018-19 we also developed significant new research partnerships:

- with Monash University as partners with AusNet Services and Ausgrid in an Australian Research Council Linkage Grant *Digital energy futures: changing lifestyles and residential demand*;
- as a member of the expert advisory group supporting the International Energy Agency's two-year project on *User-centred Energy Services*, which is being led by an Australian consortium of Monash University and the University of New South Wales; and
- supporting the integration of distributed energy resources work stream of the Australian Renewable Energy Agency through membership of the advisory panel on the ANU project *Community Energy Models* and the Oakley Greenwood project on developing pricing that will support the growth of intermediaries to orchestrate flexibility in energy use.



Lynne Gallagher speaks to the media about the Energy Consumer Sentiment Survey



## POWER SHIFT

- A tool for change

This year was the final year of the Power Shift work which has proven globally significant and instrumental in our engagement with Government and industry, including on the National Energy Productivity Plan.



Power Shift is a body of research providing evidence on which can be built better-targeted, more effective, and innovative energy management services and programs that will help consumers to manage their energy costs.



### A Power Shift

*Power Shift* is funded through a \$2 million grant from the Australian Government.

The findings from *Power Shift* provide an evidence base and pathways to deliver more effective information and assistance to consumers across the range of energy decisions they make.

The objective of *Power Shift* research project can be expressed in simple terms: That households are confident that the actions they take will make their home more comfortable and control their energy bills. Achieving that goal however requires substantial cultural and market change.

The final stage of our *Power Shift* research project has underlined the transformational nature of this work and our discussions with the OECD and International Energy Agency have made clear that this work is globally unique and significant, beyond what we had originally envisaged.

Through our research we have shown precisely how consumer behaviour varies and given us the tools to break down assumptions and see the factors that really drive energy decision making at the household level.

Our research has demonstrated that consumers are trying to manage their energy use but need help to understand how best to do that. To provide effective assistance, the sector must deliver information, tools and services to customers that meet their needs and preferences – solutions that are tailored to their circumstances and their lifestyles.

That is increasingly important to assist households navigate a changing market. We must be able to understand and articulate the value proposition to *that household* of changing their energy habits.

The findings of *Power Shift* are now embedded within our advocacy strategy – that better consumer outcomes rely on three principles:

- affordability – customers are paying no more than they need;
- individualised – customers are able to access information and services on their terms; and
- optimised – consumers are confident that the market is working in their interests – that system decisions include consumers and their assets and reward, not punish them.



*Power Shift is funded through a \$2 million grant from the Australian Government.*



*Providing more effective information – including reviewing bills design and helping consumers eligible for concessions and rebates*





The work has proved incredibly valuable. It is already having a practical impact because it gives genuinely new insight into consumer behaviour and decision making that hasn't been available before, in Australia or around the world.

With many of the reform processes in train, there are entrenched assumptions about how consumers will respond to change. The *Power Shift* work has enabled us to test and clarify those assumptions.

We have also proactively shared the *Power Shift* work with stakeholders to help them communicate more effectively with consumers, in ways that empower and equip them to make more effective energy decisions.

### Power Shift impact on national policy outcomes

An earlier *Power Shift* research report on the multiple impacts of energy efficiency measures demonstrated that the benefits to household health and wellbeing may well outweigh the energy and emissions benefits, and so should be built into the business case. Reports of elderly patients presenting with hypothermia as a result of poorly heated homes underlined the real-world significance of this issue.

We therefore made housing a *Power Shift* priority in 2018/19, amplifying the consumer voice as Ministers considered improving energy performance standards for new housing in the context of the

**Working closely with stakeholders, we convened the Housing Summit in September 2018, attended by CEOs of a number of consumer and community organisations which culminated in a joint statement signed by 36 consumer groups and 21 supporting organisations seeking a national strategy from the COAG Energy Council.**



Housing Summit 2018

*National Energy Productivity Plan*. We commissioned ACIL Allen to develop a paper, based on the *Multiple Impacts Framework Report*, which showed that the status quo was resulting in poor outcomes for consumers and was more expensive for government.

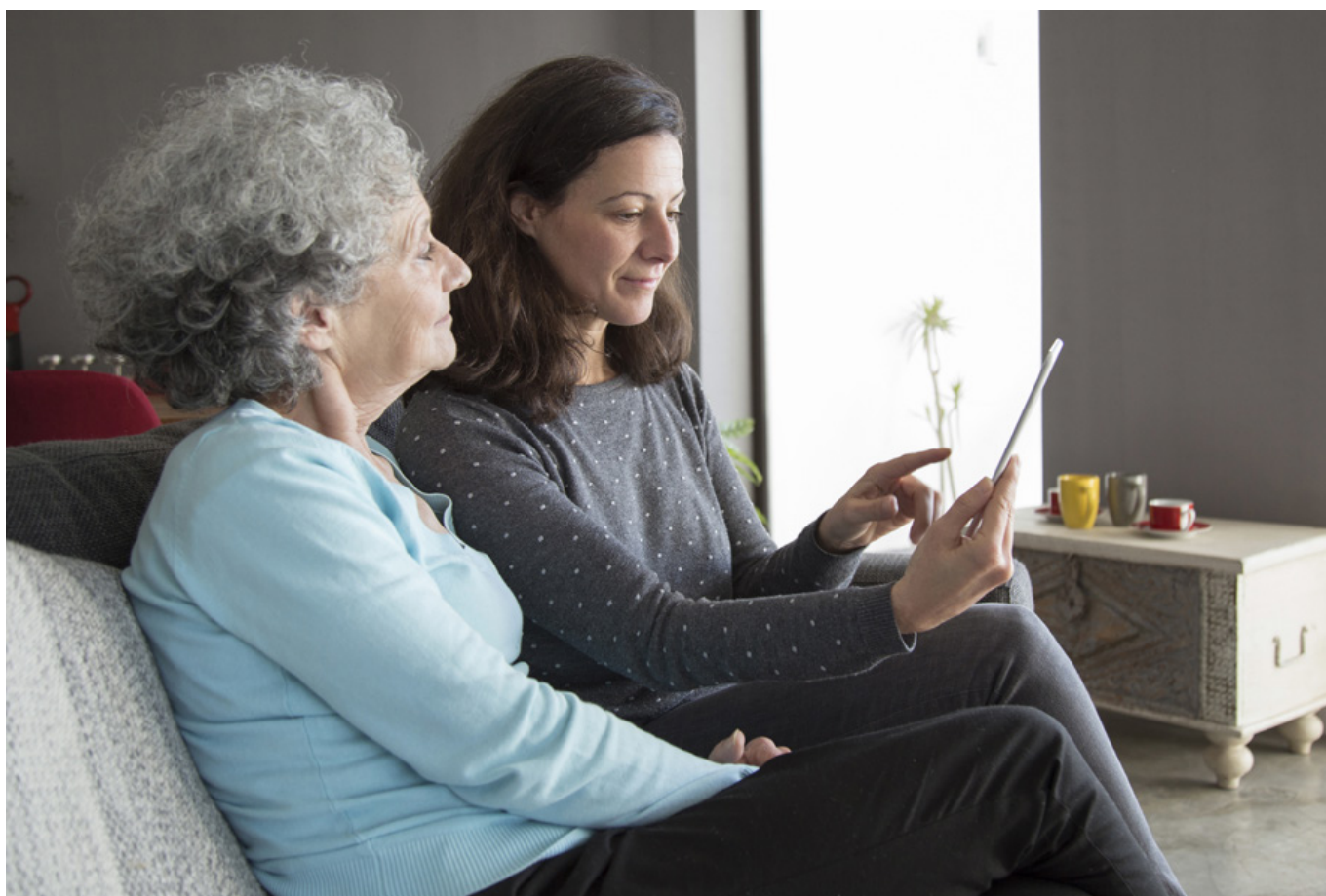
Working closely with stakeholders, we convened the *Housing Summit* in September 2018, attended by CEOs of a number of consumer and community organisations which culminated in a joint statement signed by 36 consumer groups and 21 supporting organisations seeking a national strategy from the COAG Energy Council. In February 2019, Energy Ministers agreed to a trajectory that aims to raise energy performance

standards for new housing from 2022, with built-in review points.

### **New Power Shift research**

To take the insights from Power Shift and really have an impact in communities, we commissioned ACIL Allen to develop *Supporting Households to Manage their Energy Bills: A Strategic Framework* which has three elements: it looks at the choices households can make to manage their energy bills, groups households according to their motivation, ability and opportunity, and then details the tools and services that are most likely to help different types of households make a decision.

***Through our research we have shown precisely how consumer behaviour varies and given us the tools to break down assumptions and see the factors that really drive energy decision making at the household level.***





We will shortly publish a Policy Makers Guide as a companion to the Strategic Framework.

To disseminate the research findings, as well as demonstrate how the Supporting Households Framework could be used to support consumer-centred design, we commissioned experts to run workshops in Sydney, Hobart, Melbourne and Brisbane, as well as two online, inviting over 100 officials, advocates and industry representatives who have a direct role and/or interest in helping consumers manage their energy.

We also used the workshops to develop exemplar information resources and toolkits for service providers, using the Framework. To reach specific target groups who would benefit, we delivered that information through a trusted voice, establishing partnerships with Financial Counselling Australia, Indigenous Consumers Assistance Network, Council of the Ageing, and Tenants Unions in NSW, ACT and Tasmania, and Better Renting.

We completed other new research this year in the *Power Shift* program of work.

The Australian Energy Foundation (formerly Moreland Energy Foundation) scoped the content and structure of a voluntary industry guideline centred on helping customers manage their energy use. The Foundation consulted closely with stakeholders, who agreed that a guideline would be most effective if embedded within *The Energy Charter*. The guideline focuses on five areas:

- Collecting consumer data to provide a better service and tailored solutions;
- Providing more effective information – including reviewing bills design and helping consumers eligible for concessions and rebates;
- Data matching to monitor consumers who are unsafely rationing their energy use.



Lynne Gallagher speaks at the Housing Summit in September 2018



- Facilitate consumer access to information and tools on how to manage their energy.
- Help to rebuild trust in the market through partnering where possible with community and consumer organisations to help deliver information and assistance through that trusted voice.

The Group of Energy Efficiency Researchers Australia did a stocktake of international published research on household energy efficiency interventions, to consider what works. Successful interventions tended to use multiple components (home retrofits plus education, for example), had a good understanding of how to reach consumers and were tailored to the needs of those consumers. They had clear aims and objectives – whether that be bills savings or emissions reduction – and a robust framework for measuring impact.

We commissioned Back2Back Consulting to interrogate the data collected through our *Energy Consumer Sentiment Survey*, to assess findings of relevance to energy management policies and programs. Using the Supporting Households Framework, we have greater insight on where types of households might have particular issues with energy management.

And we published the report *Empowering Low-Income Households: Delving into the co-benefits identified in the Low-Income Energy Efficiency Project Reports* by the Group of Energy Efficiency Researchers Australia which detailed how the project pilots had reported benefits to participants in addition to reducing energy usage or their bills.



### Supporting Group of Energy Efficiency Researchers Australia

We passed through 10 percent of the grant from the Commonwealth to Group of Energy Efficiency Researchers Australia, the network of academics that was established through *Low-Income Energy Efficiency Project*.

The funding was used to support the network continue to research energy efficiency for low income households and has been used to help develop articles for two books, international conferences in 2017 and 2019, two symposia with sector stakeholders, as well as numerous network meetings to share and develop research ideas.



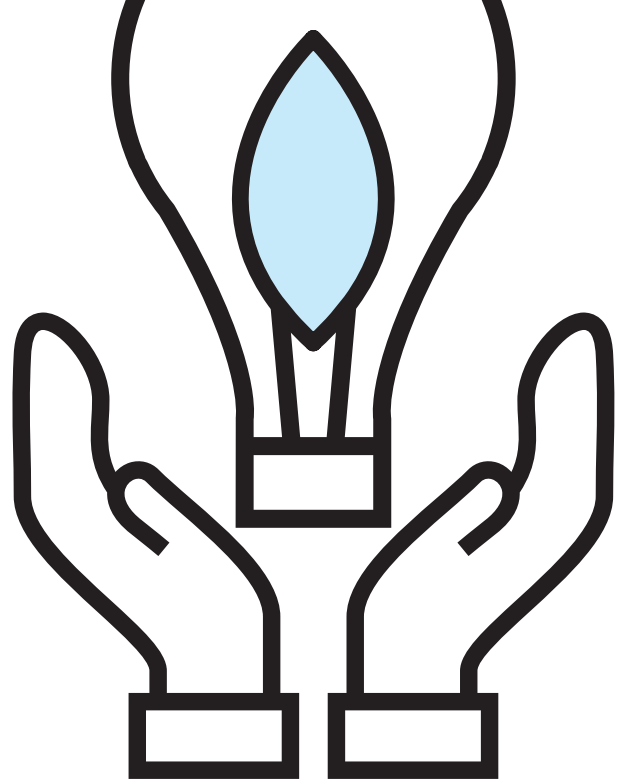


## POLICY AND ADVOCACY

- Your voice heard

After last year saw major reviews completed into the energy sector, this year started the harder work of implementation and our policy and advocacy work put the consumer voice – and their preferences – at the centre of hundreds of change processes across government and industry.

With the biggest transformation agenda in decades underway following a set of reviews that delved deep into the problems plaguing the energy market, we have focused on translating our research and evidence about what consumers want into a myriad of change processes now underway.



The starting place for this advocacy and policy work is that consumers want energy to be more affordable, individualised around their needs and they want the system to be optimised so that, as a nation, we're being smarter about the way we deliver energy. These priorities – affordable, individualised and optimised – therefore shape our advocacy priorities.

While the drivers of price are complicated, we have argued that it is incumbent on the whole sector to be focused on the outcome consumers really care about – prices need to come down to more normal levels.

In its 2019 *Retail Competition Review*, the AEMC found that the market had turned the corner. The AEMC pointed to reductions in the market share of the 'Big 3' (Origin Energy, Energy Australia and AGL); and increased switching from the 'Big 3' retailers to smaller retailers as evidence of this. After a ten-year period where prices climbed to unaffordable levels, prices also stabilised this year, with some meaningful price reductions.

Consumer sentiment has improved, as highlighted above in our *Energy Consumer Sentiment Survey*, but this improvement is from a very low base

and our qualitative research continues to show electricity prices as the most top of mind home-economic issue for Australian households and small businesses.

### Engaging with consumers

Our market research provides more than 5000 touch points each year with individual consumers, with recruitment ensuring a spread that reflects the broader Australian community. It provides a significant body of evidence about consumers concerns and issues, but we also seek to engage with consumers directly through our communications channels.

We host three structured online discussion groups with consumers every six months which help us track concerns and issues, and deepen the insights provided in our *Energy Consumer Sentiment Survey*.

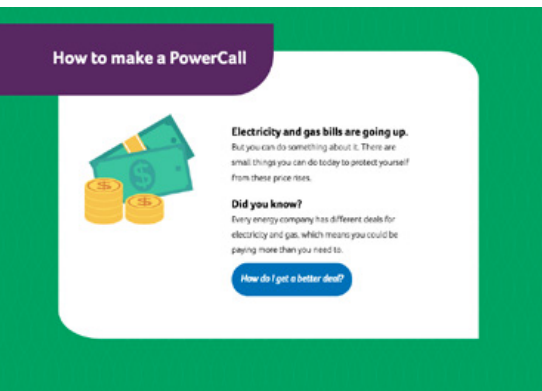
We use a range of channels to reach consumers – primarily to trial and demonstrate best-practice approaches to consumer engagement. We do this with a view to these ideas being picked up by others with more substantial marketing budgets who have the capacity to reach larger numbers of individual consumers, including



*We host three structured online discussion groups with consumers every six months which help us track concerns and issues, and deepen the insights provided in our Energy Consumer Sentiment Survey.*



*Our market research provides more than 5000 touch points each year with individual consumers.*



***A key part of the “For consumers” section of our website aims to help consumers take a simple, practical step to get the best deal for them.***

## Our PowerCall initiative

**A key part of the “For consumers” section of our website aims to help consumers take a simple, practical step to get the best deal for them.**

Recognising the confusion surrounding shopping around for the best deal, we took a different approach to encouraging consumers to find the best deal. We know that a large number of consumers are sitting on expensive deals for a range of reasons and calling your retailer to put you on their best deal can save these consumers hundreds of dollars.

We started the PowerCall initiative which encourages consumers to simply call their energy company and ask to be placed on the best deal for them. We provided a suggested script and list of questions to ask during the phone call, to guide people. Once they’ve completed the call, we ask consumers to share their experience with us. We promoted the initiative through our social media channels and by encouraging stakeholders to share the initiative through their own channels.

We believe this initiative has a high potential to materially impact a large number of consumers and the initiative is already being replicated by others with larger marketing budgets than ourselves – amplifying its impact. The beauty of the initiative is its simplicity because we know many consumers feel they don’t have time to shop around for a better deal in a confusing market.

## Sharing stories

**In addition to the thousands of individual consumers we hear from through our structured quantitative and qualitative market research, we have developed a new initiative to listen to consumers’ stories through a new section of our website.**

The ‘share your story’ action on our website collects hundreds of households’ and small businesses’ experiences in the energy market and is promoted through our biggest public-focused communications channels on social media.





Rosemary Sinclair AM at the launch of *The Energy Charter* in January 2019

retailers whose approach to consumer engagement we try to influence through our broader advocacy program.

Our website includes a section ‘for consumers’ which provides consumer contacts for comparing bills, help with debt and making complaints. It also includes two new sections that help people get the best deal and enable consumers to tell us their own stories.

### Money on the table

The ACCC *Retail Electricity Pricing Inquiry Report* found that a 20-25 per cent price reduction was possible by 2020-21 if all 56 recommendations were implemented.

Our focus has been to see the 56 recommendations implemented through an orderly process – with recommendations refined where appropriate – and the promised savings in consumers’ pockets. While there has been some good early work, the ACCC has noted that progress has

been slow and there is more urgency required around reform.

The two major initiatives we commenced this year to catalyse further change and implementation of the ACCC recommendations are our work on *The Energy Charter* and our Energy System Transformation work.

*The Energy Charter* is an initiative of businesses across the energy supply chain to progress the culture and solutions required to deliver energy in line with community expectations. We are chairing the *End User Consultative Group* on *The Energy Charter* and we also host the Independent Accountability Panel in the first phase of the initiative. It is our view that the problems in the sector are as much about culture, as they are about policy, regulation or engineering, and this is why we prioritised direct engagement with energy companies through the Charter.

Now that *The Energy Charter* is in operation, we have been working

***The two major initiatives we commenced this year to catalyse further change and implementation of the ACCC recommendations are our work on *The Energy Charter* and our Energy System Transformation work.***





to ensure the governance is robust and independent; the Accountability Panel has high calibre members and is supported by strong analytical expertise through an expert and the signatories are approaching their first disclosures.

The Energy System Transformation and the Future Energy Consumer Vision is our effort to bring consumers into the debate about the transformation of the sector and help fill the gap in long-term strategy and planning for the sector. While Australia is as deep into energy system transformation as anywhere in the world, there are things we can learn from the rest of the world in relation to how to plan for and manage change for consumers.

### Untangling the “confusopoly”

Moving the price trends from ‘flat’ to ‘down’ requires systemic change, but it also requires helping consumers to get the best possible deal for them, now. That will only happen if they can make sense of the retail options, which we have characterised this year as a ‘confusopoly’. Consumers tell us the retail market is a maze and discounting practices are the lightning rod for that frustration.

With that in mind, we were active in supporting governments tackling the problems with the energy safety net. That included engaging with the Australian Energy Regulator on the design of the default market offer, speaking at a major public forum in December 2018 and delivered a presentation to the DMO public forum to lend our support for the initiative. We also made a formal submission on the new regulations.

The introduction of the Victorian Default Offer (VDO) and the Default Market Offer (DMO) in the other, non-price regulated states will help tackle the confusopoly that characterises shopping around for the best deal in the Australian energy market and rebuilding confidence in the safety net.

At the same time, retailers appear to be reforming their discounting practices generally – not just in response to the default offers, but also with a raft of new rules working their way through the Australian Energy Market Commission process such as *Preventing Discounts on inflated energy rates*. We can see this work having an impact with AGL, for example, moving away from conditional discounting, with all new market offers from 1 July 2019 featuring an unconditional discount.

We also helped the Australian Energy Regulator to redesign the Energy Made Easy price comparison site,



Table 1: Case study: Ausgrid – the ‘bellwether’ for regulated electricity network businesses

<b>The challenge</b>	To demonstrate how Ausgrid’s interests can align with consumer interests, and advocate for affordable outcomes and culture change over reliability fears.
<b>Impact of engagement</b>	Culture change: Ausgrid worked with advocates to develop a revenue proposal that was capable of acceptance by the Regulator; and became an early signatory of The Energy Charter.
<b>Significance</b>	<p>Ausgrid supplies the Sydney CBD – whose gross domestic product (GDP) in 2017-18 was \$443.0 billion (that is, 24.4 per cent of the national GDP). The economic significance of Ausgrid’s footprint lends it an expectation that capital-intensive investment is needed to ensure the economic viability of the city. Ausgrid describes this as its “role in powering Australia’s economic engine”.</p> <p>They are also one of the first networks assessed in the revenue determination cycle meaning this decision sets a precedent for other networks across the National Electricity Market.</p>
<b>What did we do?</b>	Ausgrid agreed to make its engineers available to our expert to interrogate its latest revenue proposal. This saw a final decision more than \$1 billion lower than the initial proposal submitted to the Australian Energy Regulator for the 2019-24 period, wiping around \$150 off many consumers’ bills – an outcome that more closely reflected the long-term interests of customers.

and the NSW Government with the introduction of their Energy Switch service.

With new technology comes opportunity, but also potential confusion and issues around consumer protection. With this in mind, we worked with industry this year to develop the *New Energy Technology Consumer Code* which will set minimum standards of good practice and consumer protection provided by signatories who provide and install new energy technologies.

### Driving down network costs

One of the biggest drivers of electricity price increases over the past decade has been network costs, so we dedicate considerable time and resources to scrutinising network revenue proposals, recognising networks costs represent between 30-50 per cent of households and small businesses’ bills.

A key development in 2018-19 was the resolution of the longstanding legal dispute between NSW (electricity and gas) and ACT network businesses and the AER on the 2014-19 revenue determinations. We were involved in discussions facilitated by the AER, and including the Consumer Challenge Panel, the Public Interest Advocacy Centre (PIAC), which concluded with the networks agreeing to accept substantially lower revenues than was allowed.

We pushed for a new, more open and collaborative engagement with Ausgrid, Endeavour Energy and Essential Energy, to get an outcome in the consumer interest. We are hopeful that the remittal and 2019-24 revenue outcomes represent a course correction for network costs in NSW and set a precedent for processes underway in South Australia, Queensland and Victoria.



The Energy Charter launch in January 2019

We also advocated on behalf of households and small businesses in network revenue resets across all the major network decisions in the past year.

Other key efforts included:

- Driving down the cost of revenue proposals for 2019-24 across Endeavour Energy and Essential Energy so they were 'capable of acceptance' by consumers.
- Representing consumer views in our submissions to network businesses and the Australian Energy Regulator for revenue proposals in Queensland and South Australia for 2020-25.
- Giving a voice to consumers in Jemena's Gas Networks Draft 2020 Plan and Electricity Networks Draft 2021-25 Plan.
- Advocating for consumers' interests in the Victorian electricity distributors draft revenue proposals for 2021-25, including submission to AER on its preliminary framework and approach.
- Engaging Dr Andrew Nance to review the proposals major investments in new transmission interconnectors between NSW and South Australia (South Australia Energy Transformation); and Tasmania and Victoria (Marinus Link).

Recognising the need to drive best practice engagement among electricity network providers, we also co-hosted the Consumer Engagement Award with Energy Networks Australia.

### Consumers hands on the Finkel blueprint

This year, we prioritised engagement with specific national priority areas flowing from the Finkel Blueprint that had the biggest potential to impact energy bills. With the National Energy

Guarantee the biggest of these, we seconded an Energy Consumers Australia staff member to the Energy Security Board Project Team during its development.

We made a range of submissions and spoke at public forums during the development of the policy framework and the associated detailed design elements of the *Retail Reliability Obligation* and how the Australian Energy Market Operator will forecast the supply-demand balance that will inform the decision about whether to 'trigger' the Obligation.

We also made submissions and participated in public forums as part of the development of:

- the Integrated System Plan and Coordination of Generation and Transmission Investment,
- the Transmission Investment frameworks, and
- the Enhancement of the Reliability and Emergency Reserve Trader Review.

### Keeping our foot on the gas

The transformation of the energy system towards cleaner sources of energy is causing gas network businesses to think about their long-term future. This thinking is heading in two different directions – both raise interesting questions about uncertainty and risk for consumers.

The first is to find an alternative use for the infrastructure, with strategy and technical work gathering pace in 2018-19 to explore the potential to retrofit and adapt our gas pipelines to transport hydrogen. The CEO presented a consumer view on energy system transformation at the Hydrogen and Gas 2030 Conference in early 2019 where she made clear that to succeed, hydrogen would need to



contribute to affordability and play a positive optimisation role across the system.

The second direction is about accelerating the depreciation of the assets – to recover costs more quickly, and ahead of potential stranding associated with a shift away from gas.

We addressed issues around accelerated depreciation and hydrogen in our contributions to Jemena Gas Networks 2020-25 Access Arrangement Review, informed by expert advice from TRAC Partners. In our March 2019 submission, we argued that networks should not lurch to recover costs more quickly to transfer risk to consumers – when the better strategy may be to wait until the next five-year review, when the potential for hydrogen and other developments may be clearer.

We also commissioned TRAC Partners to undertake a comprehensive review of gas market issues and identify

opportunities for ECA to influence outcomes for consumers. The TRAC Partners Report, finalised in March 2019, identifies 13 strategic issues that will inform our work in 2019-20.

### **Impacting through others**

As a small advocacy organisation, often we have a bigger impact by helping others to do their job, rather than trying to do everything ourselves.

Advocates are juggling huge workloads so creating and packaging actionable, accessible insights is a major priority.

This year, we facilitated the *Innovation in Energy Services* workshops, pioneering a more agile approach to capturing and sharing insights for impact. Leveraging a conversation between international experts about network pricing on LinkedIn we held two events. The multimedia from these sessions was then placed back into the LinkedIn discussion.

***As a small advocacy organisation, often we have a bigger impact by helping others to do their job, rather than trying to do everything ourselves.***





Other examples of innovations and initiatives to empower consumer advocacy include:

- Our Advocates Regulatory Calendar (accessed via ECA website), which provides a one-stop-shop for energy policy and regulatory processes.
- Generation of sharable multimedia content, capturing insights that can inform advocacy, including from forums including our Foresighting Forum, Housing Summit and Board Stakeholder Forums
- Webinars with Dr Rob Nicholls, University of New South Wales Business School, on information and communication technology and network transformation, including cyber security.
- Engaging expert network technical analysts to assess revenue proposals and for other processes, shared with our stakeholders.

### Carrying the consumer voice into National Energy Market Forums.

We represented consumer views at 20 industry and market body forums this year, seeking to both impact the discussions and shape the governance of the forums themselves to deliver longer-term, structural benefit.

The stand-out example here was our engagement with TransGrid through its Advisory Council and the *Powering Sydney's Future* (PSF) Stakeholder Monitoring Committee. These committees have moved well beyond the old 'tea and biscuits' mode of engagement and are playing a genuine role in overseeing TransGrid's decisions worth hundreds of millions of dollars.

Our other activities in national energy market forums include participating in:

- Network groups: Essential Energy Customer Consultative Council, Endeavour Energy Customer



Consultative Council, Ausgrid Customer Consultative Council, Transgrid Advisory Council, Powerlink Customer Panel, Jemena electricity (Victoria) and gas (NSW) customer councils, and South Australia Power Networks Customer Consultative Panel.

- Retail groups: Origin Consumer Advisory Panel.
- Future grid working groups: Victorian Power Networks' Energy Future Customer Advisory Panel and South Australia Power Networks' Distributed Energy Resources Integration Working Group.
- Energy Networks Australia's Communications and Consumer Engagement Working Group Meeting; and Consumer Advocate Forum.
- The National Energy Consumer Roundtable.

- The Australian Energy Regulator's Energy Made Easy Redevelopment Project Stakeholder Engagement Forum Group; Compliance and Enforcement Stakeholder Forum; Customer Consultative Group.
- The Australian Energy Market Commission's Consumer Priorities Forum.
- The Australian National Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA) Distributed Energy Integration Program Steering Committee.

As mentioned previously in this report, we also Chaired the *End User Consultative Group for The Energy Charter*.

### Our digital channels

Our website was visited by around 20,000 users in 2018-19.

The audience size of our digital channels continued to grow steadily.

***We represented consumer views at 20 industry and market body forums this year, seeking to both impact the discussions and shape the governance of the forums themselves to deliver longer-term, structural benefit.***

Table 2:  
Engagement metrics

	2018-19
<b>Users</b>	<b>20,154</b>
<b>Sessions</b>	<b>35,493</b>
<b>Page views</b>	<b>130,470</b>

Table 3:  
ECA digital channel evaluation

Channel	Audience Type	Audience Size
<b>MailChimp (Email list)</b>	Subscribers	<b>1,482 (+39%)</b>
<b>Twitter</b>	Followers	<b>2,380 (+32%)</b>
<b>LinkedIn</b>	Followers	<b>417 (+49%)</b>
<b>Facebook</b>	Subscribers	<b>507 (+4%)</b>



## COLLABORATION

- Listening & connecting

Working collaboratively with stakeholders is critical to our success. We know that worthwhile change only occurs when we work together, respecting differences but focused on a clear, agreed outcome.



A collaborative approach is at the heart of our driving ethos and ingrained in our entire work program, but this year several specific initiatives were undertaken with collaborative impact in mind.

These initiatives include our annual Foresighting Forum, as well as targeted work spanning data, energy efficiency, innovation, retail, networks and more nuanced topics unique to particular jurisdictions. Through these projects, we have engaged with experts, industry, government and community representatives to better understand the issues confronting energy consumers and shape our collective response to achieve the greatest results.

### Foresighting Forum 2019

Our Annual Foresighting Forum is the only industry event that brings all energy stakeholders together in one room to focus on “wicked problems” with consumer interests at the centre of discussions. It uses a sustained sector-wide collaboration and communication approach, based on evidence and principles, not positions.

The 2019 Foresighting Forum brought together a record 196 participants from across the energy sector to work collaboratively on issues affecting the long-term interests of consumers

Under the theme of *Take charge: Data powering better energy outcomes for consumers*, participants had the specific objective to develop a shared understanding of data's role in delivering affordable, individualised and optimised energy services.

For the first time this year's forum, held at UTS in Sydney, included an international guest speaker – Michael Murray, President of Mission:data (USA). He also met with energy innovators at EnergyLab, market bodies and government officials during his visit to Australia.

In another first, our program development committee prepared a general Call for Abstracts to help drive the outstanding level of content and conference structure which participants at Foresighting Forum have come to expect. This process identified the overall theme of trust and confidence with four different lenses being behavioural, regulatory, technical and digital. Responses to the call over-subscribed the forum which culminated in over 40 speaker presentations across the two days.

In addition, the Government and CSIRO chose the Forum to officially launch the National Energy Analytics Research Program.

The forum advanced the sector's shared understanding of how data can allow consumers to get better outcomes, make better choices and support market innovations. An overwhelming 90% of participants agreed the Forum generated a constructive discussion about the problems identified.



*The 2019 Foresighting Forum brought together a record 196 participants from across the energy sector to work collaboratively on issues affecting the long-term interests of consumers*

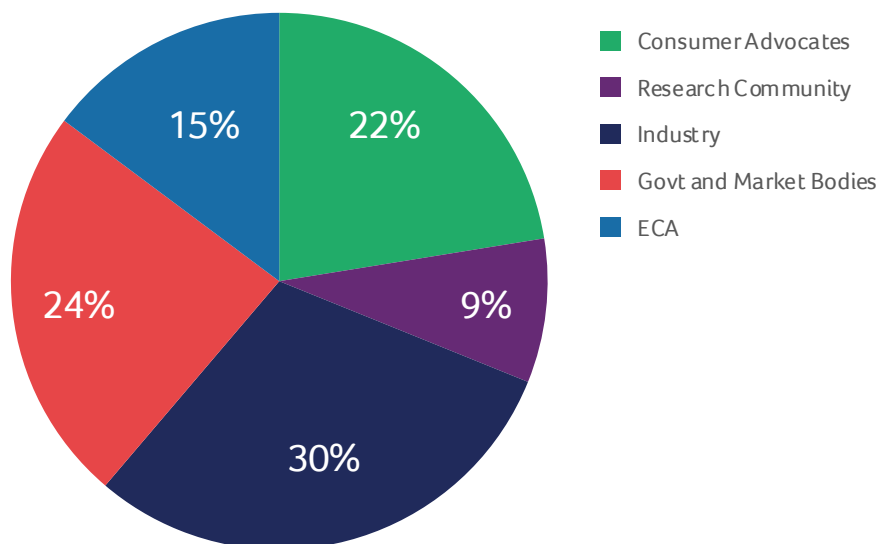


*Our Board Stakeholder Forums provided us an opportunity to engage directly with over 200 consumer advocates and other stakeholders across the country*



*The forum advanced the sector's shared understanding of how data can allow consumers to get better outcomes, make better choices and support market innovations.*

Figure 2:  
Representation at Foresighting Forum 2019



Foresighting Forum 2019





## State of play

Arising from the ACCC Inquiry and the State of Play report prepared by Finncorn for Energy Consumers Australia, we have been reviewing the transparency of retail pricing and cost stacks. Finncorn separately provided a report to the ACCC building on this first report and presented to our Foresighting Forum 2019 on the topic.

Arising from this work we have developed a rule change proposal we refer to as Sunshine on Retail. The benefit of this rule change is better transparency on an ongoing basis for all stakeholders on the contributions to electricity prices. As such it is an important element of building the evidence base for advocacy.

A draft proposal has been provided to the AEMC and was discussed with them on 5 July 2019. Prior to lodging the rule change request, we will consult further with other advocates and retailers.

**Take Charge**  
Foresighting Forum 2019



*An overwhelming 90% of participants agreed the Forum generated a constructive discussion about the problems identified.*

Foresighting Forum 2019





**The owner of an ice-works and seafood wholesale business told us that inability to take advantage of his time of use tariff was creating monthly bills of up to \$8,000 per month.**

## Community Listening

In November 2018, we travelled to Mt Isa to gather first-hand accounts to better understand the lived experience of energy consumers in the region as part of our *Community Listening* initiative. Our team spoke with local residents, small business owners and local council members to gain perspective on how the community is responding to energy affordability issues on the ground.

Our local community work reinforced the data we're seeing in our research projects, with residents and small businesses telling us they are doing everything they can to reduce their energy consumption and bills:

- Residents told us they were painting their roof white in order to repel heat in the hot and dry climate,
- A café owner told us they were investigating expansion of their cool room facilities to save on refrigeration costs,

- The owner of an ice-works and seafood wholesale business told us that inability to take advantage of his time of use tariff was creating monthly bills of up to \$8,000 per month, and
- A local solar installer observed that demand for PV panels had increased over the previous 12 months as the community seeks relief from high energy costs.

Bringing these experiences to the surface has helped us to make the case for change by humanising the broader research work that we do. Interview content was made available across our website and digital channels, with the stories integrated into our presentations at conferences, workshops and forums as a powerful communications tool. We remain committed to the *Community Listening* program as a way of hearing and amplifying the authentic voice of consumers across the country.



Chris Alexander speaks with a small business owner in Mt Isa

## Stakeholder Forums

Our *Board Stakeholder Forums* provided us an opportunity to engage directly with over 200 consumer advocates and other stakeholders across the country – with a diverse group of participants – to better understand their priority issues. Five forums were held in 2018-19 covering topic areas relating to energy such as agriculture, innovation, affordability and customer support programs.

Table 4:

### Board Stakeholder Forums July 2018 – June 2019

August 2018	Sydney
78 Attendees	

- Iain MacGill, Joint Director, CEEM, UNSW  
*The CEEM's Tariff Tool*
- Katie McRobert, General Manager and Anne Laurie, Research Officer, Australian Farm Institute  
*The impacts of energy costs on the Australian agriculture sector*

September 2018	Bundaberg
60 Attendees	

- Dr Georgina Davis, Queensland Farmers Federation  
*Farming, small business and what we need to consider*
- Bill Trevor, Deputy Mayor, Bundaberg

October 2018	Hobart
36 Attendees	

- Kirstan Wilding, Leader Regulation – Strategy & Stakeholder Relations TasNetworks  
*emPOWERing You Trial*
- Kym Goodes, CEO Tasmanian Council of Social Service  
*Affordable Energy for Low Income Tasmanians*

November 2018	Adelaide
30 Attendees	

- Andrew Nance, Director, The Energy Project Riverlink Project
- Mark Henley, Manager Advocacy & Communications, Uniting Communities  
*DNA: Alive and (mainly) Thriving*

May 2019	Canberra
46 Attendees	

- Susan Helyar, Director, ACT Council of Social Service  
*Energy affordability and vulnerability in the ACT Perspective*
- Dr Bjorn Sturmberg, Research Leader, Battery Storage and Grid Integration Program, Energy Change Institute, Australian National University  
*The future of integrated energy services*
- Lyn Camilleri, General Manager, Electricity Markets Branch, ACCC  
*The ACCC Electricity Market Monitoring agenda*



Chris Alexander presenting at the Board Stakeholder Forum in Hobart



Hobart Board Stakeholder Forum in October 2018



## Housing Summit 2018

Our analysis of the results of the *Low-Income Energy Efficiency Program* revealed the significance of the built environment in constraining low-income households from managing their energy costs. In September 2018, we brought together a range of consumer groups, government, energy industry and researchers to discuss energy affordability and how to improve the energy performance of Australian homes. Around 100 people attended the Summit in Sydney, underlining the importance and urgency of this issue.

Summit participants discussed the consumer harm caused by inferior housing, including high energy bills and poor health outcomes, as well as the opportunities to improve the performance of new housing and existing homes.

The event featured 15 speakers including:

- Dr Cassandra Goldie, CEO ACOSS
- Donna Luckman, CEO Renew
- Alison Rowe, CEO Moreland Energy Foundation

Housing Summit 2018



Participants united on the urgent need for policies and programs to ensure all Australians can afford the necessary energy to have a healthy and comfortable home. Energy is an essential service, and integral to safeguarding the health of people and communities.

Speakers highlighted the need to ensure that low-income consumers and people living in rental properties are not further disadvantaged. Many speakers noted that there are solutions to address these issues but what is needed is a policy framework to enable their implementation.

As previously mentioned in this report, the *Housing Summit* culminated in a joint statement ultimately signed by 36 consumer groups and 21 supporting organisations recognising that that any effort to bring down energy prices must include a focus on the energy performance of Australian homes and seeking a national strategy from the COAG Energy Council.

The Communique identified that improving the energy performance of our homes will result in lower energy bills, better consumer health and wellbeing, a more resilient electricity system and lower emissions.

The impact of this work was underlined in February 2019, when Energy Ministers agreed to a pathway that aims to raise energy performance standards for new housing from 2022, with built in review points.

### NewReg Project

The *NewReg* project – which explores new ways of improving sector engagement and regulatory innovation – released its Directions Paper and Approach Paper in March 2018, laying out an approach designed to ensure that network revenue proposals reflect the priorities of consumers. In releasing the papers, the partners in the project – the Australian Energy Regulator, Energy Networks Australia and Energy Consumers Australia — announced that they would use a process of live engagement. On the same day, AusNet services announced it would trial the approach for its distribution network revenue determination.

The Customer Forum has undertaken extensive investigation into consumer preferences and has negotiated with AusNet over the draft proposal which was released in January accompanied by an Interim Engagement Report by the Forum. The Forum has revealed to AusNet a number of areas where consumers were dissatisfied with network performance and AusNet has already taken action to remedy these. The negotiation has led to a proposal for a new small-scale incentive scheme on customer performance on which the Australia Energy Regulator will consult.



***Housing Summit participants discussed the consumer harm caused by inferior housing, including high energy bills and poor health outcomes, as well as the opportunities to improve the performance of new housing and existing homes.***



## GRANTS

### - Backing bright ideas

With new ideas and interest in the energy sector from a wider range of groups, demand for funding from the Grants Program has grown and we now have a larger community of contributors undertaking evidence-based advocacy achieving better outcomes for consumers.



The Grants Program is central to our role in supporting advocacy, with more than \$2 million provided annually.

### Ideas with greater impact

The focus of the *Grants Program* is supporting high quality work by other advocates and researchers that will be influential in bringing about change in policy and practice in the energy market to benefit small consumers. This includes improving the understanding of decision-makers about consumer interests and behaviour, especially vulnerable consumers.

We provide guidance on making applications on our website, together with the selection criteria. All grant applications are assessed against the criteria and considered by the Board. In particular the Board considers:

- whether the issue is of national significance and of material consequence, including jurisdictional issues that may inform national approaches;
- how the project will develop evidence to support advocacy, and potential for the advocacy to be influential in bringing about tangible benefits for consumers;

- the value for money, and likely effectiveness of the funding.

### Helping others influence network revenue decisions

We have maintained, and grown, our focus on supporting work by other advocates to engage with the network determination processes which have a major impact on energy affordability. Over \$3 million in funding for consumer engagement on network processes has been provided to advocates since January 2015 (representing over one-quarter of the *Grants Program* total funding).

Variations from year to year reflect the AER's scheduling of electricity distribution network revenue determination processes. Some jurisdictional consumer advocates representing residential and small business consumers do engage in gas and transmission network determinations but have not sought *Grants Program* funding.



**75**  
APPLICATIONS



**\$6.2**  
MILLION

*In 2018-19, we received 75 applications for new grants, slightly higher than the 69 received in the previous year, totalling \$6.2 million.*



**36**  
APPLICATIONS  
APPROVED



**\$2.5**  
MILLION  
APPROVED

*36 new grants were approved for funding of almost \$2.5 million.*

**Over \$3 million in funding for consumer engagement on network processes has been provided to advocates since January 2015.**

### Adapting for impact

Network determination processes are a good example of efforts supported by the *Grants Program* which require multi-year funding arrangements.

The need for flexibility and funding certainty has been expressed by grant applicants since the program's establishment and to give greater certainty and flexibility to advocates and other applicants, our Board approved some grants with part funding committed in future years.

The impact of these decisions on the financial commitments for future years, against budget, is shown in

Figure 3. With the amount committed for expenditure in 2018-19 slightly under-budget (\$97,000 of a total budget of \$2,159,000), this amount will be carried forward as additional funding available in 2019-20

While ongoing improvements have been to the *Grants Program*, we intend to undertake a holistic review of the *Grants Program* in 2019-20 in consultation with stakeholders. The scope of the review will include developing an approach to ongoing evaluation and improvement of the *Grants Program* overall to ensure it is delivering tangible benefits for consumers.

Figure 3: Annual financial commitments

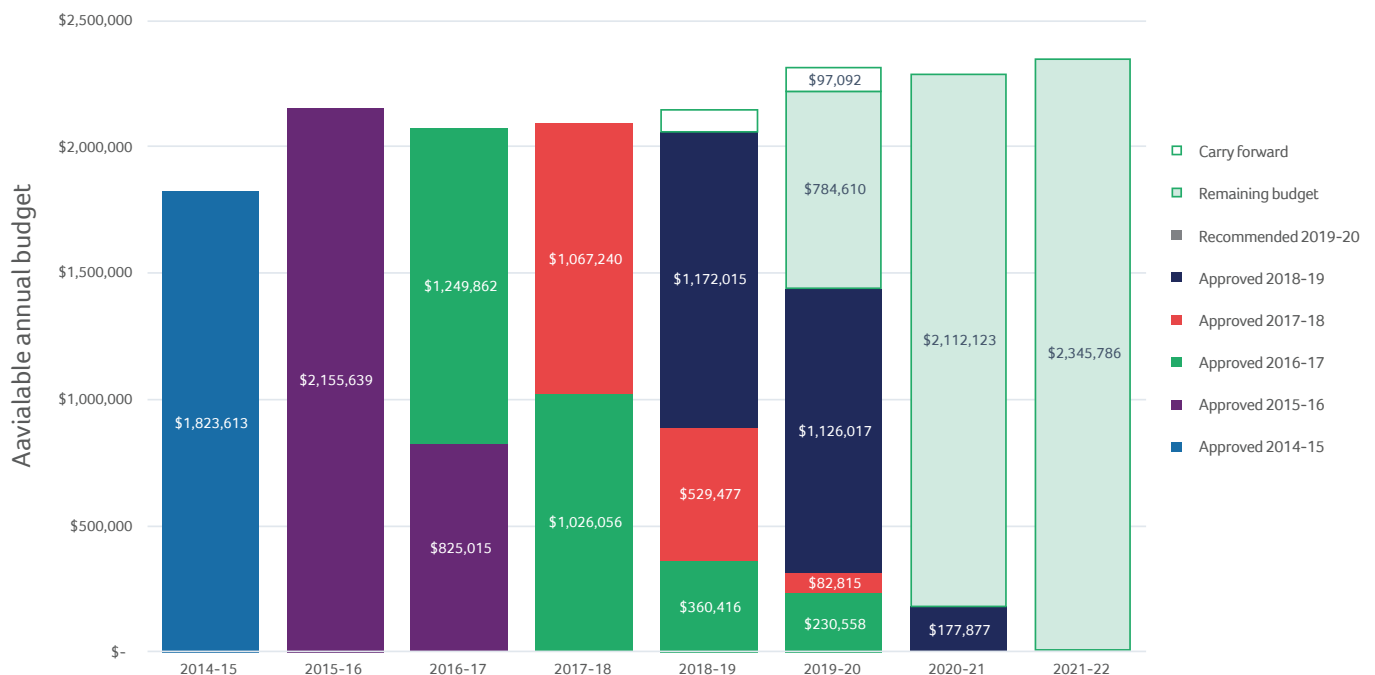


Table 5: Funding for network engagement

Funding for network engagement	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Determinations	71,275	214,500	-	312,950	325,639
Engagement	128,988	61,717	105,212	-	100,140
Limited Merits Review (LMR)	308,700	483,170	6,900	-	-
Pricing	209,900	368,229	45,000	80,600	7,300
Regulation	75,300	101,390	21,800	10,000	1,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,823,613</b>	<b>\$2,980,655</b>	<b>\$2,866,892</b>	<b>\$1,679,532</b>	<b>\$2,489,123</b>
Funding exc LMR (%)	26.6%	25.0%	6.2%	24.0%	17.4%
LMR (%)	16.9%	16.2%	0.2%		

## Gill Owen Scholarship

**The first Gill Owen Scholarship was awarded in 2018-19. Dr Owen was an inaugural Director of the Energy Consumers Australia Board and brought considerable expertise and insight to energy consumer issues.**

The Scholarship supports an individual to travel internationally to research innovative ideas and initiatives that will be relevant to improving outcomes for consumers in the Australian energy market. This year, the Scholarship was awarded to Mr Ash Salardini, Chief Economist & Policy Director, NSW Farmers' Association. Mr Salardini's project is Regulatory and advocacy approaches to increase the benefits of competition in Australia's retail electricity market. The Scholarship is worth up \$15,000 and is funded from the CEO Grants budget.





### Overall performance and trends

In 2018-19, we received 75 applications for new grants, slightly higher than the 69 received in the previous year, totalling \$6.2 million. From these applications 36 new grants were approved, up from 24 in the previous year. Total new funding approved was almost \$2.5 million with this amount to be spent in 2018-19 and future years.

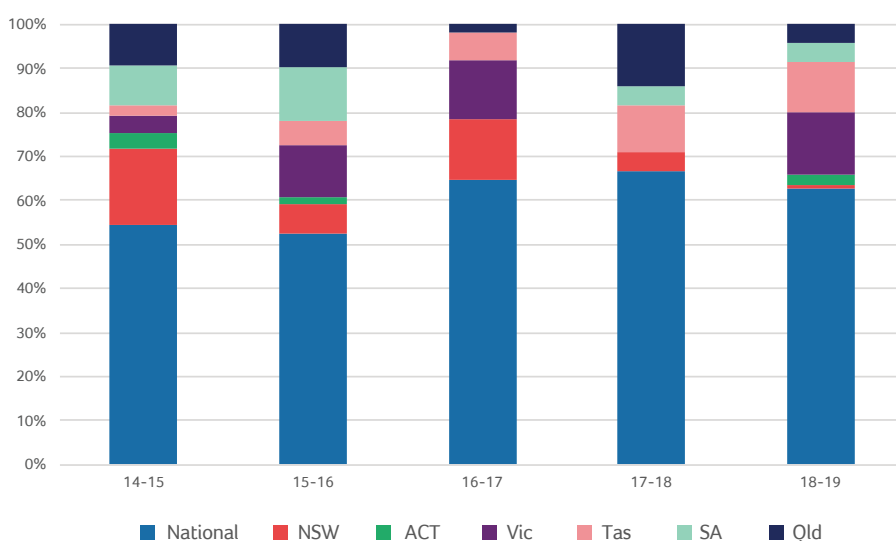
One notable development in 2018-19 was the increase in applications for CEO Grants, which are smaller grants that are available for timely or urgent advocacy projects. Applications rose to 24 (compared to 13 for the previous year) and in total 13 were approved (up from seven).

Of grant funding approved in 2018-19, 76% was for electricity market advocacy and research projects (in line with the five-year trend), with the remainder of the funding for projects that address issues across both electricity and gas markets. Of the total funding 91% was approved for advocacy projects and the remainder for research projects to support future advocacy.

Over 5 years, there has been a focus on national advocacy including projects undertaken within jurisdictions that have national implications.

Over the five years, while the interests of low-income consumers have remained a particular focus within the *Grants Program*, there has been

Figure 4: Grant Program trends - national and jurisdiction advocacy and research project funding



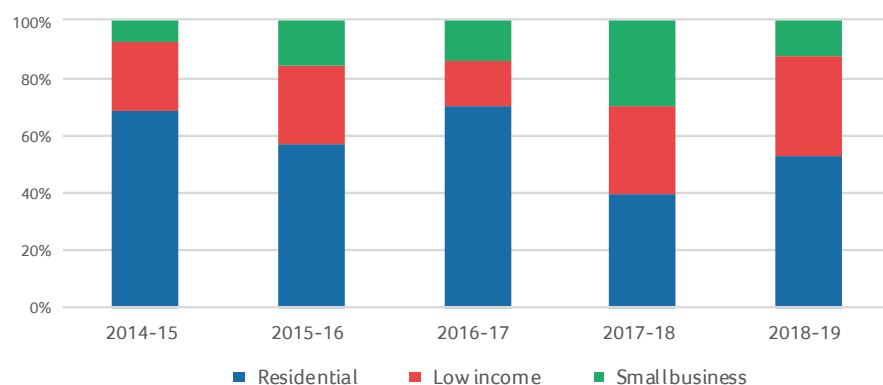
stronger interest in the issues that affect all households, including low income households, and also small business.

Since 2016-17 the duration of funding reflects the needs of the applicant, and the advocacy and research activities in which they are engaged, rather than being limited to 12 months

which was the arrangement that had been carried over from the Consumer Advocacy Panel (and was removed in March 2016). The increase in projects funded for 12 months or less in 2018-19 reflects the impact of a single large project, for consumer engagement by the Tasmanian Small Business Council on Project Marinus, between July 2018 and July 2019.

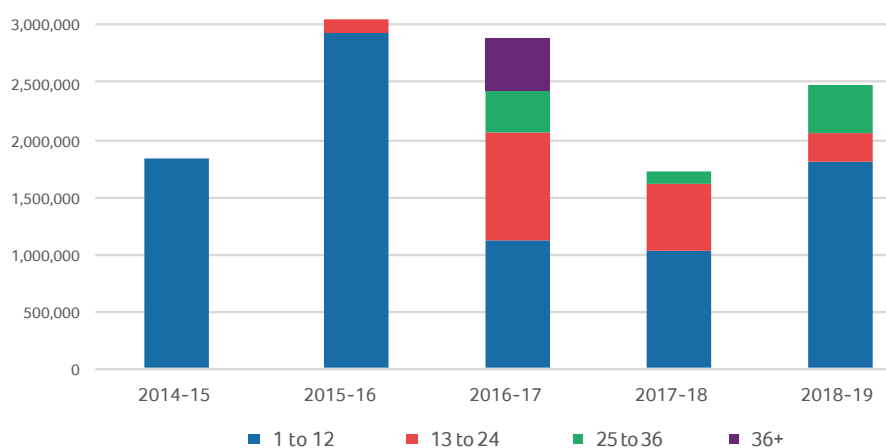


Figure 5: Grants Program trends – households, including low income households and small business



*Of grant funding approved in 2018-19, 76% was for electricity market advocacy and research projects (in line with the five-year trend), with the remainder of the funding for projects that address issues across both electricity and gas markets.*

Figure 6: Grants Program trends – value of grants funding by duration (months)





### Key themes

The advocacy and research projects funded through the *Grants Program* are driven by the priorities and processes where it is critical that the voice of the consumer is heard.

In 2018-19 there continued to be a strong focus on affordability issues in particular for low-income households and small business (27% of total funding, with 19% focussed on low income households). A new theme that has emerged this year is the importance of advocacy to address the implications of poor housing and poor appliances for the energy costs of low-income households (8%).

There was a greater focus in 2018-19 on the importance of consumer expectations, fit-for-purpose

consumer protection frameworks and the role of information and tools in consumer decision-making, in the context of an energy system in transition (accounting for 10% of total funding).

Reflecting the national processes underway exploring the future of the energy systems, funding was provided for advocacy on behalf of consumers in relation to the role distributed energy resources and the development of the Integrated System Plan (27% off total funding).

Building the capacity of the advocacy community, in particular through the National Consumer Roundtable on Energy, was secured through a three-year grant in 2018-19 (accounting for 18% of total funding approved).

Figure 7: Grant funding by major theme 2018-19

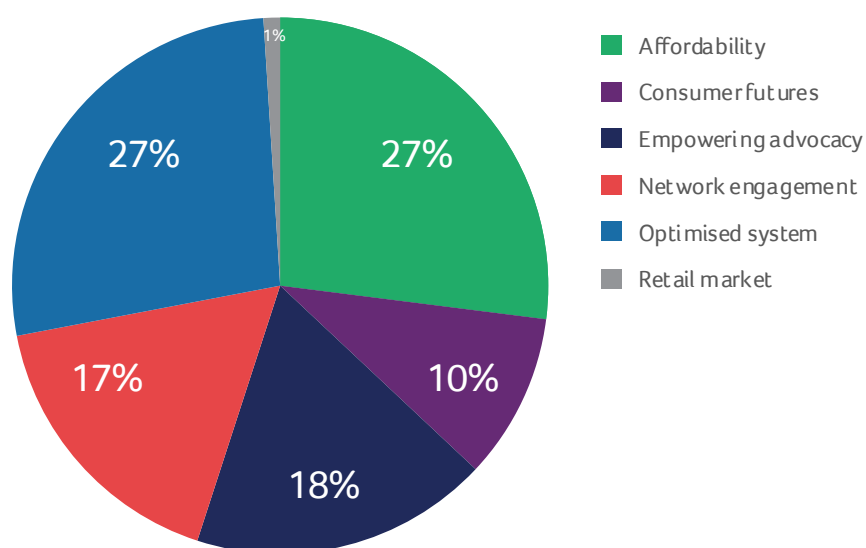




Figure 8: Grant funding by theme 2014-15 – 2018-19



*The advocacy and research projects funded through the Grants Program are driven by the priorities and processes where it is critical that the voice of the consumer is heard.*



Table 6: Great Grants

The work undertaken by advocates and other organisations through the *Grants Program* is having influence and impact in improving outcomes for consumers in energy markets. The *Great Grants* that we have listed here showcase important work that has built new evidence, created influence or demonstrated impact.

	Project	Organisation / Code
Networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inconvenient guests – the consumer experience of administrative review for electricity pricing (consumer participation in limited merits review processes)</li> </ul>	752, 800, 801 Public Interest Advocacy Centre
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analysis of SAPN tariff reforms through its proposed TSS in relation to impacts on small business</li> </ul>	787 Business South Australia
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Networks &amp; batteries: what's best for consumers?</li> </ul>	795 Total Environment Centre
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An evaluation of the role of accelerated depreciation in regulation of electricity and gas networks</li> </ul>	807 Engineroom Infrastructure Consulting
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Electricity pricing and managing heatwaves at home: mitigating health and financial risks for heat-vulnerable household consumers</li> </ul>	813 RMIT
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessing and improving consumer outcomes of network pricing reform</li> </ul>	840 Renew (formerly Alternative Technology Association)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tariff Assessment Tool</li> </ul>	814, 944 UNSW
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Living Deliberate Negotiate Agree (DNA)</li> </ul>	853 Uniting Communities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AER TasNetworks Revenue Proposal - Small Business advocacy</li> </ul>	915 Tasmanian Small Business Council
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fair outcomes for low income and vulnerable consumers – Queensland Electricity Networks Revenue Determination 2020-25</li> </ul>	946 QCOSS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tariff Reform workshop for consumer advocates</li> </ul>	987 COTA Queensland
Affordability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Households in the Dark: Mapping electricity disconnections in the NEM</li> </ul>	712 St Vincent de Paul Society
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interaction between energy supply and residential rental housing arrangements</li> </ul>	791 QCOSS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research and Advocacy materials on the feasibility of rural electricity users in Queensland going off-grid and irrigators in particular</li> </ul>	832 Bundaberg Regional Irrigators Group
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Photovoltaics on Apartment Buildings</li> </ul>	841 UNSW
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The lived experience of Tasmanian consumers – energy consumer advocacy project</li> </ul>	849 TasCOSS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Response to Queensland Competition Authority Scoping Paper</li> </ul>	862 QCOSS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluating energy management options in community housing multi-unit dwellings to reduce energy costs for community housing tenants</li> </ul>	876 Q Shelter

<b>Affordability (continued)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Empowering irrigation consumers to improve their long-term electricity purchase arrangements</li> </ul>	892 National Irrigators Council
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The impact of energy costs on the Australian agriculture sector</li> </ul>	910 Australian Farm Institute
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Irrigators – the flow on benefits of regionally embedded generation</li> </ul>	942 Cotton Australia
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Future proofing small business energy bills</li> </ul>	964,1004 COSBOA
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advocacy for low energy homes</li> </ul>	966 Renew
<b>Consumer futures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Smart home control: exploring the potential for enabling technologies in vulnerable and disadvantaged households</li> </ul>	788, RMIT Centre for Urban Research
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understanding the changing needs of residential energy consumers in the information age and the implications for tariff reform</li> </ul>	821 CitySmart
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use your power – optimising the financial outcomes for consumers with solar systems</li> </ul>	883 Moreland Energy Foundation Ltd
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exploring the nexus of energy use, ageing, health and wellbeing amongst older Australians</li> </ul>	887 Macquarie University
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Our Grid - Concepts, strategies and relationships to engage energy consumers in the Future Grid</li> </ul>	935 RMIT
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training materials for low income energy affordability</li> </ul>	995 Fourth & Centre
<b>Empowering advocacy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Voices for Power – a multicultural movement advocating for low income and migrant energy consumer needs</li> </ul>	865 Sydney Alliance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Systemic advocacy training &amp; support for representatives of older energy consumers</li> </ul>	870 COTA Australia
<b>Optimised system</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planning future grids together: improving engagement between network planners and local government</li> </ul>	815 Northern Alliance for Greenhouse Action
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The role of distributed energy resources in facilitating the equitable and efficient decarbonisation of the NEM</li> </ul>	904, 983 Total Environment Centre
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consumer Scrutiny of the proposed RiverLink Interconnector</li> </ul>	969 The Energy Project
<b>Retail market</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Retail Tariff Tracker project</li> </ul>	713, 794, 898 St Vincent de Paul Society
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Power Transformed: Understanding consumer decision making in the complex and transforming energy market</li> </ul>	758 CALC
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research and analysis supporting irrigator submissions into the ACCC Retail Electricity Pricing Inquiry</li> </ul>	893 National Irrigators Council
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tasmanian Small Business Advocacy to ACCC Inquiry into Retail Electricity Prices</li> </ul>	894 Tasmanian Small Business Council
<b>Wholesale market</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Study of the Tasmanian wholesale market and its impact on small business</li> </ul>	873 Tasmanian Small Business Council
<b>Gas market</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Response to the AEMC's gas pipeline review</li> </ul>	902 Major Energy Users



## GOVERNANCE

- Living our values

A photograph of a diverse family of three sitting closely together on a couch. The mother, on the left, has dark curly hair and is smiling. The father, in the center, has a beard and is also smiling. The child, on the right, is laughing joyfully and holding a remote control. They are all looking towards the right side of the frame, presumably at a television screen. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

Good governance is  
essential to the  
success of our entire  
organisation.

We are an independent body established as a Company Limited by Guarantee, through an initiative of the Council of Australian Governments Energy Council to provide residential and small business consumers with a strong and influential voice in national energy matters.

We are incorporated as a company and funded by consumers from levies collected by the Australian Energy Market Operator.

### **Our Role**

Our Constitution, 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 of Residential Customers and Small Business Customers.”

### **Our vision & values**

#### **Our purpose**

*(why we do what we do)*

To enable the voices of consumers to be heard so their interests are reflected in energy market outcomes.

#### **Our vision**

*(where we want to end up)*

Our vision is for future focused consumer driven energy markets meeting residential and small business consumers' needs.

#### **Our mission**

*(what we do)*

We promote the long-term interests of consumers with respect to price, quality, safety, reliability and security of supply of energy services.

#### **Our values**

*(how we do it)*

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 work is about empowering consumers through energy services that are affordable, individualised and optimised.*



***As required in our constitution, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Energy Council commissioned KPMG to undertake a review of our performance against our objectives.***

### **Review of Energy Consumers Australia**

As required in our constitution, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Energy Council commissioned KPMG to undertake a review of our performance against our objectives.

While the Review implementation plan is under development, we have already started acting to address issues raised with us during the review process.

This includes providing clarity and consistency about how we prioritise our activities.

Next year, we will use a Stakeholder Survey to assess whether our efforts to explain our priorities are meeting the needs of our stakeholders.

We are also working to develop an impact and performance reporting

framework for our activities including capacity building activities, jurisdictional expertise and other elements of our performance. The 2020/21 Business Plan, due in September 2019, will reflect this update to our reporting approach.

We will use the Board's Reference Committee to enable advocates to provide annual feedback on our effectiveness in capacity building and jurisdictional expertise issues. The key themes and issues that emerge from this feedback will be reflected in future Annual Reports.

We will implement the new performance reporting framework through our annual Business Plan which is approved by the COAG Energy Council each year.

**Our work is about empowering consumers through energy services that are affordable, individualised and optimised and this "AIO" framework is derived from consumers themselves and drives our priorities:**

#### **1. Affordable**

Affordability must be a constraint on all our investments and decisions about energy – an explicit criterion in our decision-making up and down the supply chain.

#### **2. Individualised**

Energy services must be built around individuals to reflect their unique circumstance; enabling people to manage their own use and costs.

#### **3. Optimised**

Existing and future investment in the power system – networks, generation and retail – must be optimised based on consumers demands that not one more dollar than necessary is spent than required, and new investments are not made one day earlier than necessary. Key to optimising our energy system is providing genuine choice and control to households and small businesses, rewarding their flexibility and embracing them as partners for change.



## Tax

The Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission advised in March 2019 that our application for registration as a charity was successful, effective 16 February 2015. On this basis the Australian Taxation Office advised in April 2019 that we had been granted income tax exemption from 16 February 2015. An amended tax return has been submitted to the ATO and we expect to receive an outcome in the 1st quarter 2019-20.





## Our Board

We had some change in the composition of our Board this year. In January 2019 we bid a fond farewell to Steve Graham, Catherine Cooper and Clare Petre who made enormous contributions to our organisation over several years. New Directors Chris Spangaro, Dr Helen Garnett and Gavin Dufty, who were appointed on 29 January 2019, bring new and unique perspective to our strategic direction.

### Louise Sylvan, AM, FAICD

***Chair and Director,  
Energy Consumers Australia***

Louise Sylvan is Adjunct Professor, School of Public Health, School of Medicine, University of Sydney.

She is a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors, Deputy Chair of the Australian Advisory Board on Impact Investing, and a Non-Executive Director of Impact Investing Australia, the Social Enterprise Fund Australia, the Australian Risk Policy Institute and Member of the Advisory Panel of the Australian Privacy Foundation.

Formerly Chief Executive Officer of the Australian National Preventive Health Agency, Louise was also a Commissioner of the Productivity Commission and Deputy Chair of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission where she was appointed for her expertise in consumer affairs.

### Chris Spangaro, GAICD

***Director,  
Energy Consumers Australia***

Chris Spangaro has a background in law and public policy. Chris is a former Senior Director of the Australian Energy Market Commission (AEMC) where he led the Retail and Wholesale Markets team addressing key aspects of consumer energy pricing and protection as well as the reshaping of wholesale market rules. Chris retired from the AEMC in 2017.

Chris previously worked for the NSW Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal as General Manager of the Greenhouse Gas Abatement Scheme (GGAS) and as Manager, Water Pricing. Prior to his engagement with IPART Chris was with the NSW Cabinet Office and the NSW Ministry for Police in senior policy roles. The earlier part of Chris's career was with the NSW Probation and Parole Service working primarily in disadvantaged communities across rural and urban NSW.

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### **Helen Garnett PSM, FTSE, FAICD**

**Director,  
Energy Consumers Australia**

Helen Garnett has held a wide range of directorships on government entities and ASX-listed companies in the energy, mining, agriculture and education sectors as well as entities involved in regional economic development and the arts. Helen currently chairs Generator Property Management and is a director of Grains Research and Development Corporation, Sugar Research Australia, The Crawford Fund and Developing East Arnhem Land. Helen is a Fellow of the Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering and the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

Helen was awarded the Centenary Medal in 2003 and the Public Service Medal in 2004.

### **Gavin Dufty**

**Director,  
Energy Consumers Australia**

Gavin Dufty is Manager Policy and Research at St Vincent de Paul Society, Victoria. Gavin has worked as a consumer representative in the energy sector for over 28 years undertaking research and policy evaluation on its impacts on domestic consumers.

Gavin is currently a representative on a number of industry and government committees including; gas and electricity distribution company customer consultative committees, AEMC's reliability panel, AGL's national customer council, AEMO's energy market leaders forum and the AER customer consultative group.

Gavin was awarded a centennial medal for services to community in 2001.

### **Virginia Hickey FAICD**

**Director,  
Energy Consumers Australia**

Virginia is a lawyer, corporate governance expert and a company director. She was previously a partner of commercial law firm, Finlaysons.

Virginia has significant experience in national regulatory environments through her previous governance positions as a National Competition Councillor, a National Transport Commissioner, and as the Independent Chair of the Telecommunications Ombudsman Council.

Virginia's private sector board positions have included Flinders Ports Pty Ltd, a private company which owns the Port of Adelaide ports. She has also been on a range of government boards as well as on a number of private, government and not for profits. Virginia is currently a director of People's Choice Credit Union, SportsMed SA, the Independent Chair of Fertility SA, the chair of the Audit and Risk Management Committee of Public Trustee, South Australia and a member of the Governance Committee of Anglicare SA.





## Our Reference Committee

Working with other consumer advocates and organisations, and providing information and resources to support their research, advocacy and outreach, is core to our mission. Our Reference Committee underpins our close engagement with other advocates in the sector.

Our Reference Committee continues to provide a strong advocacy network representing the diverse communities of consumers and small businesses across Australia.

### Gerard Brody (VIC)

Gerard Brody is CEO of the Consumer Action Law Centre (CALC) and has over ten years' experience as a consumer advocate and lawyer. Gerard Brody has represented consumers on a number of bodies, including the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission's Consumer Consultative Committee, and the Australian Energy Regulator's Customer Consultative Group. He is also a Consumer Director of the Energy and Water Ombudsman Victoria.

### Jo De Silva (SA)

Jo De Silva is a member of the leadership team at the South Australian Council of Social Service and directs the organisation's energy, water and climate program. Jo De Silva was an inaugural Member of the Consumer Challenge Panel and has continued on the Panel in its second iteration.

### Robin Eckermann (ACT)

Robin Eckermann is widely known for leading the creation of TransACT and serving as its Chief Architect during TransACT's \$250m advanced broadband rollout in Canberra (2000-2003). He has extensive experience in advanced network initiatives and served on two reviews of regional telecommunications. Robin Eckermann is an Adjunct Professor at the University of Canberra, a Fellow of Engineers Australia and in 2016 was inducted to the Pearcey Hall of Fame for lifetime contributions to the telecommunications industry.

### Fiona Hawthorne (QLD)

Fiona Hawthorne currently works in the Essential Services Team at the Queensland Council of Social Services, and is involved in energy policy development, designing and delivering energy and water literacy programs, and community engagement.

### Dale Holliss (QLD)

Dale Holliss is the manager of Bundaberg CANEGROWERS Ltd, Company Secretary for the Bundaberg Regional Irrigators Group and is a Director on the National Irrigators Council where he is the Energy Committee Chair.

### Bernadette Jago (TAS)

*(from July 2018)*

Bernadette Jago is the Senior Policy analyst at TasCOSS, where she is responsible for advocating for the interests of residential consumers, in particular low-income consumers.

### **Robert Mallett (TAS)**

Robert Mallett is currently the CEO of the Tasmanian Small Business Council (Tasmania's peak small business advocacy body) and also holds the position of CEO of Hair & Beauty Tasmania (Tasmania's statewide industry association specifically supporting the hair & beauty sector). Robert is a past Chair of COSBOA (the national small business peak organisation) and has held several positions on Small Business Ministerial advisory groups.

### **Craig Memery (NSW)**

Craig Memery is the Policy Team Leader for energy advocacy at the Public Interest Advocacy Centre. Craig Memery has accumulated significant expertise in energy consumer advocacy through his previous roles at the Alternative Technology Association and Energy Consumers Australia.

### **Ash Salardini (NSW)**

Ash Salardini is the Chief Economist at the New South Wales Farmer's Association. Ash has a keen interest in energy related matters from a consumer and small business perspective, given the energy intensive nature of agriculture, and given that farmers are largely small businesses.





## Summary of financial performance for 2018-19

Year Ending 30 June	2019	2018
<b>Statement of Comprehensive Income</b>		
Income	\$6,304,136	\$9,568,672
Expenses		
Grants Payments	\$2,108,866	\$2,393,572
Projects	\$2,488,504	\$1,693,282
Administration	\$4,042,737	\$3,636,056
Income Tax Expense	(\$962,377)	\$433,353
<b>Net Surplus/(Deficit)</b>	<b>(\$1,373,594)</b>	<b>\$1,412,409</b>
<b>Statement of Financial Position</b>		
Current Assets	\$3,340,450	\$5,159,148
Non-Current Assets	\$44,362	\$86,464
Current Liabilities	\$1,517,154	\$1,497,647
Non-Current Liabilities	\$0	\$506,713
<b>Equity and Reserves</b>	<b>\$1,867,658</b>	<b>\$3,241,252</b>
<b>Statement of Cash Flow</b>		
Cash Outflow	(\$9,487,870)	(\$9,277,979)
Cash Outflows from Financing Activities	(\$2,012,396)	(\$2,783,978)
Cash Inflow	\$6,462,781	\$10,137,536
Cash Inflows from Financing Activities	\$2,501,541	\$3,250,691
Cash at Beginning	\$3,599,317	\$2,273,047
<b>Cash at End</b>	<b>\$1,063,373</b>	<b>\$3,599,317</b>

### Notes:

1. Summary version only of ECA accounts. Full accounts available on ECA website [www.energyconsumersaustralia.com.au](http://www.energyconsumersaustralia.com.au)
2. ECA's Income are fees recovered by Australian Energy Market Operator in accord with national electricity & gas rules
3. AEMO revenue for Q1 2018/19 was received in advance in 2017/18
4. There was a change to ECA's Tax Status during the period. ECA was registered as a charity by the Australian Not for Profits Commission and granted income tax exemption by the Australian Tax Office.



## APPENDIX A

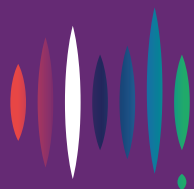
### - All grants approved in 2018-19

	Project	Organisation / Code
Networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Queensland Electricity Networks Distribution Determination Process 2020 – 2025: Fair outcomes for low income &amp; vulnerable consumers</li> </ul>	Queensland Council of Social Service (variation)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resourcing for optimal consumer engagement with energy network businesses</li> </ul>	Uniting Communities SA
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CEO Grant – Consumer participation in Open Energy workshop</li> </ul>	Cummings Economics
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CEO Grant – Tariff Reform Workshop for Consumer Advocates</li> </ul>	Council on the Ageing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CEO Grant – AER re OPEX productivity</li> </ul>	Major Energy Users Ltd
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A blueprint to lower energy prices</li> </ul>	Dynamic Analysis
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consumer input into the 2020 regulatory reset for Victorian electricity networks</li> </ul>	Brotherhood of St Laurence
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consumer Scrutiny of SA Power Networks 2020-25 Revenue Determination</li> </ul>	SA Financial Counsellors Association
Affordability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Energy Consumer Advocacy Project</li> </ul>	Tasmanian Council of Social Service
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advocacy for low energy homes</li> </ul>	Renew
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CEO Grant – NEM training for advocates</li> </ul>	Queensland Council of Social Service
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mapping Electricity Disconnections 2</li> </ul>	St Vincent de Paul Society-Victoria
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Energised consumers: Supporting ACT advocacy</li> </ul>	ACT Council of Social Service
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Equitable, Affordable Inclusive Energy Transition Advocacy Project</li> </ul>	Australian Council of Social Service
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advocate travel for Housing Workshop</li> </ul>	Renew
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Small Business Energy Summit</li> </ul>	Council of Small Business Organisations Australia
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CEO Grant – QCOSS Engagement with Queensland Competition Authority on Regulated Retail Electricity Prices.</li> </ul>	Queensland Council of Social Service
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Healthy Homes for people who rent</li> </ul>	Better Renting
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Boosting consumer advocacy to improve housing energy performance</li> </ul>	Environment Victoria

Consumer futures	• Our Grid: Concepts, strategies & relationships to engage energy consumers towards the Future Grid	RMIT (variation)
	• Consumer outcomes during energy transformation	Renew (variation)
	• Ongoing Monitoring & Assessment of CALD Energy Engagement Guidelines	Ethnic Communities Council NSW
	• Training materials for low income affordability	Fourth & Centre
	• A vulnerable consumer perspective on renewable energy program models	Moreland Energy Foundation
	• Everyday People - Connecting both sides of the digital divide	Moreland Energy Foundation
	• Home Energy Management Service	St Vincent de Paul Society-QLD
Empowering advocacy	• National Consumer Roundtable on Energy	SA Council of Social Service
	• Gill Owen Scholarship	Mr Ash Salardini
	• COTA Energy Advocacy National Workshop	Council on the Ageing
	• Advocate to attend Tasmanian Energy Development Conference	Tasmanian Small Business Council
Optimised system	• CEO Grant Consumer Scrutiny of the proposed RiverLink Interconnector	The Energy Project
	• The role of distributed energy resources (DER) in equitable decarbonisation	Total Environment Centre
	• CEO Grant - TasNetworks consultation on Project Marinus	Tasmanian Small Business Council
	• DER Export Management	Renew
	• Emergence of battery systems at a residential & wholesale level & the resulting policy implications for consumers	Engineroom Consulting
	• Community batteries: A new piece of the energy equity puzzle?	Total Environment Centre
	• A consumer perspective on inter-connector & transmission investment - Project Marinus (case study)	Tasmanian Small Business Council
	• Creating a shared power grid	Community Housing Industry Association-Victoria
Retail market	• Engagement in consultation on Victorian Default Offer	Victorian Council of Social Service







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