

## CUSTOMER CONSULTATIVE GROUP

### Meeting Communiqué – 2 November 2023

1. The Australian Energy Regulator's (AER) Customer Consultative Group (CCG) met on 2 November 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. Elissa noted that this was TasCOSS' last meeting as they have resigned from the CCG.
3. AER Chair, Clare Savage, covered a number of AER updates, including the:
  - release of the [State of the Energy Market report 2023](#)
  - release of [AER's guidance on the amended National Energy Objectives](#)
  - changes in consumer bill design and content as a result of the Better Bills Guideline implementation
  - issues paper and consultation on [2024-25 default market offer determination](#)
  - [release of 2024-29 revenue proposal draft decisions](#) for six network businesses
  - release of [Directions Paper on Social licence](#) for electricity transmission projects.

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

- Positive feedback on the new EME website.
  - The development of the interim value of emissions reduction.
4. In the *Emerging issues* session, CCG members discussed the following:
    - Cost of living and hardship levels
    - Experiences of First Nations consumers
    - Preparing for extreme weather events
    - Metering, pricing and tariffs
    - Access to Energy Accounts Payment Assistance (EAPA) vouchers, concessions and use of Buy Now Pay Later schemes
    - Consumer protections
    - Engagement practices (network resets)
  5. In the *Compliance matters* discussion, the AER and CCG members engaged in a discussion regarding issues of concern and the AER provided an update regarding the Compliance and Enforcement Priorities.

6. The AER ran a discussion on the [Review of the exemptions framework for embedded networks](#). Staff sought the group's feedback on some of the key issues for the review. These included the potential harms and benefits of embedded networks, and policy options if the review established a case for change.
7. The AER ran a discussion on the *Default Market Offer (DMO) 2024-25 Issues Paper*, which included an overview of DMO 6 (which applies from 1 July 2024), the submission process, the historical impact of the DMO and components of DMO pricing. The discussion focused on advanced metering and the retail allowance. CCG member feedback has been incorporated into a [formal submission](#).
8. The AER ran a discussion on *Supporting customers experiencing payment difficulty in the National Energy Customer Framework (NECF)*. Staff explored the scope and problem definition for a potential review focused on supporting consumers experiencing payment difficulty with CCG members (part of objective 3 of the AER's [Towards Energy Equity strategy](#)), to inform a staff presentation to the AER Board in coming weeks.
9. There were no items for noting.
10. In *Any other business*, the AER provided an update on the Review of consumer protections for future energy services, noting the imminent release of the final document; PIAC updated the group on their work on a vulnerability workstream, and the CCG Chair advised of an online public briefing taking place by the Alice Springs Future Grid Project (invite to be sent to CCG members).
11. CCG members met for a *Members only* discussion, in which they provided feedback on this meeting and future topics for the AER to cover.