



Communique

WA ACE Forum

22 August 2023 meeting

Meeting 17 of the Western Australian Advocacy for Consumers of Energy (WA ACE) Forum was held on 22 August 2023.

ATCO Australia Access Arrangement 6

Members were provided an overview of the upcoming ATCO Australia Access Arrangement 6 proposal, covering the Mid-West and South-West gas distribution systems that ATCO owns and operates. ATCO outlined that the proposal includes a strong focus on safety and emergency response actions, as well as continuing to provide reliable network services.

Esperance Energy Supply Transition Program

Horizon Power outlined actions taken to develop and implement a program to transition customers affected by the closure of the Esperance gas distribution network from natural gas to other energy sources. Government funding assisted with rebates to cover most of the costs for households and business to replace gas appliances with electric or LPG alternatives. Horizon Power outlined the importance of education and hands on experience (e.g. cooking demonstrations) for tradespeople, households and businesses to showcase the latest appliance technology. This customised approach resulted in a majority of residents and businesses choosing to fully electrify their properties, with strong levels of customer satisfaction.

Expert Consumer Panel update

Expert Consumer Panel members provided an overview of recent activities, including:

- Providing a submission on the Proposed Changes to the Electricity Networks Access Code – Priority Projects Consultation Paper.
- Representation on the newly formed Wholesale Electricity Market Investment Certainty Review Working Group.
- Continued representation on the Pilbara Advisory Committee, Market Advisory Committee, Gas Advisory Board and the Reserve Capacity Mechanism Review Working Group

Energy Consumers Australia electrification research (Stepping Up: A Smoother Pathway to Decarbonising Homes report)

Energy Consumers Australia provided an overview of the findings of its Stepping Up: A Smoother Pathway to Decarbonising Homes [report](#). Using CSIRO and Dynamic Analysis modelling, Energy Consumers Australia was able to investigate the shared and individual costs of electrification, combined with technology developments and digitalisation of Australian households. The main findings included:

- As more people move off the gas network, there will be less households to contribute towards costs to maintain the network, resulting in price increases. The additional costs will then see further increases in the number of households moving from the gas network, resulting in a self-reinforcing effect. It is likely that only those who face barriers to going all-electric (people on low incomes, living in apartments, and renters) will remain on the gas network.

- Electrification of vehicles and buildings will provide bill savings for individual households and the associated increased electricity network utilisation will further reduce network costs/electricity bills.
- To gain and maintain the social licence to achieve a significant change in decarbonisation policy requires a partnership across all levels of government to coordinate the energy transition for consumers.

Thriving Communities Partnership One Stop, One Story hub

Thriving Communities Partnership provided an overview of its One Stop, One Story Hub that results in people experiencing family violence and/or financial difficulty only needing to tell their story once.

- During the initial call the person experiencing family violence and/or financial difficulty gives informed consent to sharing of their story and information as part of a referral into the support program of other Hub partner organisations.
- Other Hub partners are able reach out to the person experiencing family violence and/or financial difficulty and assist, without the need for that person to retell their story.
- Hub partners' call centre staff benefit from reduced vicarious trauma (indirect exposure to trauma experienced by others, including through repeated exposure to written or visual details of such events that can impact on the person hearing or reading these stories) and receive benefits in being able to assist the person to access other supports.

About the WA ACE Forum

The WA ACE Forum brings to together consumer representative bodies from across Western Australia to provide consumer insights to the energy sector, supporting informed, valuable contributions to the energy debate in Western Australia. The WA ACE Forum meets five times a year.

The WA ACE Forum is not a decision-making body, nor is it required to form consensus. Accordingly, this Communique does not reflect the views of Energy Policy WA or any particular member organisation, rather it seeks to share the key areas of discussion by the Forum.