

Evoenergy Energy Consumer Reference Council (ECRC)
Meeting 32

Minutes December 11th 9.30am
Evoenergy Greenway

Attendees

Allan Williams
Geoff Buchanan
Jenny Mobbs
Kevin Cox
Glenys Patulny
Nick Clarke
Ron Thompson
Helen Oakey
Joel Dignam
Prof Barbara Norman
Michael Hopkins

Representation

Chair
Council of Social Service (ACTCOSS)
Council on the Ageing (COTA)
Gungahlin Community Council
Tuggeranong Community Council
Engineers Australia, Canberra Division
Canberra Business Chamber
Conservation Council, ACT Region (*part of meeting*)
Better Renting
Canberra Urban and Regional Futures (CURF)
Master Builders Association

Evoenergy

Fiona Wright
Leylann Hinch
Alison Davis
Samantha Lloyd
Giuliana Baggoley
Danielle Tyrrell
Paul Wheatley

Acting General Manager
Group Manager, Strategy and Operations
Group Manager, Customer Delivery
Strategic Communications Advisor, Projects
Customer Interaction Manager
Project Officer
Acting Group Manager, Network Services

ActewAGL

Chris Bell
Gillian Symmans
Alexis Hardin

Manager, Price Review
Senior Economist
Economist

Guests

Robyn Robinson
Kerrie Grundy
Vincent Guo

Consumer Challenge Panel (CCP24)
Narrabundah College
Narrabundah College

Apologies

Adina Cirson
John Sullivan
Bruce Hansen
Phil Deamer
Sean Gladman

Property Council of Australia (ACT)
Australian National University (Major Customers)
Manager, Gas Networks Group
Acting Director Regulatory Affairs and Pricing
Canberra Business Chamber

Papers distributed prior to meeting

- Final draft minutes ECRC meeting 31
- Citizens' Jury Recommendations Report
- Meeting 32 Agenda
- Draft notes from the AER Customer Service Incentive Scheme (CSIS) public workshop November 6th for your information
- Evoenergy site map indicating parking areas

1. Welcome and introductions

ECRC Chairman Allan Williams welcomed members and guests. Apologies were noted.

Mr Williams welcomed back Robyn Robinson, Chair of Consumer Challenge Panel 24 (CCP24).

Mr Williams also announced that two guests from Narrabundah College were attending as guests to observe the meeting.

2. Review and ratify the minutes of meeting 31

Actions from meeting 31 were discussed. In particular, Glenys Patulny recalled her question from meeting 31 relating to verges in suburbs. Mr Williams replied that this topic has been flagged for inclusion in the ECRC 2020 agenda.

Mr Williams mentioned Evoenergy's response to the ACT Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD) Sustainable Energy Policy discussion paper. During meeting 31 ECRC members heard about Evoenergy making a submission.

Samantha Lloyd told attendees that Evoenergy has submitted a response to the discussion paper. It is not known exactly when EPSDD will publish submissions but it is likely to be before Christmas.

Once EPSDD publish submissions, Evoenergy will publish their submission on the Evoenergy website www.evoenergy.com.au. Evoenergy's response recommends a direction for 2020–25 that will support the ongoing development of sustainable, cost effective, safe and reliable energy networks for the Canberra community. There were no questions for Ms Lloyd.

Mr Williams referred to meeting 31's presentation on the Australian Energy Regulator's (AER) Customer Service Incentive Scheme (CSIS) review that is underway: Kevin Cox attended a November 6th AER workshop and contributed to discussion. Meeting 32 circulated pre-reading included an AER CSIS workshop summary. Giuliana Baggoley and Robyn Robinson also attended the November 6th workshop.

The ECRC Meeting 31 minutes were ratified pending final clarification from Mr Bruce Hansen on some wording related to gas networks.

3. ECRC member updates

Geoff Buchanan said that ACTCOSS has also submitted a response to the EPSDD Sustainable Energy Policy discussion paper. ACTCOSS will publish this when EPSDD publish submissions. Mr

Buchanan also mentioned that ACTCOSS's South Australian counterpart SACOSS has released a report "*Working to Make Ends Meet: Low-income Workers and Energy Bill Stress*". Nick Clarke asked about how utilities consider customers facing bill stress and mentioned recent media reports on disconnections of customers unable to pay retail energy bills. He remarked that more should be done to identify such vulnerable customers and intervene before disconnection; among other things, disconnections cost a lot.

Jenny Mobbs mentioned a number of events COTA already has scheduled in for 2020.

Mr Clarke said Engineers Australia was to meet with the ACT Chief Engineer Adrian Piani in the new year and that topics may include smart cities and infrastructure.

Ms Patulny thanked Evoenergy for hosting a stand at SouthFest where field crew and other Evoenergy team demonstrated an Elevated Work Platform and specialised clothing that field crew wear for live electrical work.

Guest observer Kerrie Grundy, Narrabundah College Principal, mentioned her membership of the ANU College of Engineering and Computer Science Industry Advisory Board. Ms Grundy also mentioned that Vincent Guo, also attending as a guest observer, had just completed year 11 at Narrabundah College and in 2019 established an Engineering Student Society to promote engineering as a profession. Mr Guo had arranged for a variety of guest speakers to present to fellow students during the year.

Joel Dignam said that Better Renting will soon release a report on housing, heat and health. This report is complementary to Better Renting's winter report on housing, cold and health that was mentioned in meeting 31 minutes.

4. Gas network access arrangement review (GN21)

Alexis Hardin presented a gas network regulatory proposal (GN21) recap on where Evoenergy are up to with the GN21 draft plan. Her presentation included recaps on ACT climate change action and future gas options for the region. Ms Hardin presented a GN21 draft plan overview including scenarios that Evoenergy are considering for the future of the gas network, and indicative key inputs to our plan – capex, opex, rate of return etc. that arise from each scenario.

Information presented by Ms Hardin was classified as confidential; as such, discussion is minuted in Confidential Items Part 2 of these minutes.

Chris Bell presented on the Citizens' Jury process that took place in between Meetings 31 and 32. Ms Mobbs participated in the Citizens' Jury as a Jury member and presented on her experience. In particular Ms Mobbs noted the engagement and enthusiasm with which her fellow Jury members participated, and the quality of facilitation and support given to the Citizens' Jury who discussed and

¹ <https://www.sacoss.org.au/sacoss%E2%80%99-working-make-ends-meet-report-highlights-energy-affordability-struggles-%E2%80%9Cwaged-poor%E2%80%9D>

debated with respect to ultimately produce the Recommendations Report. The Recommendations Report was circulated as pre-reading with the ECRC meeting 32 agenda.

Ms Grundy asked Ms Mobbs about the selection process. Ms Mobbs said she completed an interview/survey online after receiving an invitation by mail to express interest in participating. Ms Baggoley said that a company that specialises in recruitment of Citizens' Juries was contracted to recruit Jury members; that Evoenergy did not know who members were until the day before the Citizens' Jury commenced, that invitations were sent by post and email to over 10,000 gas and electricity customers who were randomly selected and faced further screening to form the Jury.

5. 2019 Brand Tracker Survey

Ms Lloyd presented on the outcomes of Evoenergy's 2019 Brand Health Tracker survey. It was the first Brand Tracker conducted as Evoenergy following the rebrand. Unprompted brand awareness was high. Ms Lloyd also explained that specific feedback gathered in the survey has already been directly actioned where possible, and collated and distributed among the business to inform business cases, initiatives and measurement thereof. Evoenergy asked about customer communication channel preferences. Ms Lloyd remarked that, as a communications professional, this was of great interest to her so that Evoenergy gets this right: survey results suggest most customers have a preference for email communication.

Mr Williams remarked that the unprompted brand awareness among survey participants was very good considering the recent rebrand.

Ms Lloyd said brand awareness is important because Evoenergy want people to listen to us when we have important messages for the public; being aware of our brand increases the likelihood of this happening.

Ms Oakey left the meeting before the conclusion of this item.

6. Notifications

Danielle Tyrrell explained the types of notifications Evoenergy sends to customers, how Evoenergy must comply with National Energy Retail Rules and National Energy Rules in terms of communication and notification periods, and how many notifications Evoenergy issues per year.

Ms Patulny asked how much advance warning Evoenergy must give for planned outages, noting that many people no longer check their mailbox every day. Ms Tyrrell replied that four (4) business days' notice are required ahead of planned works to allow customers to prepare for an outage. Alison Davis said that for emergency work Evoenergy crews are allowed to enter private property to manage risk. Ms Tyrrell also discussed Evoenergy's new outage map that is on the Evoenergy website and which shows planned outages sites to support customer understanding of upcoming and recent work.

Ms Tyrrell said Evoenergy was exploring an SMS messaging service for planned and unplanned supply interruptions and explained how that might work.

Ms Grundy said having someone organise her dinner when the electricity was out would be a good idea!

Mr Williams asked how an SMS service would work in the event of an unplanned outage – would Evoenergy require (and have) customer numbers and know who to contact. Ms Tyrrell replied that Evoenergy has a large percentage of customer mobile numbers but that any future communication method will respect customer communication preferences and privacy as appropriate.

Ms Baggoley asked attendees what they thought of an SMS as a communication method for notifying customers of planned and unplanned outages. There was unanimous approval for this.

7. Planned works scheduling

Paul Wheatley outlined Evoenergy 2019-2020 Summer Operational Readiness plans. Mr Wheatley spoke about the safety implications of field crew working in extreme heat, how extreme heat conditions are measured / determined, and the work that Evoenergy has been doing in examining data on previous summer weather patterns and worker health and safety.

Mr Wheatley outlined an initiative to commence some works earlier in the day during parts of January and February. The intent is to support worker health and safety and restore supply to customers well before the hotter part of the day. Mr Wheatley said such an approach would provide a better timing buffer in the event of any unforeseen circumstances that might prolong a planned outage (which is not common).

Members remarked on how what have traditionally been considered 'hot months' are changing. Mr Clarke asked what times Evoenergy field crew access customer yards for work. Mr Wheatley said from 8am onwards, with outages typically commencing from 8.30am. Mr Clarke suggested that adopting this early start approach during school holidays might be well-received.

Mr Dignam commented that given it is already bright by 7.30am in summer this approach may be palatable as people are up at that time. Mr Dignam also asked about air pollution, given current concern around bushfires and air pollution in Canberra. He wondered whether Evoenergy considers air pollution when conducting works.

Mr Wheatley said yes, Evoenergy does consider air pollution and in recent days, in accordance with advice issued by the ACT Chief Health Officer employees with heart and lung health issues have been pulled from outdoor works and given office-based tasks. Evoenergy also supplies P2 masks for people who wish to use them however these have been identified as a heat stressor as they heat the air being inhaled by crews which can contribute to heat stress.

Ms Grundy said work health and safety standards are increasingly discussed and understood so people may be sympathetic and supportive of initiatives to support worker health and safety.

Ms Patulny asked about how emergencies are handled during extreme heat conditions. Mr Wheatley said a Job Risk Assessment is conducted as usual, extreme heat is identified as a risk and subsequently managed via worker rotation (1 hour on, 1 hour off) and doubling crews. So in such instances works cost more, but the rotation through a work-rest cycle supports crews.

Ms Mobbs offered to share information with COTA newsletters. Other ECRC members offered to communicate this initiative to their communities if Evoenergy implements the plan.

Mr Williams wondered whether there might be some pushback from the community. Mr Clarke said people may worry about being able to open garage doors when they leave for work.

Michael Hopkins said the proposed timings would align with the building industry work hours over hotter months. Prof Norman asked what hours builders work and Mr Hopkins replied that some commence at 6am.

8. Other business

Mr Kevin Cox presented on behalf of a cooperative on an approach to tariffs to address perceived inequity in energy pricing across usage segments.

Members and guests asked Mr Cox about the approach and how the co-operative is planning to work.

Mr Cox said they have submitted a proposal to the AER.

Members discussed the 2020 meeting calendar. 2020 meeting dates will circulate in the new year and any potential clashes can be raised with Ms Baggoley. Some proposed topics for the 2020 agenda include microgrids, future Evoenergy electricity network strategy, ACT verges and infrastructure and GN21.

9. Next ECRC meeting number 33 will be held in February 2020

The meeting closed at 11.55am

ACTIONS ARISING

Action	Owner	Due
Agenda item discussing verges, trenches and ACT canopy / tree management.	Giuliana Baggoley	Meeting 33
Review of operation and maintenance costs of running gas network (vs electricity network) in relation to connection charges	Regulatory Affairs	Meeting 33 or within GN21 engagement program.
Circulation of proposed 2020 meeting dates to Allan Williams for consideration against the ACT/NSW 2020 calendar of events.	Giuliana Baggoley	December 30 th 2019
Circulation of 2020 ECRC meeting dates	Giuliana Baggoley	January 15 th 2020
Information on summer planned works scheduling to be shared with ECRC member organisations for communication once planning is finalised (within the communications strategy being developed)	Paul Wheatley (via Strategic Communications Advisor, Operations)	TBC