

CUSTOMER CONSULTATIVE GROUP

Meeting Communiqué – 22 August 2023

1. The Australian Energy Regulator's (AER) Customer Consultative Group (CCG) met on 22 August 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, noting that this meeting was being observed by a mentee in the Consumers' Federation of Australia mentoring program.
3. AER Board member, Justin Oliver, covered a number of AER updates, including the:
 - draft guidance on amended national energy objectives
 - draft Contribution Determination Guideline for recovering costs of the NSW Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap
 - issues paper for *Retail Performance Reporting Procedures and Guidelines* review
 - final response and proposed actions for flexible export limits
 - Game Changer initiative.

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

- A need for targeted consumer engagement following amendment of the national energy objectives.
 - Considerations for demographic information collected and reported by retailers.
 - The role of data and monitoring in informing the energy transition.
 - Clarity of ownership in relation to the implementation of new energy technologies.
4. In the *Emerging issues* session, CCG members discussed the following:
 - Cost of living, affordability and access to available supports.
 - The gas transition.
 - Visibility / availability of consumer billing data.
 - Tariff types.
 - Engagement practices (network resets).
 5. The AER ran a discussion on *The future of Energy Made Easy*. Staff summarised current services and limitations of the website and CCG members provided observations and feedback on how we can ensure that Energy Made Easy remains an empowering and relevant tool to help consumers navigate an evolving energy market.

6. The AER ran a discussion on the *Review of Consumer Protections for Future Energy Services*. CCG members provided feedback on the case for change and proposed framework and implementation plan as presented by staff.
7. In the *Compliance matters* discussion, the AER and CCG members engaged in a discussion regarding issues of concern.
8. In *Items for noting*, Thriving Communities Partnership reflected on constructive conversations with major retailers at a recent summit on family violence.
9. In *Any other business*, the AER shared consumer insights from the AER Contact Centre and Energy Made Easy beta site. Staff also reminded members that the AER has English-language and translated brochures with hardship information available to request.
10. CCG members met for a *Members only discussion*, in which they provided feedback on this meeting and discussed priorities for future meetings, including a focus on agile and flexible regulation during the energy transition.