

Board Communique: September 2022

The Energy Consumers Australia Board met in person and via video conference on 15 September 2022

The Board met in Brisbane, holding only its second live stakeholder forum since November 2019, following a Sydney forum in May 2022.

Board Stakeholder Forum

Ahead of the release of the Queensland Government's release of its [Energy Plan](#) later this month, the Forum had as its key theme, "*Electrification of Homes and Transport: Challenges and Opportunities*". Some 60 stakeholders representing consumer and community organisations, industry, government, regulators and universities attended, and actively participated in engaging with a speakers panel.

Hosted by Professor Neil Horrocks, from the University of Queensland's Centre for Energy Data Innovation, there were three speakers at the Forum who provided their insights into the challenges and opportunities in Queensland.

Dr Liam Byrnes, from the Department of Energy and Public Works, spoke to Queensland's Zero Emission Vehicle Strategy, the Electric Super Highway. The Electric Super Highway provides 31 fast-charging sites, connecting Queenslanders and tourists travelling from Coolangatta to Port Douglas, and from Brisbane to Toowoomba in low or zero emission vehicles. Phase 3 of the project will see an additional 24 charging stations added. This project is about preparing the path for larger-scale adoption of electric vehicles in a way that meets the needs of everyday Australians.

The Board also heard from Associate Professor Wendy Miller from the Queensland University of Technology about research being conducted as part of the CRC RACE for 2030 project at the Carseldine Village Living Laboratory. The Living Lab is a project that engages directly with household consumers to understand energy use and adoption of new technologies, aiming to deliver lower costs and improve comfort for householders living in Carseldine Village. It enlists resident volunteers to participate and looks into how the home, everyday appliances, and renewable energy technologies could impact household energy bills.

These speakers were followed by remarks from Energy Consumers Australia's Chief Executive Officer, Lynne Gallagher, on the importance of people and social practices, and addressing the opportunities and barriers to an orderly and rapid transition in homes and small businesses. She reiterated the challenge, raised by the previous speakers, of addressing the poor quality of people's homes as a barrier to achieving the benefits of widespread electrification.

Governance and operational matters matters

The Board finalised the Audited Financial Accounts FY 22, the draft annual FY 24 budget submission to be submitted to the South Australian Energy Minister for approval and the Annual Report FY 2022. The Board also discussed with the Executive Leadership Team progress on Energy Consumers Australia's key policy and organisational priorities.

The Board was also updated about the progress of our first strategic intelligence project, aimed at ensuring Energy Consumers Australia has a full and comprehensive understanding of major issues across the energy sector. Such a scan, together with our surveys, research and grants projects, is a valuable tool to ensure that Energy Consumers Australia is sharing with stakeholders the focus of its work and where there are opportunities to influence outcomes to benefit residential and small business consumers.