



**CUAC**

**ANNUAL WORKPLAN 2010-2011**  
STRATEGIC PLANNING PERIOD 2009-2012



ACN 100 188 752

## Context

Following substantial internal organisational change in late 2008, CUAC's executive management and Board developed and the Board approved strategic priorities for CUAC for 2009-2012:

- Build a new, strong and expert team
- Maintain and enhance CUAC's focus and expertise on utility issues
- Strengthen CUAC's Funding Opportunities
- Increase CUAC's impact and influence with community stakeholders and develop a communications strategy
- Develop CUAC's Governance framework

This is set out in full in CUAC's Strategic Plan 2009-2012 (approved by the Board on 29 June 2009).

CUAC developed an Annual Workplan for 2009-2012, which supported these strategic directions. CUAC reviews progress against these plans on an annual basis.

In reviewing CUAC's Annual Workplan for the financial year 2010-2011, CUAC held a number of planning forums including:

- CUAC Reference Group Strategic Planning Workshop April 2010 (circulated)
- CUAC Strategic Planning Staff Workshops
- CUAC Board and Staff Strategic Planning Workshop (23 August 2010).

The Annual Workplan was approved by the Board by formal resolution on 15 November 2010.

### **Mission**

To ensure the interests of Victorian consumers, especially low-income, disadvantaged, rural and regional and indigenous consumers, are effectively represented in the policy and regulatory debate on electricity, gas and water.

### **Values**

We believe:

- All Victorians have a right to affordable and sustainable electricity, gas and water;
- All Victorians have a right to have their interests heard in policy and regulatory decisions on electricity, gas and water; and
- All Victorians have a right to not be disconnected from electricity, gas and water due solely to inability to pay.

### **Corporate Objectives**

CUAC achieves its mission through its corporate objectives, which are:

- To facilitate and provide an independent, proactive and informed advocacy voice for Victorian utility consumers in regulatory and consultation processes.
- To facilitate, undertake and disseminate research into consumer utility issues, with the aim of enabling consumers to take full advantage of utility markets.
- To monitor grassroots consumer utility issues, particularly those affecting low-income, disadvantaged and rural consumers.

Role	Objective	Priorities	Action areas 2010-2011
<b>Advocacy: impact and influence</b>	Provide policy and regulatory advice on utility issues.	<p>Influence the national and Victorian energy and water reform process to ensure Victorian consumer protections are protected and enhanced.</p> <p>Develop strategic alliances and joint advocacy approaches.</p>	<p>Identify policy principles &amp; criteria for assessing CUAC's work priorities.</p> <p>Advocacy priorities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National energy reform including the National Energy Customer Framework implementation and Victorian derogation.</li> <li>• Issues of energy market design to ensure that the National Energy Market delivers reliable supply in an affordable manner.</li> <li>• Effective consumer participation in markets, information, education, choice and marketing.</li> <li>• Impact of developing technologies on consumers (including emphasis on the Victorian smart meter roll-out, policy and regulatory gaps, equity &amp; pricing).</li> <li>• Victorian Powerline Bushfire Safety &amp; price impacts.</li> <li>• Low cost and effective energy efficiency including access by low income and disadvantaged groups.</li> <li>• National &amp; Victorian water reform initiatives (consumer protection, third party access &amp; meters).</li> <li>• Energy &amp; water pricing reviews, access &amp; affordability.</li> <li>• Consumer protections for customers in hardship.</li> </ul>
<b>Research and information provision</b>	Research & disseminate information to non-government agencies aimed at increasing consumer energy & water literacy & increased participation in markets to the benefit of consumers, including disadvantaged groups.	<p>Develop a dynamic and proactive research action model &amp; scope appropriate partners for research projects.</p> <p>Develop a policy position on the water paradigm: issues, relationships &amp; activities, federal &amp; state positions, strengths &amp; weaknesses.</p>	<p>Undertake four energy research/action projects including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smart meter information and education needs of non-government agencies</li> <li>• Effective consumer participation in the energy market</li> <li>• Energy marketing - protections needed for consumers, including for different communities.</li> <li>• Indigenous experience of energy and water services</li> </ul> <p>Undertake a water research project to develop consumer principles on major water reforms including proposed tariff pricing reforms.</p>

Role	Objective	Priorities	Action areas 2010-2011
Community engagement	Engage with community agencies: gain understanding of experiences and views on utility services. Monitor grass roots issues including, low income, rural and disadvantaged.	Further develop stakeholder relationships with community, government & industry participants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a stakeholder engagement plan.</li> <li>Undertake direct engagement with a minimum of 20 community stakeholder groups including rural groups and those representing disadvantaged Victorians to gain their insight into grass roots issues. CUAC to provide information and education on energy and water issues.</li> </ul>
		Build capacity of non-government agencies on utility issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Host a forum on water tariff options to provide capacity building opportunity for non-government organisations to participate effectively in the next water pricing review.</li> <li>Upgrade the CUAC website to provide better information for non-government agencies.</li> </ul>
Sound Governance	Ensure sound governance principles are embodied in our internal structures and processes.	Establish an effective compliance regime.	Undertake a review of CUAC's compliance obligations under the Public Administration Act and Financial Management Act.
		Maximise the effectiveness of the CUAC Reference Groups.	Review the role and effectiveness of the Reference Groups and develop a discussion paper outlining options and provide an opportunity for the Reference Group to provide feedback and recommendations to the CUAC Board.
		Maximise effectiveness of CUAC Grants Monies	Finalise recommendations arising from the Grants Review.
	Effective communications	Implementation of a communications action plan	Seek Board approval for the CUAC Communications Action Plan and implement plan into CUAC systems and processes.
	Access broader resources	Maximise CUAC's effectiveness in delivering its work program	Seek partnership with other agencies, including funding sources.
Effective planning	Review against past learning	Incorporate an annual evaluation of CUAC's successes and failures into the planning process for 2011-2012.	