

Acquittal Report

This Report will be provided to the Panel.

PROJECT OVERVIEW			
Grant no :	AP 611	Date of progress report	30/06/2014
Grant recipient	South Australian Council of Social Service		
Project title	National Consumer Roundtable on Energy – organisation of meetings		
PROJECT OUTCOMES : outline the project outcomes during the reporting period			
Describe the intended project outcome/s, and whether they were met. Where the outcomes were different from those proposed in the grant application, explain the reasons for the variation			
<p>All of the following intended project outcomes were met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • November Steering Committee meeting agenda included setting of strategic priorities. • March and June Steering Committee meeting agendas included strategic scanning for RT meetings. • All RT meetings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Set a strategic agenda for national energy consumer advocacy; ○ Identified opportunities for Roundtable members' collaboration; ○ Enhanced relationships, both: between Roundtable members; and between Roundtable members and key industry and government decision makers. • Achieved understanding amongst Roundtable members of where the opportunities for participation in collaborative advocacy are. 			
PROJECT OUTPUTS: list the main outputs during the reporting period			
Outline the project outputs. Where the outputs were different from those proposed in the grant application, explain the reasons for the variation.			
<p>All of the agreed project outputs were met as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convened first meeting of Roundtable Steering Committee • Roundtable meeting November 2013 • Collation and distribution of November meeting action items • Convened meeting of Roundtable Steering Committee • Roundtable meeting March 2014 • Collation and distribution of March meeting action items • Convened meeting of Roundtable Steering Committee • Roundtable meeting June 2014 • Collation and distribution of June meeting action items 			
Please provide an assessment of the project's effectiveness – did the project meet its key success indicators?			

The objectives of this project were to:

- Set a strategic agenda for national energy consumer advocacy;
- Identify opportunities for Roundtable members' collaboration, and;
- Enhance relationships, both: between Roundtable members; and between Roundtable members and key industry and government decision makers.

These objectives were achieved by organising three strategic meetings of the National Consumer Roundtable on Energy with oversight of a Steering Committee. The first meeting was held in November 2013, the second in March 2014 and the third in June 2014.

In addition to the planned outcomes, engagement with the Australian Energy Market Commission (AEMC) has led to strategic outcomes in the area of consumer engagement. Following the November Roundtable, the Roundtable Steering Committee met with a team from the AEMC:

- Paul Smith, Chief Executive
- Chris Spangaro, Senior Director, Markets
- Richard Owens, Director, Networks
- Mark Allen, Director, Markets
- Tara D'Souza, Senior Advisor, Strategy and Economic Analysis

The meeting considered a range of consumer engagement options for the AEMC (refer to Attachment 1) and members of the Roundtable Steering Committee provided direct feedback on these (refer to Attachment 2). One major outcome to flow from this conversation is the establishment by the AEMC of semi-annual consumer forums. The first semi-annual forum was held on May 19 in Melbourne.

Throughout the project period, the Roundtable meetings have acted as a vehicle to nurture key relationships including with:

- Jessie Foran, Adviser to the Energy Minister, the Hon Ian Macfarlane MP
- John Pierce, AEMC
- Andrew Reeves, AER
- David Swift, AEMO
- Andrew Dillon, ESAA
- Cameron O'Reilly, ERAA
- Brendan Morling, DoI
- Gary Richards, DoI
- Dominic Zaal, DoI
- Veronica Westacott, DoI
- Mark Paterson, CSIRO

At the June Hobart meeting, Gary Richards from the Department of Industry commented that the advocacy demonstrated by the Roundtable on the Energy White Paper session (Canberra March 2014) was formative and those conversations stayed with the Department during the white paper process. DoI is interested in future discussions with Roundtable members regarding the Energy Green Paper.

Support for the Roundtable is extremely high amongst delegates as the below evaluation responses indicate:

Roundtable Feedback Form Analysis

Aspect	Average rating - meeting 1 - 19 responses	Average rating - meeting 2 - 18 responses	Average rating - meeting 3 - 19 responses
Session content Day 1	8.6	8.5	7.5
Session content Day 2	8.5	8.0	8.5
Context setting	n/a	7.9	7.5
Panel with regulatory/industry parties	n/a	8.1	7.7
Department of Industry EWP session	n/a	7.8	6.7
Overall relevancy of topics and approach	9.4	8.6	7.4
Facilitator	No question	9.3	8.3

Do you have any other comments on the project?

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Do you have any comments/feedback on the Panel's procedures?

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Please list any attachments to the report (reports, submissions, media releases, etc) – please identify any that should not be posted on the website.

National Consumer Roundtable on Energy – November 2013 Meeting Action Items
 National Consumer Roundtable on Energy – March 2014 Meeting Action Items
 National Consumer Roundtable on Energy – June 2014 Meeting Action Items
 AEMC presentation to the National Consumer Roundtable on Energy Steering Committee
 Notes from AEMC presentation to National Consumer Roundtable on Energy Steering Committee

PROJECT EXPENDITURE

The Funding Agreement (clause 3.3) requires you to provide a detailed breakdown of the costs and expenses associated

with the grant – attach that to this report.

National Consumer Roundtable on Energy Meeting - Sydney

28th & 29th November 2013

Action Items

Item	Responsible	Timeframe
Flag for discussion at March Roundtable: Affordability and the safety net; the future of the Roundtable and the relationship to the National Advocacy Body; energy efficiency programs (advocacy/policy); is competition delivering consumer benefits? (study); power of choice implementation (separate workshop?); effective advocacy in the new political climate - carbon pricing, ret review, white paper	SACOSS	Roundtable March 2014
Engagement on the AEMC's Terms of Reference for the national review of the effectiveness of competition	Mark Henley	6/12/13
Roundtable Steering Committee to facilitate discussions about Roundtable strategic engagement with AEMO, AER and AEMC	SACOSS	Ongoing
Gas advocacy – prioritise attendance at Melbourne workshop and proposed Masterclass	All	December and TBA
Consumer engagement forum	CUAC	TBA
Collate thoughts and questions raised regarding gas	SACOSS	ASAP
Invitation to be issued to the Federal Minister or advisors to attend the next Roundtable to discuss issues	SACOSS	ASAP
Smart meters – costs and protections briefing paper	Janine (supported by Craig, Dean & Sue)	2 weeks before March RT
Tariffs – briefing paper	Gavin, Jo B & Mark H	2 weeks before March RT
Network regulatory re-sets - briefing paper	Mark Henley	2 weeks before March RT

Briefing Paper outline

- Background (1 paragraph)
- Key issues (dot points)
- What consumers want/ need (the ask)
- Suggestions for next steps for RT members (including how we collaborate)
- Maximum 2 pages

National Consumer Roundtable on Energy Meeting – Canberra

27th and 28th March 2014

Action items

Item	Responsible	Timeframe
<p>Energy efficiency programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidate key learnings from energy efficiency schemes & circulate to the Roundtable (RT) delegates • Create a repository of all reports in the SACOSS library 	<p>Carly (QCOSS), Bronwyn (SACOSS) & Tejopala Rawls (Kildonan UnitingCare) SACOSS</p>	<p>June RT</p>
<p>AER, AEMC & AEMO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce RT delegates to the AER's Consumer Challenge Panel (CCP) via email • The AEMC highlighted there is important work coming up over the next 12 months and urged delegates to get involved. The AEMC indicated capacity to conduct face-to-face discussions with advocates regarding submissions • The AEMO (David Swift) is willing to communicate with delegates via email and contact details were provided 	<p>Jo (SACOSS)</p>	<p>30/4/14</p>
<p>Energy Consumers Australia (ECA)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate ongoing questions from RT delegates to the Department of Industry (DoI) • Delegates invited to subscribe to updates on the SCER website • Delegates interested in influencing the ECA's Constitution were advised by DoI to consult with their relevant Ministers 	<p>Jo (SACOSS)</p> <p>All delegates All delegates</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Topics identified for the June Roundtable agenda:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lessons on retail competition/deregulation (for Tasmania and Queensland) • Affordability and access (political environment & positive advocacy, programs and education) 	<p>Roundtable Steering Committee</p>	<p>June RT</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positioning the RT in the new landscape and its relationship to the ECA • 10 year anniversary of the RT – reflect on the past (inc. summarising key people and contributions, what has and hasn't worked, national orgs that have left RT & implications) • Energy Green Paper – DoI invited to attend • Energy Supply Association of Australia on network tariffs 		
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Emerging issues

Item	Responsible	Timeframe
<p><i>Gas National Strategy Work (3 streams)</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consumer options and impacts 2. Energy security 3. Connections and networks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delegates can register interest in project work &/or joining a Steering Committee for streams 1 & 3 by contacting the stream lead • Delegates advised the Gas Master Class (April) will provide good background information 	<p>Craig (ATA) Mark B (TEC) Martin (CUAC)</p>	<p>30/4/14</p>
<p><i>Future of the Roundtable</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delegates agreed that SACOSS will apply for funding to host the 2014 – 2015 series. The strategic focus of the Roundtable will be emphasised in the application. 	<p>Jo (SACOSS)</p>	<p>ASAP</p>
<p><i>ECA Jurisdictional Lobbying</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft a joint position paper and circulate (key issue: grant funding) • Email good news stories of CAP funding to Mark for the position paper • Table the Roundtable position at the SCER meeting • IP issue (who owns it and who can use it?). Check grant funding applications. • State delegates to lobby Ministers 	<p>Mark H (Uniting Communities) All delegates Gavin (St Vincent de Paul) All delegates QLD, SA, VIC, NSW & TAS</p>	<p>April 2014 April 2014 May 2014 30/4/14 30/4/14</p>

<p><i>Future Grid Forum</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate communication between Mark Paterson and a small working group from the Roundtable. Interested members - Jo D, Mark H, Mark B, Craig, Robyn and Martin 	Jo (SACOSS)	30/4/14
<p><i>Energy Green Paper Response</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Several organisations indicated capacity to make a submission on the Green Paper RT requested the DoI to provide advanced notice on the consultation process DoI indicated a willingness to accept comments and reports via email A phone conference was highlighted as an accessible method for future communication Circulation of DoI contact details to RT delegates Include as an agenda item for June Roundtable 	Jo (SACOSS)	30/4/14
<p><i>Political Landscape</i></p>	Jo (SACOSS) RT Steering Committee	30/4/14 June RT
<p>CALC/CUAC Proposed Rule Change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distribute a light and medium template to RT delegates for the rule change. Several organisations indicated capacity to make a submission. Circulate the phone number & email of the AEMC submission contact person to delegates. Delegates need to contact AMEC if submitting as the deadline has been extended. Resource assistance for submissions 	Denise (CALC)	28/3/2014
	Denise (CALC)	28/3/2014
	Martin (CUAC)	28/3/2014

National Consumer Roundtable on Energy Meeting – Canberra 19th and 20th June 2014

Action items

Item	Responsible	Timeframe
Create an online calendar of upcoming forums and opportunities to collaborate for Roundtable delegates (via Nemchat)	Claire to investigate (CALC) Mark Henley to assist (Uniting Communities)	
Facilitate ongoing dialogue of consumer issues between Roundtable representatives and the Department of Industry (DoI)	Jo (SACOSS)	
DoI to engage with the Roundtable on the rule change and opportunities for public consultation and engagement on Demand side response process	DoI via Jo (SACOSS)	
Issues the Department of Industry (Brendan Morling) have taken on notice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concessions: federal funding and the role of federal government in this area • Concessions & income support: the federal governments engagement in the space • The prominence of the gas death spiral on the Energy Councils radar 	Raised by Jo (SACOSS) Raised by Rhiannon (NCOSS) Raised by Craig (ATA). Craig to email report to Brendan	
Facilitate discussions on disconnections between the ERAA and Roundtable organisations	Jo (SACOSS)	
Facilitate a phone conference between Roundtable organisations and DoI on the Energy Green Paper	Jo (SACOSS)	
National Concessions Review – write a letter to John Pierce to nominate the AEMC as the review body	Jo (SACOSS) to work with Dean (VCOSS), Rhiannon (NCOSS) & Carly (QCOSS). Mark H (Uniting Communities) to work on terms of reference	
Fix It Campaign – CUAC/CALC rule change request. Organise teleconference with Roundtable members prior to the next steps of the process. Nemchat to be used to engage with Roundtable members on the process and other options	Martin (CUAC)	
AEMO consultation suggested options: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Workshops – SACOSS could co-ordinate either side of the Roundtable 2. Internal staff development at the AEMO by Roundtable members 3. Funding for an internal staff member at AEMO 	Craig (ATA) to coordinate & lead	

Item	Responsible	Timeframe
<p>Consumer choice in a complex market (choice architecture)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of variables that are reasonable for consumers to consider • Information that is useful for consumers (i.e. spend for average household sizes) • Improving regulatory understanding on how consumers make decisions (consider research by academics, regulatory bodies/government or industry) • Research funding – consider AEMC • For people who can't engage with market information consider the role of energy brokers <p>Coordinate informal feedback on network processes to the Consumer Challenge Panel</p>	<p>Roundtable Steering Committee to look at these issues for future Roundtable agenda items</p> <p>Craig (ATA)</p>	

Positive Feedback!

Gary Richards from the Department of Industry commented that the advocacy demonstrated by the Roundtable on the Energy White Paper session (Canberra March 2014) was formative and those conversations stayed with the department during the white paper process. DoI is interested in future discussions with Roundtable members regarding the Energy Green Paper.

Collaborative projects from group work (see appendix A)

Item	Responsible	Timeframe
<p>Tariff Design</p> <p>Working with vulnerable groups</p> <p>Energy efficiency</p>	<p>SVdP, CUAC, ATA & PIAC(?)</p> <p>NCOSS, SACOSS, WACOSS, Kildonan, COTA Tas, COTA QCOSS, TASCROSS, CALC, Anglicare Tas & QCOSS</p> <p>PIAC & VCOSS</p>	

Appendix A: Collaborative projects

1. Tariff Design

The Problem:

The design of tariffs is changing; the end point is uncertain

Aims:

- Identification of changes & their effects
- Evaluation
- Respond to 'losers' of the changes who are low income/vulnerable

What/how:

Identify

- Existing studies (desktop research)
- Tariff tracker analysis
- Ask networks/regulators to model effects

Evaluate

- Rate and extent of change on bills
- Suitability of concessions and gaps
- Reduction of network costs (optimising use)

Respond

- NECF
- Retailers overlay
- Government concessions, energy efficiency, literacy and education
- Metering
- AEMC
- Industry (ESAA)
- Ministers

Who:

Above + SVdP, CUAC, ATA & PIAC(?)

Next steps:

- Advocate for modelling
- Review existing modelling
- Respond to rule change

Sticky note ideas:

- Social tariff, simple tariff, flat, cheap for vulnerable/low income
- Use of Excel – tariff St Vinnies!
- Dialogue about price
- Tariff designs
- Relative Price Index
- Network tariff redesign
- RT recommendation

2. Working with Vulnerable Groups

Concessions reforms – best practices to share

Hardship programs + consumer protections (e.g. wrongful disconnections fine to utility) – best practices to share

Hardship

SACOSS & CALC

- Both doing hardship best practice guidelines
- Report on best practice across utilities
- CALC based on Financial Counsellors Australia (Fiona Guthrie)

Aim

- Looking for best practice hardship program (Roundtable endorsed)
- AER also reviewing hardship programs (reporting at the end of the year)

Opportunity

- Other states to use SACOSS and CALC reports locally
- Use email list to collaborate to develop core document

Concessions

- Cuts from Commonwealth – what will states do?
- Opportunity to put our position forward
- Potentially change structure – move to percentage based? better targeting
- Government has to consult with the sector
- QCOSS paper & ACOSS paper as starting point
- Higher level – can we agree to a vision for the national type of concessions
- Fundamental principles (established by WACOSS)
 - evidence based
 - consultation
 - transitions
 - adequacy and targeting
 - overall growth
- Might want to work more broadly than energy concessions
- Automatically entitled to concessions via Centrelink
- Bills should all state hardship policy and concessions
- Need a national process to ask Federal Government to reinstate concessions
- Aim to agree on principles and a framework
- Be clear about concessions overall, high level agreements but target energy concessions (how relates to tariffs, hardship policy etc)

Who Does What?

- Email Hardship reports to project group – Bronwyn & Claire
- Send links to ACOSS & QCOSS concession reports – Marguerite

- Send old concession reports – Rhiannon
- Email concessions principles & ask Dean Lombard to contribute – Chris
- Set up email distribution list – Bronwyn
- Collaboration and contribution – All
- Push the group along – Margie
- Send an email to Nemchat re: who wants to join the concessions/hardship project group – Claire

Project members:

Rhiannon – NCOSS

Bronwyn – SACOSS

Chris – WACOSS

Joanna – Kildonan UnitingCare

Keree – COTA Tas

Robyn – COTA QLD

Marguerite – TASCOS

Claire – CALC

Anthony – Anglicare Tas

Margie – Anglicare Tas

Rose – QCOSS

Sticky note ideas

- Better use of case studies /videos of vulnerable client issues driving advocacy. Reality of vulnerable clients situation
- Concessions reform (single portal, whole of government reporting, means testing, adequacy)
- Structural unaffordability – inability to pay
- Develop a guide to engagement for vulnerable communities for network and retail businesses – How to Manual
- Disconnections research & concessions in SA – other approaches e.g. Vic
- Roundtable to develop preferred Hardship and Concessions package and advocate widely
- Best practice guideline for energy retailers on hardship policies
- Disconnections (actual and threatened, low income households & understanding their experience, surveying threats and impact of funding and welfare cuts)
- Network sales – link to customer protections
- Put all hardship policies together to find best and worst practice for lobbying in each state
- Collaborative work on concessions
- Principles on concessions across Australia (location equity)
- Energy and transport concessions
- Access to energy – how to maintain energy supply to people who can't pay
- Disconnections advocacy
- Lack of capacity to pay cannot be sorted out by hardship policies
- Snapshot of how legislations and policies for utilities affect disadvantaged people in different states. Dive deep to see what is really on the ground
- Community energy retailer guidelines for hardship to allow a community retailer to get off the ground
- Concessions harmonisation, concessions framework
- Energy efficiency – hardship correlates to high rise poor living (low cost rental)
- PPM systems in remote Aboriginal Communities (supply capacity mode?)
- Engaging vulnerable customers during market changes
- Smarter prepayment without full disconnection
- Access to VRGS – awareness about it, retailer conditions on it, complexity of form
- Reform policy to no disconnections
- Fuel poverty issue for older people = social isolation
- Develop a definitive document - Roundtable endorsed position on preferred structure for energy concessions
- Improvements to the process of EEPS in SA
- Domestic violence and utilities
- Research on the impact of financial counselling on utility hardship – where it does and doesn't work?
- Develop principles for ensuring access to benefits of competition for older and vulnerable people
- Capacity to pay - policy for people who just can't afford to pay, what is reasonable to accept?
- EAPA/VRG's best practices
- Impact of welfare cuts on disconnections

3. Energy Efficiency

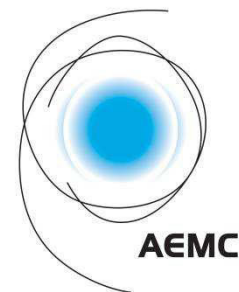
1. Non-government funding/financing of energy efficiency programs – engagement between consumers and community energy sector ‘C4CE’
2. Roundtable position paper on replacement for HESS (behaviour change)
3. Roundtable position paper on overcoming split incentives for public/private housing tenants (retrofitting), for example:
 - Environmental upgrade assessments
 - Mandatory or voluntary energy efficiency disclosure – CSIRO & LJ Hooker project
 - Costs of increased ratings
 - National consistency in star ratings
 - % of appliances as alternative to building envelope
 - Target low income owner-occupiers e.g. expand NILS

Progressing It

- PIAC LAP project
- Minimum standards for rental housing – VCOSS

Sticky note ideas

- EE & RE for low income households
- Design of RT replacement for HESS program and advocacy for it
- Energy efficiency campaigning
- Tax deduction / social investment / local community investment. Community energy efficiency project targeted at low income households
- Energy efficiency and renewable generation is most cost effective in regional and remote communities where the cost of power is greatest
- Energy efficiency programs
- Advocacy for solar for low income tenants – virtual metering
- Develop position paper on energy efficiency options and split incentives in public housing
- Incentives for energy efficiency for public and rental housing. Push housing ministers to install solar hot water when existing hot water is too old



Stakeholder Engagement with Consumer Advocates

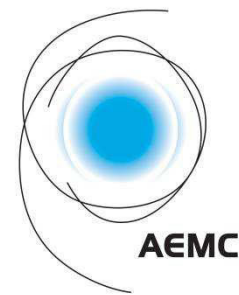
Discussion with the Consumer Roundtable Steering Committee



Paul Smith
CHIEF EXECUTIVE
AUSTRALIAN ENERGY MARKET COMMISSION

AGENDA

- Overview of current stakeholder engagement
- Proposed actions to increase stakeholder engagement with consumer advocacy groups
- Questions and discussion



Overview of current stakeholder engagement



Project-specific stakeholder engagement

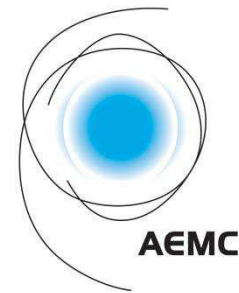
Based on the size and expected impact or interest in the project, the AEMC may undertake the following with consumer advocates:

- Public forums and workshops
 - Invitations to attend and opportunities to speak (eg Distribution network pricing arrangements, NSW Competition Review)
- Working groups
 - Participation in mixed (eg Power of choice) or consumer only (eg NSW Competition Review)
- Meetings with project team
- Seek feedback on direct consumer research (eg NSW Competition Review, NSW Reliability Review)

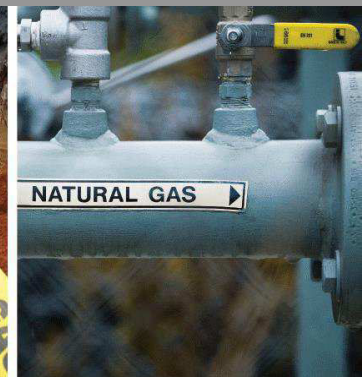
Broader and/or strategic stakeholder engagement

The AEMC participates in or facilitates the following engagement opportunities with consumer advocates on an ad hoc basis:

- Consumer Roundtable
 - Respond to requests to present and participate
- Events
 - Attend consumer advocate hosted events or conferences as relevant to work program or on invitation
- AEMC Strategic Priorities
- AEMC Stakeholder Survey
- One on one meetings on request (meetings can be requested with staff or with the Commission, eg CUAC/CALC briefed Commission on their rule change request)



Proposed actions to increase stakeholder engagement with Consumer Advocacy groups

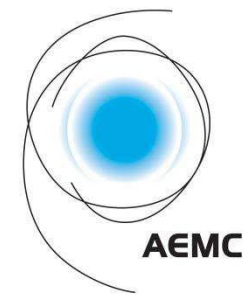


Consumer focused communications

- New website
 - Sections with plain English explanations of the market
 - Work program/project information and dates
- E-newsletter
 - Quarterly newsletter with corporate stories and project updates
- Plain English documents
 - Improve style of review and determination documents
- Submissions
 - Offer to take minutes during meetings and following acceptance of minutes by representative, treat as formal submissions

Consumer focused engagement

- Host a semi-annual event for consumer advocates
 - Opportunity to discuss broader strategic and high level market-wide issues
 - Consumer advocacy groups to present and attend
 - Key staff and Commission to attend
- Make more use of consumer surveys, deliberative forums and focus groups
 - In general, as well as project specific research
- Increase speaking and attendance at consumer advocacy events or other engagements (eg Consumer Roundtable)

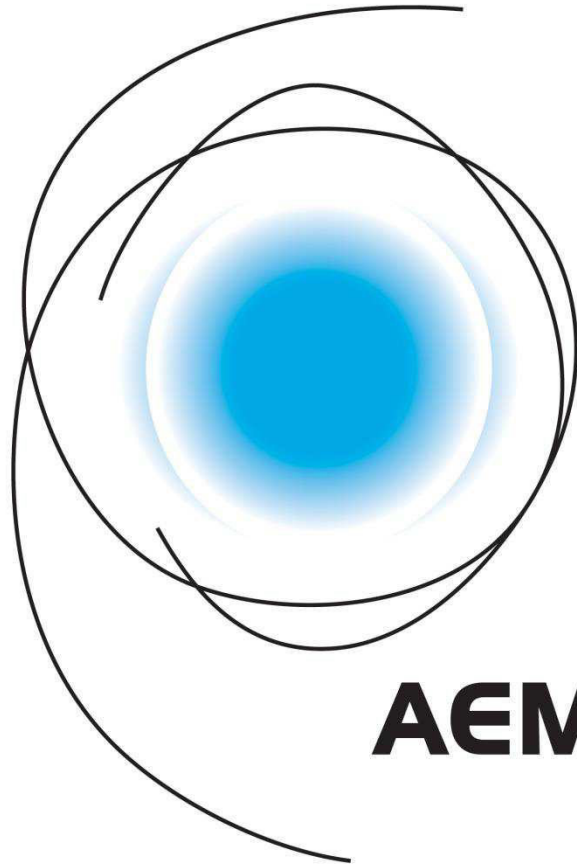


Questions and discussion



Questions

- Would it be useful to have a key point of contact within the organisation?
- Is our proposal for a semi-annual event for consumer advocates consistent with that raised in the Consumer Roundtable? We understand you want the opportunity to discuss more strategic issues, is this correct?
- Do you think it would be useful to include multimedia information or training on the website (ie podcasts, powerpoint masterclasses, RSS feeds, etc)?
- How do you decide which rule changes to engage with? Is there more the AEMC can do to make this decision easier?



AEMC

National Consumer Roundtable Steering Committee Teleconference: 3 February 2014

Presentation from the AEMC – summary

A slide pack was circulated prior to the discussion (see attached).

In attendance from the AEMC:

- Paul Smith, Chief Executive
- Chris Spangaro, Senior Director, Markets
- Richard Owens, Director, Networks
- Mark Allen, Director, Markets
- Tara D'Souza, Senior Advisor, Strategy and Economic Analysis

In attendance from the National Consumer Roundtable Steering Committee

- Jo De Silva, SACOSS
- Janine Rayner, CALC
- Craig Memery, ATA
- Gavin Duffy, St Vincent de Paul
- Mark Henley, UnitingCare Australia
- Joel Pringle, ACOSS

Expectations for engagement:

- AEMC noted that for large projects staff seek out advocates' attention; however, for others (eg smaller projects) it is difficult to know if there is something important for advocates to consider. The AEMC is interested in feedback regarding how to let advocates know what it is doing so advocates can make decisions about engagement
- Group noted that it may be useful for the AEMC to clarify the purpose of documents being released, eg whether looking for feedback or whether strictly for information.

Oral submissions:

- Group supported an initiative to have meeting notes treated as formal submissions in rule change processes. It was noted that it is often a choice whether to participate or not, so this option would allow more organisations to participate. It was also noted that formal submissions require full organisational support for signoff, whereas meetings do not, so that reduces the administrative burden.
- Agreed that transcripts were not necessary, as they add costs. A summary to be approved should meet the purpose.
- AEMC encouraged consumer advocates to contact project leaders to request meetings and oral submissions on rule change requests.

Semi-annual event:

- Support for a periodic event. Despite a packed engagement schedule, it was viewed as important to take the time to discuss high level strategic issues not necessarily being addressed in other processes.
- SACOSS volunteered to take the role of coordinating with the AEMC to ensure a future event does not clash with any major events on consumer advocates' calendars.
- AEMC agreed to take on developing an agenda and date to hold in the next 2-3 months.

Work program communication:

- Asked AEMC to notify group when there is a sense that a big issue is looming. It takes 2-3 months to start organising and potentially secure CAP funding for work.
- AEMC stated that it is looking at how to improve information (eg information on rule changes not yet initiated)
- The group agreed that an e-newsletter and work program calendar would be useful to inform and bring together various project timelines. It was noted that there are a number of project pages that need to be checked from the AEMC website to know of all timings – this is the case across AER and SCER as well. Useful to have a single view of all that is going on.
- Information sheets for projects were noted as very useful in determining if and how to engage in a project.
- Deliberative forums were noted as extremely worthwhile processes.
- There was support for a single point of contact for consumer representatives in the organisation.

Actions arising from meeting:

- AEMC agreed to summarise notes and circulate to Roundtable.
- AEMC will develop options for broad strategic event for advocates.
- SACOSS will provide point of contact to coordinate with the AEMC regarding dates for an event to discuss high level strategic issues.