

ActewAGL Distribution Energy Consumer Reference Council Communique

Meeting 17 – 5 April 2017

The ActewAGL Distribution Energy Consumer Reference Council (ECRC) met on 5 April 2017. Representatives from Council on the Aging ACT (COTA), SEE-Change, Canberra Business Chamber, Engineers Australia, ACT Council of Social Services (ACTCOSS) and the Gungahlin and Tuggeranong Community Council participated in the meeting. The ACT Energy Consumer Advocate attended as an observer.

The following presentations and associated discussion occurred at the meeting:

- **Australian Energy Regulator;** The AER provided a presentation to the ECRC on the AER's preliminary Framework and Approach paper released to facilitate consultation with respect to ActewAGL Distribution's 2019-24 Electricity Regulatory Determination. This included consideration of classification of services, and the related issue of ring-fencing of contestable and non-contestable services. Members of the ECRC noted that the economic outcome is not always the best measure of what is the most beneficial outcome for the consumer. For example, some of the Power of Choice changes will increase complexity; greater choice does not always allow enough protection for smaller segments of the market. The benefits of reduced costs generated by competition are often not seen by the consumers, particularly as electricity prices continue to rise. .
- **Gas Vision 2050;** Representative of Energy Networks Australia presented to the ECRC on the recently released work, 2050 Gas Vision. The presentation explored the role of gas resources and products and services in the energy transformation, particularly through the use of low emission transformation technologies. Members of the ECRC were interested in what the ENA saw as the long term price of gas under this vision and how long-term supply can be sustained at a viable price. It was suggested that if the price of gas continues to rise, consumers will move away from gas in the short-term.
- **Electricity Regulatory Matters;** ActewAGL Distribution provided the ECRC with an update on the revised Tariff Structure Statement, ring-fencing and the 2019-24 Electricity Regulatory Determination process, including information on recent consultation work undertaken by ACTCOSS. The ECRC was interested in the customer implications for rebranding of ActewAGL Distribution and potential increased confusion about who to call for assistance. The ECRC commended ACTCOSS on its workshop and associated input to ActewAGL Distribution's regulatory submission process. Members of the ECRC provided some feedback on next steps of the consultation process around the electricity price determination.
- **Gas billing issues;** ActewAGL Distribution provided the ECRC with an update on the billing issues associated with the gas meter reading. ECRC members were pleased to see the number of bill estimations continues to drop, with the trend in the right direction with complaints also substantially dropping. It was suggested that better information be provided to customers that receive estimated bills, such as informing the customer how to read their own meter and who to contact if they would like to have their bill revised.
- **Power of Choice project;** ActewAGL Distribution provided the ECRC with a live demonstration of the draft customer portal. Members of the ECRC will be sent information shortly to invite them to be part of the pre-launch testing process.

Copies of PowerPoint presentations and papers presented to the meeting are available at www.actewagl.com.au/consumerengagement . The next meeting of the ECRC is scheduled for June 2017. For further information contact Peter Cunningham, ActewAGL on 02 6293 5108.