

Media Release



5 September 2018

New members provide customer voice on electricity issues

One of Essential Energy's core customer forums has had a changing of the guard with five new members joining the business' Customer Advocacy Group (CAG). The Group represents local communities in ensuring the NSW poles and wires business consults closely in providing the best possible service and stays attuned to local issues.

General Manager Customer and Stakeholder Engagement, Roger Marshall, welcomed the new representatives of Essential Energy's CAG and acknowledged the contributions of the outgoing members.

"The Customer Advocacy Group has been operating for over 20 years in different forms and provides a proactive forum for us to engage with, and gain valuable insight from, our customers and stakeholders," Roger said. "While Essential Energy only accounts for around one third of the typical customer's total electricity bill, the CAG has been invaluable in helping us deliver 40 per cent reductions in network charges over the 2014-19 period.

"The Group's advice and feedback enables us to gauge customer sentiment on a range of issues and guides us to continually improve our services across regional, rural and remote NSW."

The CAG meets regularly and represents consumer groups, low-income households, Indigenous and ethnic groups, people with disabilities, residential and business customers, those in rural and remote areas, and primary producers.

Incoming members of the Customer Advocacy Group include Andrew Richards (Energy Users' Association of Australia), Margaret Breust (Country Women's Association), Cathy Budda-Deen (Aboriginal Employment Strategy), Tim Harrison (Public Interest Advocacy Centre), Janine Lea-Barrett (Businesswoman and Cobar Shire Council Councillor), and Mark Byrne (Total Environmental Centre).

They join sitting members Marie Russell AM, Gavin Dufty (St Vincent de Paul), Ash Salardini (NSW Farmers Association), Jennifer Brown (Cotton Australia), and Shannon Lakic (Caravan and Camping Industry Association NSW).

The first meeting to include the new CAG members was held in Wagga Wagga in mid-August 2018 and updates to the communities they represent will be shared in coming weeks.

"The conversation, consultation and insights provided by the CAG is invaluable and we very much appreciate the contributions of past and new members. I look forward to the CAG members' continued participation as we further improve safety, service and business sustainability and maintain downward pressure on network charges," Roger said.

For more information on Essential Energy's Customer Advocacy Group, visit www.essentialenergy.com.au/cag.

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Caption:
New Customer Advocacy Group members and Essential Energy representatives outside Essential Energy's regional office.

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Essential Energy is the operator of one of Australia's largest electricity networks spanning 95 per cent of New South Wales and parts of southern Queensland. Owned by the New South Wales Government, Essential Energy also provides water and sewerage services to customers in far western New South Wales.