

# Consumer Advocacy Panel

## STRATEGIC PLAN 2009-2012

### ***Introduction***

As of 1 July 2008, with the passage of amendments to the Australian Energy Market Commission (AEMC) Establishment Act in the South Australia Parliament, the statutory underpinnings of the Consumer Advocacy Panel were changed. In light of the Panel's new responsibilities for gas and research, the Panel viewed it timely to review its current strategic objectives. The Panel intends to undertake a broad review of the Strategic Plan 2010-2012 in early 2010.

In developing the strategic plan, the Panel considered its purpose, value and vision in order to identify key result areas. The Panel also reviewed current and emerging issues for energy consumers in an environment characterised by continuing rapid reform and the development of climate change responses targeting energy consumption. In order to evaluate its progress, the Panel has developed performance indicators to monitor the implementation of the strategic plan.

While the Panel does not intend at this stage to undertake a formal consultation process on what is largely an update of the Strategic Plan, stakeholder comments are welcomed.

### ***Purpose***

The Panel's purpose is to facilitate end-user advocacy in the national electricity and national gas markets so the views of all classes of end-user can impact on decision-making on market policy and regulation.

### ***Values***

The Panel is committed to:

- Effective and efficient consumer advocacy;
- Effectiveness and efficiency in the Panel's funding allocation, research program and administrative functions;
- Consulting closely and regularly with consumer groups, MCE governments and regulators;
- Integrity - the Panel's decisions are ethical, impartial, and honest;
- Diversity - the Panel supports access and equity of advocacy for all classes of end-user in the national electricity and gas markets; and
- Accountability - the Panel operates in a way that is transparent, consistent, cost-effective and demonstrates good corporate governance.

### ***Vision***

The Panel's vision is a national electricity market and national gas market in which decisions fully reflect the interests of all end-users and where:

- Decision-makers are informed in their decision-making of the interests of all classes of end-user;
- The capability of end-user advocacy groups is developed to a highly competent and sustainable level;
- Funding is spread across issues, regions and end-user classes according to need;
- A robust project evaluation process assists the Panel's decision-making in order to maximise quality outcomes from funding allocations;
- A vibrant research program operates and is open to contributions from a range of disciplines;
- The Panel operates cost-effectively and maximises the funds available for advocacy;
- The Panel's decisions are transparent and it communicates decisions promptly, clearly and pro-actively and responds promptly to issues raised.

*Strategic objectives 2009-10*

The Panel has identified the following strategic objectives for 2009-10:

Key Result Area	Key Performance Indicators
<i>Gas advocacy</i>	
<p><b>Encourage consumer advocacy organisations to advocate on behalf of gas consumers in policy and regulatory decisions</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Development of a gas advocacy agenda to identify priority projects</b></li> <li>➤ <b>Panel receives 30% more gas advocacy grant applications by July 2010</b></li> </ul>
<i>Capacity-building</i>	
<p><b>Build the capacity of consumer advocacy organisations to contribute to policy and regulatory decisions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Trial new approach to resourcing consumer advocates</b></li> <li>○ <b>Facilitate access by consumer advocacy organisations to technical expertise</b></li> <li>○ <b>Inform consumer advocates of advocacy opportunities</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Increased diversity of grant applications received in 2009 and 2010</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>From groups representing classes of consumers not previously involved; and</b></li> <li>○ <b>On consumer energy issues that have not been previously addressed.</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<i>Grant programs</i>	
<p><b>Ensure the Panel’s funding programs are appropriately structured and targeted to enhance consumer advocacy and diversity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Undertake an effective and constructive evaluation program</b></li> <li>○ <b>Improve application processes</b></li> <li>○ <b>Commission independent review with stakeholders of Panel policies and procedures</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Incorporation of review learnings and recommendations in Panel policies and procedures</b></li> <li>➤ <b>Stakeholder satisfaction with Panel procedures, demonstrated by the independent review</b></li> </ul>
<i>Research agenda</i>	
<p><b>Undertake research projects of benefit to energy consumer advocacy organisations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Consult stakeholders to identify most useful projects</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Timely consultation process</b></li> <li>➤ <b>Publication of Panel-initiated research reports</b></li> </ul>