

# NATIONAL CONSUMER ROUNDTABLE ON ENERGY A G E N D A

Date: Monday 7<sup>th</sup> November, 2016  
 Venue: Stamford Heritage, Corner Edward and Margaret Streets, Brisbane, QLD  
 Facilitator: Jo De Silva / Bob Weymouth

<b>DAY 1</b>			
<b>Key themes:</b>			
<b>TIME</b>	<b>SESSION TITLE</b>	<b>PURPOSE</b>	<b>PRESENTER/NOTES</b>
<b>8:45 - 9:00</b>	<b><i>Coffee</i></b>		
9:00 -10:00	New member induction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview of energy market nationally</li> </ul>	Presentations and discussions – for new members, but established members are welcome to share insights
10:00 – 10:30	Welcome and introductions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview of agenda</li> </ul>	Jo De Silva, SACOSS Bob Weymouth
<b>10:30 -11:00</b>	<b><i>Morning Tea</i></b>		
11:00 – 12:00	Australian Energy Market Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview of current work program including wholesale rule changes and reliability panel updates</li> </ul>	Anne Pearson, AEMC Kris Funston, AEMC Suzanne Falvi, AEMC Short presentations followed by discussion
12:00 – 1:00	Transforming energy market – are the rules and regulation keeping up?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview of market transformation and how institutions are tracking</li> </ul>	Brian Spalding, AEMC Michelle Groves, AER Short presentations followed by discussion
<b>1:00 – 1:30</b>	<b><i>Lunch</i></b>		
1:30 – 2:20	Australian Energy Regulator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview of wholesale, network and retail issues</li> </ul>	Michelle Groves, AER Presentation followed by discussion
<b>2:20 – 2:30</b>	<b><i>Tea break</i></b>		
2:30 – 3:30	Energy Consumers Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic priorities</li> <li>• Solar and battery readiness research</li> </ul>	Nefley Hetherington, ECA Chris Alexander, ECA Presentation followed by discussion
<b>5:00pm</b>	<b><i>Drinks, COTA, Level 1, 25 Mary St, Brisbane</i></b>		

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Date: Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> November, 2016  
 Venue: Stamford Heritage, Corner Edward and Margaret Streets, Brisbane, QLD  
 Facilitator: Jo De Silva / Bob Weymouth

<b>DAY 2</b>			
<b>Key themes:</b>			
<b>TIME</b>	<b>SESSION TITLE</b>	<b>PURPOSE</b>	<b>PRESENTER/NOTES</b>
<b>8:45 - 9:00</b>	<b><i>Coffee</i></b>		
9:00 – 10:00	Energy Markets Transformation Project Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updates on current work streams and focus of work</li> </ul>	Catherine Cussen, DEWS Qld Presentation followed by discussion
10:00 – 10:30	Regulation of batteries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update on current TEC's ECA-funded project on the regulation of batteries on both sides of the meter</li> </ul>	Mark Byrne Presentation followed by discussion Includes discussion of the extent to which they should be owned and controlled by networks themselves, consumers and/or third parties via competitive markets.
10:30 – 11:00	Regulating microgrids (embedded and offgrid systems)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview of key issues</li> </ul>	Mark Byrne and Dean Lombard Presentation followed by discussion
<b>11:00 - 11:30</b>	<b><i>Morning tea</i></b>		
11:30 – 12:30	Climate and energy policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of past activity</li> <li>• Identification of any gaps</li> </ul>	Lauren Solomon, AGL Presentation followed by discussion
<b>12:30 – 1:30</b>	<b><i>Lunch</i></b>		
1:30 – 2:30	Limited Merits Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview of COAG Energy Council Review</li> </ul>	Julia Mansour, PIAC Short presentation followed by discussion
2:30 – 3:30	Emerging issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion on emerging topics of interest</li> </ul>	Carly Allen, Kath McLean, Dean Lombard Short discussion starters followed by facilitated discussion
<b>3:00 - 3:15</b>	<b><i>Afternoon tea arrives</i></b>		
3:30 – 4:00	Check out and feedback forms		
<b>4:00pm</b>	<b><i>Close Day 2</i></b>		

**National Consumer Roundtable on Energy Meeting – Brisbane**  
**7<sup>h</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> November 2016**

**Action items**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
New RT participants to be added to NEMchat	SACOSS	WIP
Circulate speakers presentations	SACOSS	WIP
Questions from AER Session – see below	SACOSS	WIP
Update new member induction to include WA and NT developments	SACOSS	WIP
Build in capacity building for participants on AER and AEMC consultations	SACOSS and RTSC	WIP
Speaker presentations vs general discussion times to be reviewed	SACOSS and RTSC	WIP
Further information on storage and microgrids	RTSC	WIP
Suggestions for future Roundtable agendas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parametric insurance</li> <li>• Complexity of issues; education of consumers</li> <li>• Lower base price for electricity rather than higher base prices with discounts</li> <li>• Reverse auctions excluding communities</li> <li>• Finkel Review</li> <li>• Effectiveness and resourcing of COAG energy council</li> <li>• TOTEX: Move from separate capex and opex</li> <li>• Prior notification by retailers of price/benefit changes</li> <li>• Installation of dual meters pre start of contestability</li> <li>• National rule change – standard bill format across the NEM</li> <li>• Australian Energy Council— Hardship and other consumer support developments</li> <li>• Energy/Productivity: including housing energy efficiency disclosure</li> <li>• Paradox of choice—i.e. when too much choice leads to poor default decisions</li> <li>• Remote disconnection – what protections do we need?</li> </ul>	RTSC	Ongoing

## ***Response from AER re questions raised***

### **Issues raised regarding networks:**

- **Capacity building** - training has been useful when offered, but needs to be timed so that training occurs *before* submissions are due. Consider extending to areas in addition to resets/building blocks (e.g. training on TSS, ring-fencing would have been useful prior to consultation).
- **Submissions to reset processes** – preference for single submission covering both draft decision and revised proposal (as opposed to two separate submissions on different dates). Why do AER decisions not address issues raised in stakeholder submissions to *businesses* (e.g. through customer reference groups set up by businesses as proposals are developed) where these haven't been picked up in proposals?

### **Engagement in networks consultations**

Next year's resets will move further into the new consultation process under the NER, which provides multiple opportunities for submissions at various stages of our processes – proposals, draft decisions, revised proposals and cross submissions. These changes support the flow of information between us, regulated businesses and consumers throughout a reset, allowing exchanges of views to continue beyond our draft decisions. We've also had very positive feedback on the information and training sessions we've run to date to help inform submissions to our processes. We're in the process of settling consultation timelines for 2017, and will look for opportunities to offer further sessions to support our consultation processes as these evolve.

In addition to views on the proposals themselves, these submissions provide an opportunity to let us know how valuable stakeholders have found a service provider's own engagement in the development of its proposal. Where stakeholders consider submissions or advice put to service providers throughout the development of a proposal have not been satisfactorily considered by the business in its proposal, we would encourage them to provide that feedback to businesses and also to us by sharing those submissions with us as part of our consultation throughout the reset process.

### ***Issues raised regarding retail markets:***

- **Qld NECF derogation re prior written notice of price increases** – can the AER enforce these now?

Ahead of the commencement of this derogation on 1 July, the AER wrote to all retailers to remind them of their obligations in relation to price changes for both standing and market offers. We also issued a compliance check:

<https://www.aer.gov.au/system/files/AER%20Compliance%20Check%202016-02.PDF>

We monitor compliance with this obligation through our usual channels, including customer complaints and market intelligence and monitoring. We have not received complaints on this issue and would encourage people to contact us directly if they have concerns these obligations are not being met. Any potential breaches will be considered in accordance with our *Compliance and enforcement – Statement of approach* (<http://www.aer.gov.au/publications/corporate-documents/aer-compliance-and-enforcement-statement-of-approach>).

- **Retail performance stats** – timely access to these is important – can Q4 stats be released in advance of the November performance report? (noting that Q4/annual returns come in a month later than Q1, 2, 3).

The Retail Law requires that the AER releases an annual report on the performance of the retail energy market by 30 November each year. In addition to this, we seek to provide stakeholders with access to quarterly data within 8 weeks of receiving it from retailers, although meeting this deadline is subject to the quality and timeliness of retailers' submissions. Late submission of data and some resubmissions to correct errors has affected AER timelines and we will not be in a position to publish Q4 stats ahead of releasing the annual performance report on 22 November.

- **Exempt sellers** – do we have plans to collect data on exempt sellers (solar PPAs?)

The Retail Law does not impose performance reporting obligations on exempt sellers. However, the Public Register of Retail Exemptions on the AER's website (<http://www.aer.gov.au/retail-markets/retail-exemptions/public-register-of-retail-exemptions>) promotes transparency around exempt energy sales.

- **EME** – Are we doing anything to improve wait times on the 'EME phonenumber'? Have we looked at changes to EME so that customers can enter feed-in data from their bill as well as usage?

Wait times on the AER Inquiry phone line (which also assists customers with EME) have improved since July 2016, but we encourage energy customers to visit the site as a first step to comparing energy offers. We are currently undertaking a scoping study to look at what changes customers might find useful and what those would cost (both in terms of development and ongoing maintenance). We are not, however, funded for additional development work at present.

## Appendix C: Roundtable Feedback Form Analysis (19 responses)

### Ratings

Aspect	Average	Comments (taken from low & high scores)
New member induction	7.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not quite clear of the purpose. Background on market, or on roundtable process?</li> </ul>
Australian Energy Market Commission	7.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Too general to be of much use. Not long enough for Q&amp;A</li> <li>Clear explanation of 5 minute settlement. Very useful.</li> </ul>
Transforming Energy Market	7.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not enough discussion time. No new information.</li> <li>Excellent info, focus, presentation</li> </ul>
Australian Energy Regulator	6.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not long enough for Q&amp;A. very high level</li> <li>Good information, important relationship</li> </ul>
Energy Consumers Australia	6.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good to hear about development but could be better use of session. Lacked info about how ECA will engage with advocates</li> <li>Excellent conversation by roundtable afterward</li> </ul>
Energy Markets Transformation Project	7.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More time for discussion needed. Could have used more focus</li> <li>Good to hear status update</li> </ul>
Regulation of Batteries	7.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Could have longer session with more discussion</li> <li>Good overview, helps organisations engage</li> </ul>
Regulating Microgrids	8.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More time for discussion. Wasn't so much about regulation</li> </ul>
Climate & Energy Policy	8.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Misnamed. Narrow focus on vulnerable, not so much about climate change</li> <li>Good to hear retailers' views, especially new research</li> </ul>
Limited Merits Review	8.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thorough, informative. Provided a good opportunity to air issues</li> </ul>
Emerging Issues	8.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Could have had greater breadth</li> <li>Good/interactive</li> </ul>
Venue & Catering	8.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is it necessary to have such expensive food?</li> <li>Fruit very much appreciated</li> </ul>
Accommodation	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grand</li> </ul>
Facilitator	8.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Excellent</li> </ul>

**Question 1: What did you like most about this Roundtable meeting?**

<b>Response</b>	<b>No.</b>
Variety of speakers	2
Meeting people	3
Industry presentation sessions	2
Discussion on limited merits review	1
Batteries & microgrids	1
Technical knowledge sharing	2
Industry networking	1
Collaborative discussion	4
Catering	1
Collegiality	1

**Question 2: What did you like least about this Roundtable meeting?**

<b>Response</b>	<b>No.</b>
Some technical presentations too high level	1
Not enough time for conversation/ Q&A	6
Need more about post roundtable action	1
Sessions which looked at organisational work were not as useful	1
Some presentations too heavy on overview and not enough detail/discussion	1
Repetition in some presentations	1
Bland presentations by regulatory entities	1
Not enough on climate and energy policy	1

**Question 3: Is there anything specific you would like to see on the Agenda for future Roundtable meetings?**

<b>Response</b>	<b>No.</b>
Update from roundtable participants about their current work	1
Emerging supply arrangements e.g. different models of exempt networks	1
Gas/electricity interconnection. Should we have a single objective covering both?	2
Alternative/Adjustments to market design, e.g. Finkel Review	1
How customer involvement will be effectively introduced	1
Introduction of load controlled air conditioning across the NEM	1
Wrongful disconnections	1
Installation of advanced meters	1

How to engage with economic regulators about social policy/vulnerable customer issues	1
Free discussion of the issues at the end of each day	1
More discussion of joint work potential	1
Rule change to bring about a standard bill format across the NEM	1
Metering changes; state by state issues	2
Finkel and overview of climate goals	1
Update on tariff reform	1
Review of ECA funding program	1
Investigation into impact of solar power purchase agreements on consumers	1
Access to renewables for low income & vulnerable; models & consumer protection	1

**Question 4: What do you value most about the Roundtable in general?**

Response	No.
Networking	6
Sharing information/ideas	7
Expertise of other advocates	2
Getting updated on national issues	2
Chairperson	1

**Question 5: see ratings on page 1**

**Question 6:**

**Other comments**

- More on emerging issues & proposed regulations. Great idea about the Energy Advocate calendar.
- Luke's comment on block chains and the "energy internet" model of energy market needs unpacking
- Would like to see the presence of energy minister or a representative, to gain greater understanding, engagement & education of national consumer issues
- The room didn't facilitate discussion. Table too long vs. wide to see other advocates & really engage with them
- Excellent concept. Keep it up.
- Thanks for all the work that goes into organising this smooth event.
- More opportunity for discussion should be facilitated
- Luke Reade happy to talk on renewables for ECA funded projects



<b>National Consumer Roundtable on Energy November 2016 participating organisations</b>
South Australian Council of Social Service
St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria
Consumer Utilities Advocacy Centre
Tasmanian Council of Social Service
Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW Inc
Council on the Ageing Queensland
Alternative Technology Association
Victorian Council of Social Service
Kildonan UnitingCare
Public Interest Advocacy Centre Ltd
Energy Consumers Australia
Queensland Council of Social Service
Council of Social Service of New South Wales
Total Environment Centre
North Queensland Electricity Users
National Seniors
Energetic Communities
Consumer Action Law Centre
Uniting Communities
Queensland Consumers Association