



## Communique

# WA ACE Forum

*16 April 2024 meeting*

**Meeting 20 of the Western Australian Advocacy for Consumers of Energy (WA ACE) Forum was held on 16 April 2024.**

### **Kimberley Community Solar Saver Program**

Members were provided a briefing on the Horizon Power Kimberley Community Solar Saver Program. The program will support households in remote communities across the Kimberley region to reduce energy costs through access to the benefits of solar PV electricity systems. Horizon Power outlined:

- the program works by installing solar panels on suitable household and community buildings, and aggregating power generation so that the entire community benefits, rather than just individual households/buildings with PV system installations;
- benefits are to be returned to customers via pre-payment meter credits and discounted tariffs;
- the program will also reduce the use of diesel for generating electricity; and
- the program aligns with the First Nations Clean Energy Network Best Practice Principles for Clean Energy Projects.

### **Electric Vehicle Action Plan update**

The Electric Vehicle (EV) Action Plan was released in 2021. It provides an integrated set of actions designed to deliver a future where EVs contribute to a safe, reliable, and efficient electricity system while accelerating our transition to a low-carbon future.

Members were provided an update on the status of actions within the EV Action Plan, including that most actions are now complete or ongoing, while the Commonwealth Government is currently developing national standards for integrating vehicle to grid technology with electricity distribution grids.

### **Consumer advocacy for a least-cost energy transition: capacity building with a consumer-first lens**

Professor Pierluigi Mancarella from the University of Melbourne outlined the upcoming consumer advocacy training that the University will soon be offering to consumer advocates. The program aims to provide an understanding of major socio-techno-economic issues associated with the energy transition, as well as basic knowledge of the major energy sector processes, routes and decision makers for advocates to effectively be able to influence government, regulatory and industry policies and decisions. The topics range from understanding energy bills, distribution network efficiency and network planning, the role of consumer energy resources in future networks, all electric households and businesses, along with climate resilience.

### **Smart Energy Council introduction**

The Smart Energy Council outlined its role as an advocate for the Australian smart energy/renewable energy industry. The Council, in partnership with the Master Electricians Australia, has recently established Solar Accreditation Australia, a stand-alone organisation to oversight solar installer accreditation across Australia.

## **Expert Consumer Panel update**

Expert Consumer Panel members provided an overview of feedback provided to the Economic Regulation Authority in response to a call for issues for the upcoming review of the Code of Conduct for the Supply of Electricity to Small Use Customers. This feedback included consideration that the service standard payment rates should be increased, the need for more practical requirements for the registration of users of life support equipment and a proposed new requirement for retailers to advise customers if there is a more suitable tariff for the household (based on current and previous energy consumption).

## **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.