

CUSTOMER CONSULTATIVE GROUP

Meeting Communiqué – 14 June 2023

1. The Australian Energy Regulator's (AER) Customer Consultative Group (CCG) met on 14 June 2023 to discuss current issues affecting residential and small energy customers.
2. The CCG Chair, Elissa Freeman, provided a welcome and overview of the meeting.
3. In the Compliance matters discussion, the AER and CCG members engaged in a discussion regarding issues of concern.
4. The AER ran a discussion on *The transition from gas and impacts on consumers*, which was co-designed by CCG members Lyndsay Bassett (ACTCOSS) and David Harding and Simon Moore (both Business NSW). The discussion covered work currently being undertaken by the AER in this area, the outcomes the AER are working towards and challenges currently facing the gas sector. CCG members provided insights into the challenges and inequities faced by consumers in the transition.
5. AER Chair, Clare Savage, covered a number of AER updates including:
 - the 2023–24 Federal Budget
 - the final Default Market Offer 2023–24 (DMO5), released on 25 May 2023
 - the Game Changer initiative being undertaken as part of the AER's Towards Energy Equity strategy
 - Victorian gas distribution revenue decisions
 - the AER's Review of Consumer Protections for Future Energy Services.

The following topics were discussed during a Q&A response session with the AER Board:

- The AER's visibility of wholesale market contracts.
 - Design of the Default Market Offer.
 - Participating in and progressing the Game Changer.
6. In the Emerging issues session, CCG members discussed the following:
 - Cost of living (including high energy prices) and the effects on households and small businesses.
 - The energy sector transition to renewables, including the transition away from gas.
 - Energy retailer competition and enticement offers for consumers.
 - Trusted sources of information and education for energy consumers.
 7. The AER ran a discussion on *Affordability*, which looked at the challenges facing consumers in meeting their energy costs and what the AER is currently doing to support

consumers experiencing affordability issues. CCG member feedback was sought and provided on upcoming compliance and enforcement priorities and two actions from the Towards Energy Equity strategy.

8. The AER provided an update on the AER's consumer focussed work, including the launch of the Energy Made Easy (EME) beta website.
9. CCG members met for a Members Only discussion, in which they discussed topics and the structure for future CCG meetings.