

CUAC Annual Work Plan 2012-13

Action item 1: Improving the effectiveness of competition in the Victorian retail electricity and gas markets

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| Retail market concentration | Research and produce a policy issue paper on market concentration in the Victorian retail electricity and gas markets, the implications of this issue and establish a framework for ongoing monitoring of concentration. |
| Fair retail contracts | Based on previous CUAC research recommendations, develop and implement an advocacy campaign on fair contract terms. |
| Retailer margins and competition effectiveness | Assess impact of retail margins in the energy industry as part of efforts to continue monitoring of the effectiveness of Victoria's competitive retail model. |
| Non-price indicators of retailer performance | Develop and implement a rating scheme that compares the performance of energy retailers on a range of non-price measures of performance to provide consumers with a variety of tools to facilitate their energy market choices. |
| Accurate and effective price comparison services | Based on previous CUAC research, continue advocacy for the introduction of a voluntary code for privately operated price comparison services. |

Action item 2: Improving the quality of the economic regulation of energy network to ensure consumers get an appropriate and fair cost/service mix

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| Merits Review Appeals | Continue our advocacy in support of the replacement of the limited merits review regime with a mechanism more closely aligned with the public interest. Advance CUAC's positions to both the expert review panel and the standing council on energy and resources |
| Rules on energy network regulation | Further consumer focussed research and advocacy on better approaches to the economic regulation of energy networks given perceived failings of the existing system. |

Action item 3: Advocating for consumers with particular needs or specific circumstances

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| Exempt networks | Complete research into the experience of customers of exempt electricity networks, develop policy recommendations and advance these to policy makers and regulators. |
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Action item 4: Advancing the consumer interest in the transition to smart meters

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| AMI Ministerial Advisory Council | Advance CUAC's evidence based policy positions to the Victorian Government through the AMI Ministerial Advisory Council based on consumer impacts. Engage with government, regulators, industry and consumer agencies to influence development of policy and regulatory settings. |
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Action item 5: Victorian Aboriginal access to affordable energy and water

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| Aboriginal energy and water project | Advocate for implementation of recommendations arising from Aboriginal Energy and Water Project. As part of this, project recommendations will be targeted for particular stakeholder audiences and CUAC will maintain links with Aboriginal agencies. |
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Action item 6: Empower Victorian consumers to participate in the energy market and access smart meter enabled products and services

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| Development of effective information materials | Build education resource base for use by non-government agencies and their clients and members with focus on low income and vulnerable consumers. In developing the resource base, collaborate with non-government agencies. This project dependent on project funding. |
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| Consumer education and awareness | Work with a range of stakeholders to deliver information and education to community agencies and, ultimately, consumers to improve the effectiveness of their energy market choices. The scope of this project dependent on project funding. |
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Action item 7: Water pricing in the consumer interest

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| Water Price Determination | Assess impacts of water business plans and engage directly with water businesses and the regulator to influence consumer outcomes. |
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Action item 8: Best practice consumer protection for Victorian energy and water customers

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| Transition to the NECF | Advocate for the maintenance and enhancement of consumer protections in the Victorian jurisdiction and the inclusion of best practice protections in the transition to the NECF. |
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| Water governance changes | Ensure consumer protections are maintained in the development of regulation to implement recent changes in water governance legislation. |
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| Door-to-door selling | Research & advocate on best practice consumer protection in relation to door-to-door selling |
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Action item 9: Ensure sound governance principles are embodied in our internal structures and processes