



30 June 2020 meeting

The inaugural meeting of the Western Australian Advocacy for Consumers of Energy (WA ACE) Forum was held on 30 June 2020. The following matters were discussed.

Introductions

WA ACE members, observers and industry participants provided introductions, addressed the Terms of Reference and established principles for engagement in the Forum.

Energy consumer insights

Members provided initial comments about experiences with the energy sector.

While the issue of cost underpinned each observation, the focus of discussion tended towards reliability of supply and clean energy outcomes.

The broad social impact from reliability issues was noted in the context of supply to businesses and for those without a stable home. Limited availability of clean energy options is also of increasing concern to some consumers.

The energy efficiency of rental properties was raised as a concern and amplified by the difficulties tenants may face to alter a property to improve its energy performance.

Consistency of hardship policies and the number of disconnections were also challenged.

COVID-19 impacts

Members provided feedback on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and noted the secondary and compounding impact that energy bills and energy insecurity had on the community. Working from home and rental arrangements were noted as impacting bills, with consumers often not being able or empowered to change their conditions.

The Small Business Tariff Offset and Energy Assistance Payment Boost had been well received, however members were aware of the potential need for additional support measures for impacted households as the pandemic continued. Particular concern was raised for those who had not been able to receive government support or had not received any increases in assistance during the period.

The variable scale of impact of the pandemic across the regions was noted, with the Kimberley area seen to be in the greatest need of support.

WA ACE Grants

Members provided feedback on potential areas of focus for the 2020-21 funding round for the WA ACE Grants program.

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.

For more information contact:

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