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Grant guidelines

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Purpose

Energy Consumers Australia is directed by article 4.1 of its Constitution to

- To promote the long-term interests of Consumers of Energy with respect to the price, quality, safety, reliability and security of supply of Energy services by providing and enabling strong, coordinated, collegiate evidence-based consumer advocacy on National Energy Market matters of strategic importance or material consequence for Energy Consumers, in particular for Residential Customers and Small Business Customers.

The purpose of Energy Consumers Australia's Grants Program is directed by article 4.2 (e) of its Constitution to achieve the above through:

funding and managing grants to build knowledge and sectoral capacity supporting policy development and consumer education in the National Energy Market.

Other relevant Constitutional functions are:

- 4.2 (c) Building national and jurisdictional expertise and capacity through research, knowledge development and consultation to advance the interests of Australian Energy Consumers, in particular, residential and small business Energy Consumers
- 4.2 (d) Undertaking robust research to build knowledge, engage and influence policy development and educate Consumers in the Energy markets.

Grants program structure

Energy Consumers Australia manages four grant sub-programs.

- Participation Grants
- Gill Owen Scholarship
- Influence Grants
- Collaboration Grants

An important consideration for all grant applications is how they intend to achieve **impact** or **influence**.

Organisations could be engaged in processes that can take significant time and planning. Applicants can apply for grants to pursue longer term, strategic and substantive projects. However, where projects are longer than one year, gateway reviews may be needed at appropriate stages to ensure that the project is ready to proceed to the next stage of implementation.

Funding of research activities within the Grants Program will contribute to building knowledge, engaging and influencing policy development, industry practice and the community.

In this context, Grants Program funding may be used to support consumer education projects that identify and fill structural and systemic knowledge gaps.

Funding will not generally be prioritised for public education and awareness campaigns that are the responsibility of regulators and government, or projects targeted at informing and educating individual consumers.

Participation Grants

Participation Grants (previously known as CEO Grants) provide up to \$15,000 to enable residential or small business consumer advocacy by participation in current or forthcoming government, regulatory, or industry decision-making processes, or for small, targeted research projects.

They will support and accommodate advocates engagement and decision making in:

- government;
- regulatory and policy reviews; and
- the energy sector as a whole.

Examples of activities that may be funded include:

- engaging a consultant to provide technical or specialist expertise for a submission;
- undertaking research;
- undertaking workshops; and
- funding for reasonable travel costs (flights, accommodation, transfers) to engage in government, regulatory and industry forums relating to that process, and where video conferencing is not provided.

Gill Owen Scholarship (International Scholarship)

The **Gill Owen 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. Energy Consumers Australia will work with scholarship recipients to help them identify appropriate opportunities to communicate the findings of their research, and to help identify relevant international contacts. Examples of activities that could be funded include:

- visits to one or more countries to learn from energy consumer activities and experiences;
- meetings with key stakeholders in selected countries;
- research on issues or relevance to Australian energy consumers;
- written report documenting the learnings from the research and or overseas stakeholder meetings and their potential relevance for Australia; and
- in Australia, meetings with consumer groups, energy companies, government officials to promulgate research findings and recommendations.

Gill Owen Scholarship recipients would be expected to disseminate their research findings widely in Australia to advocates and decision-makers.

Influence Grants

Influence Grants support *advocacy and research* initiatives with a purpose of immediate influence on a specific and achievable goal on matters of material significance to residential and small business consumers. How advocacy and research could be defined are provided below.

This grants stream supports projects that aim to shift energy market practices and behaviours to deliver better consumer outcomes and where a path to success is credible within a fixed period. Applicants must make clear the pathways from the proposed project to influence and long-term impact.

Examples of activities that could be funded through an **Influence Grant** include:

- engagement national or jurisdictional policy, regulatory and market design review processes;
- engagement in a network revenue determination;
- rule changes to amend National Electricity Rules;
- developing a network of new consumer voices; or
- undertaking research.

Definition of advocacy

Advocacy can be defined as:

“Policy advocacy involves working to achieve change in a particular cause area by seeking to influence public policy – including laws, regulations and government practices.” ([Philanthropy Australia](#))

Advocacy can also be described as a set of actions that lead to realising a goal, of systems change. Or it can be working to put a problem on the agenda of decision-makers, identify a solution to that problem and build support for action on the problem and the solution.

Advocacy can involve working with peers, allies, and coalitions. It can be undertaken by a range of organisations and stakeholders. In energy markets in Australia, there are organisations, groups and individuals who have a core focus on undertaking advocacy for residential and small business energy consumers. However, there are other voices involved in energy advocacy and Energy Consumers Australia welcomes grant applications from others who can contribute to this advocacy.

Definition of research

Research can be defined as:

“the creation of new knowledge and/or the use of existing knowledge in a new and creative way so as to generate new concepts, methodologies, inventions and understandings. This could include synthesis and analysis of previous research to the extent that it is new and creative. This definition of research is consistent with a broad notion of research and experimental development (R&D) as comprising ‘creative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of man [human-kind], culture and society, and the use of this stock of knowledge to devise new applications’.” ([Australian Research Council](#))

Taking a translational research approach seeks to produce more meaningful, applicable results that directly benefit people, communities and society. The goal of translational research is to translate (move) basic science discoveries or knowledge more quickly and efficiently into practice.

Collaboration Grants

Collaboration Grants support complex, multi-year projects put forward by a group of organisations aiming to collaborate, with the aim to drive energy systems change. Collaborative research projects will have an intent to contribute to a policy or advocacy outcome and will involve working with advocates and other stakeholders.

Applicants who wish to consider developing a **Collaboration Grant** should submit a brief (no more than 2 pages) proposal to the Grants Manager at grants@energyconsumersaustralia.com.au.

Eligibility criteria

Influence Grants and Participation Grants

To be eligible applicants must be a not-for-profit organisation, with a purpose or mandate that permits them to be an advocate for residential and small business energy consumers, or a bona fide research organisation with a public purpose. The proposed project must demonstrate how it will build knowledge and/or sectoral capacity supporting policy development and consumer education in the National Energy Market.

Gill Owen Scholarship

To be eligible for a **Gill Owen Scholarship**, applicants must demonstrate some or all of the following attributes/experiences:

- be working as a Consumer Advocate or related organisation at present (or with recent experience), preferably one which has worked on National Energy Market issues;
- is relatively experienced and/or senior in the relevant sector;
- has good knowledge of the key issues facing Australian energy consumers
- has good networking skills;
- has good writing skills – Energy Consumers Australia will require a comprehensive bio of grantees work experiences; and
- has the ability to prepare and deliver presentations – for their meetings overseas and on their return to Australia.

Guidance

The questions below are intended to provide applicants with guidance when developing their application.

THEME	GUIDING QUESTIONS
Problem statement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the problem and why is it critical for households or small business consumers? • Is it a short-term, medium-term or longer-term problem? • What evidence/knowledge gaps are being filled by this project? • How does this build on existing research or understanding of the problem?
Impact statement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the long-term change to be achieved from this project?
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the short-term outcomes resulting from the project outputs? • Does the project deliver a direct benefit to residential or SME energy consumers? • What does success look like?
Methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why is this approach the most effective and efficient way for your organisation to tackle this challenge? • Do the benefits outweigh the costs, and are costs prudent and minimised? • How will your organisation or project partners/others contribute to the project (financially or in-kind)? • Has a robust research methodology been provided e.g. which includes a hypothesis, well thought-out research questions, approach to validating findings? • Who is to be influenced? • Have the right decision-makers been identified? • Has an effective advocacy and/or stakeholder engagement approach been provided? • How will project findings/learnings be disseminated? • What are the opportunities to build or leverage partnerships, networks, or coalitions in this project?
Skills and experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why is your team or organisation best placed to do this work? • Where there are gaps in capability or capacity, have appropriate project partners been identified?

Information on previous grants can be viewed in Energy Consumers Australia's [Grant Archive](#) and provides reports and outputs from previously funded projects.

Additional resources

Information on Energy Consumers Australia strategic priorities can be found in the [Energy Consumers Australia 2021-24 Strategic Plan](#).

Strategic plans for NEM governance bodies are provided below.

- [Energy Ministers Strategic Energy Plan](#)
- [AEMO Corporate plan](#)
- [AEMC Strategic Plan](#)
- [AER Strategic Plan](#)
- [ESB Post-2025 Market Design Directions Paper](#)

How to apply

Grant applications must be made through the Energy Consumers Australia *SmartyGrants* website <https://energyconsumersaustralia.smartygrants.com.au>

Please contact Energy Consumers Australia directly if you have any questions about your application at grants@energyconsumersaustralia.com.au.

Grant approval process

The Energy Consumers Australia Board assesses **Influence Grant** applications twice a year (usually April and October). Information about application deadlines and Board dates can be found on the [Grants/For Applicants](#) page of the Energy Consumers Australia website.

Participation Grant applications can be submitted at any time with an assessment turnaround time of typically two weeks.

Further information

For further information on the Energy Consumers Australia Grants Program please email: grants@energyconsumersaustralia.com.au or visit the Grants website on www.energyconsumersaustralia/grants/applicants.