



28 July 2017

Ms Michelle Groves  
Chief Executive Officer  
Australian Energy Regulator  
GPO Box 520  
Melbourne VIC 3001

Dear Ms Groves

**AER Reference 50496 / D17/58029 – Stakeholder Engagement Framework**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Australian Energy Regulator's Consultation Paper: *Draft Revised Stakeholder Engagement Framework*.

The Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW (EWON) investigates and resolves complaints from customers of electricity and gas providers in NSW, and some water providers.

As a general principle, EWON supports the AER's efforts to continually improve its communication. The subject matter of much of the material in its publications is necessarily complex and stakeholders appreciate any efforts to promote better understanding through clear communication.

In particular, EWON supports tailoring of AER engagement strategies and the development of targeted communications to encourage more informed feedback from different types of stakeholders. Markets as diverse as those regulated by the AER have many stakeholders of differing interests and levels of understanding. Communicating with different stakeholder groups in targeted ways will also build knowledge among resource-constrained stakeholders.

EWON also notes that the AER has made considerable inroads recently in its communications with consumers and consumer groups, through the establishment of, and consultation with, the Consumer Consultative Group and Consumer Challenge Panel. Ultimately, Australia's energy markets are for the benefit of, and paid for by, consumers. Informed feedback from consumers is therefore essential.

To further that aim, EWON suggests the increased use of explanatory material aimed specifically at consumers and their representative groups. For example, fact sheets, infographics and webinars can help make complex material more accessible to a wider audience. We further suggest that the AER consider making some of this material available in languages other than English. There are many customer groups representing stakeholders from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds that would benefit from material made available to them. This, in turn, would lead to better consultation and outcomes.

If you would like to discuss this matter further, please contact Rory Campbell, Manager Policy & Research, on (02) 8218 5266.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Helen Ford". The signature is written in a cursive style with a blue color.

**Helen Ford**  
**General Manager Governance, Awareness and Policy**  
**Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW**