

# AER REFERENCE GROUP

**Record of meeting – 13 December 2017**

1. The AER’s consumer information reference group (ARG) met for the sixth time on 13 December 2017 (see attendee list at **Attachment A**).
2. The AER’s Sarah Proudfoot (SP) greeted attendees and introduced the AER’s Pablo Albornoz (PA) who presented to the group on the consumer research findings about the fact sheet concepts.
3. PA presented to the group a summary of this work, with particular focus on:

* The methodology and findings from BETA’s draft report
* Insight into consumer testing undertaken by a retailer
* Discussion of the outstanding issues (language and the inclusion of rates)

1. The group discussion following covered:

* the different results generated from the customer focus groups versus those from framed field experiments
* how best the fact sheets can account for the needs of small business customers
* whether the same proposed Energy Price Fact Sheet (EPFS) should be used across all customer testing platforms
* concerns the consumer testing undertaken to date did not fully examine all issues and what scope exists for further consumer testing before finalising the EPFS
* the drafting of the revised Retail Pricing Information Guidelines (RPIG) and the incorporation of proposed fact sheets
* how the upcoming development of the reference price by the AER through a consultant might impact the design of the fact sheets

1. The AER’s Simon Kidd (SK) chaired a discussion about language and terminology on fact sheets and the group discussion following covered:

* the possibility of using a plain English consultant to assist in synthesizing the variations of the terminology
* acknowledging there are some terms used in the energy industry that can more easily be changed than others
* understanding how some terms are a reflection of distribution network practices and any changes will require the distribution networks to also adopt them
* recognition of the need to be considered in making any language or term changes as it could have potentially confusing consequences for customers

1. SK closed the meeting by:

* flagging the next reference group meeting would be held in January 2018
* future meetings will be held monthly. However if there are matters that require input from members outside scheduled meetings, we will arrange for out-of-session meetings.

The next steps:

* AER to circulate:
* a copy of letter from AER Chair Paula Conboy to the Prime Minister updating him on the various pieces of work being undertaken following the retailer roundtables (circulated on **15 December 2017**)
* a copy of BETA’s draft report when it becomes available

**Attachment A**



## ARG Attendees

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| Organisation | Name |
| Australian Energy Regulator | Sarah Proudfoot - General Manager, Retail Markets (Chair) |
| ActewAGL Retail | Kate Goatley - Manager, Business Projects |
| Australian Energy Council | Tess Fitzgerald - Retail Policy Manager  Fiona Simon – General Manager, Strategy |
| Brotherhood of St Laurence | David Bryant - Research Officer |
| Consumer Action Law Centre | Zac Gillam - Senior Policy Officer |
| Consumer Policy Research Centre | Lauren Solomon – CEO |
| EnergyAustralia | Samantha Nunan - Industry Regulatory Lead, Corporate |
| Energy Consumers Australia | Sabiene Heindl - Director, Strategic Engagement |
| Origin Energy | Timothy Wilson - Manager, Regulatory Policy |
| Powershop | Michael Benveniste - Head of Commercial & Strategy |
| Red Energy | Ben Barnes – Regulatory Manager |
| Uniting Communities/Uniting Care | Mark Henley‎ - Manager Advocacy, Uniting Communities and Energy Advocate, Uniting Care |

**Apologies**

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| Organisation | Name |
| Brotherhood of St Laurence | Damian Sullivan - Research and Policy Senior Manager |
| COTA Australia | Robyn Robinson - Director  Sue McGrath - National Policy Manager |

**Non-member attendees**

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| Organisation | Name |
| AER | Rebecca Holland - Director, Retail Electricity Pricing Inquiry (Melbourne) |
| Department of the Environment and Energy (Cth) | Clare Valence (Canberra) |
| Essential Services Commission of Victoria | Jodie McQueen (Melbourne) |