

Energy Consumers Advocacy Training

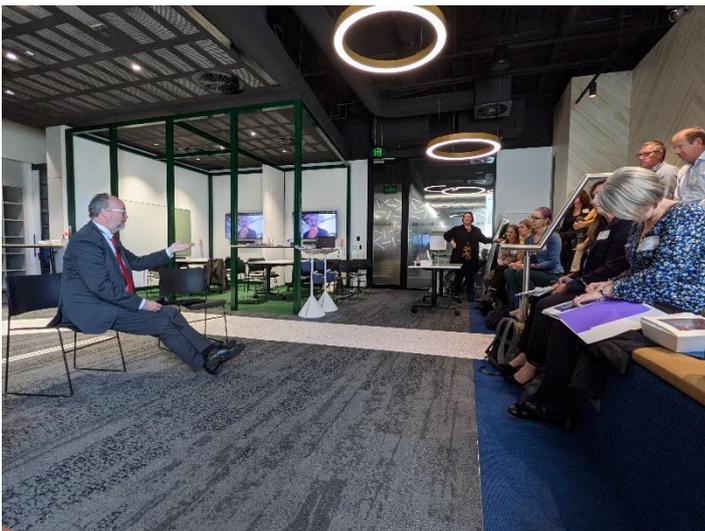
Workshop overview

The WA Advocacy for Consumers of Energy Grants (WA ACE Grants) were established to support energy consumer advocacy and research. SEC Newgate received a grant to run an Energy Consumer Advocacy Training Workshop. This was a one-day advocacy workshop held from 9am to 5pm Monday 1 November at Co Lab, in Synergy's office in Perth.

The objective of the workshop was to develop the skills and strategies of participants to better advocate for energy consumers in WA and provide a professional development opportunity for stakeholders and consumer advocates in the energy space.

To prepare the agenda for the workshop, SEC Newgate issued a training needs survey to all prospective attendees. The findings of the survey informed the agenda for the workshop. The agenda included presentations from:

- The Hon Bill Johnston MLA, Minister for Energy, with an overview of the future of energy in WA.



- Graham Hansen, Senior Policy Officer, Western Australian Council of Social Service (WACOSS) on Energy poverty and advocacy in energy. Mr Hansen also facilitated a discussion with representatives from Synergy (Elizabeth Edgar, Manager Residential Customer Success), Alinta Energy (Charlotte Wirtz, Manager Customer Service) and Horizon Power (Troy Mulder, Retail Operations Manager) regarding the support these companies provide to customers who need it the most. The discussion focused on programs for vulnerable people, hardship and community education and information.



- Rachelle Gill, Assistant Director at Energy Policy WA, regarding energy pricing, how prices are set and what makes up an energy bill.



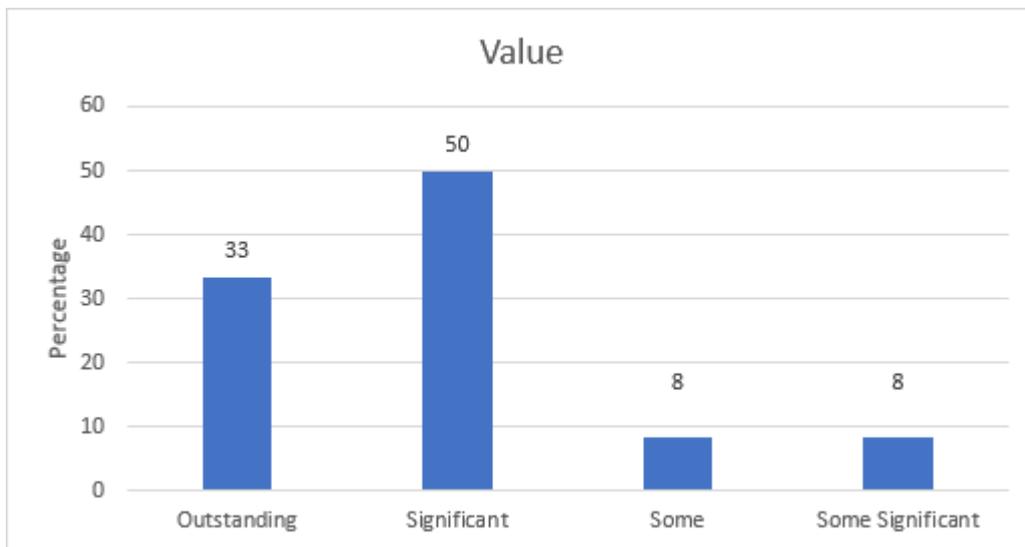
The complete agenda and presentation pack is attached to this report in a separate pdf file named: Energy Consumer Advocacy Training - Full workshop pack

Workshop feedback

40 to 60 people were invited (primary contacts were welcomed to bring other people from their organisations) to attend and participate in the workshop.



There were 19 attendees on the day (including one person online) and, of those attendees, 12 (63 per cent) provided feedback on the session. **83 per cent of survey respondents found the workshop to have significant or outstanding value while the remaining 16 per cent found it to have some value. No participants indicated little or no value.**



Participants' key takeaways

Participants were also asked about their key points taken from the workshop.

Upon review, the responses can be grouped relating to three broad areas - advocacy, education and networking. Of 34 items included in responses, 67 per cent related to how to better advocate, 18 per cent related to education and 12 per cent highlighted the networking aspect of the workshop.

On advocacy, there was a significant appreciation of the value, timing and need for a structured approach to stakeholder engagement and advocacy.

On education, a better understanding of the complexity of the sector including demand, variety of players and appreciation of lack of understanding by consumers were the major items cited.

On networking there was an appreciation of the value of the workshop bringing together a variety of people as well as a better appreciation of the value of working together on advocacy.

Considerations for future training/workshops

Workshop participants were asked about what they would like to see in future workshops and other training which may be offered. Responses were:

- General consumer advocacy.
- Communications channels - How these have changed/are continuing to change and how advocacy needs to accommodate these changes.
- More information on 'how to include consumers' in advocacy.
- Link directly to WA ACE grants to show how further opportunities could be taken.
- Running the advocacy training over a full day with a longer session on consumer advocacy planning/mapping.
- More examples of good key messages and good advocacy case studies.
- More case studies and examples of energy consumer advocacy gone right or wrong.