



Australian Council of Social Service



## Energy at home: Current issues for consumers

Prices, products, pressures, protections. And politics.

A briefing and discussion

For legislators, policy makers, industry, consumer advocates

Parliament House, Canberra

Tuesday 13 September, 9:30 am to 4:00 pm

Australian energy prices are rising fast - faster than inflation, faster than incomes, and faster than in other advanced economies. The energy market and its products are becoming more complex. Find out why and what this means for Australian households. Consider what can be done in response, what the future might look like and factors for consideration in policy making.

Energy is an essential household service. ACOSS and CHOICE present a one day conference about current issues in energy for the residential consumer. The program features an overview of forces affecting retail energy bills and other developments in the market, and then turns to the future; can anything be done about trends to increasing consumption and increasing bills?

**Our facilitator today is Lish Fejer, science and sustainability communicator.**

### 10:00-11:30 Session 1: What's happening and why?

Paul Simshauser, Chief Economist and Group Head of Corporate Affairs, AGL Energy

Matt Levey, Head of Campaigns, CHOICE

Clare Petre, Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW

### 11:30-12:00 Break

### 12:00-13:30 Session 2: What can be done? in the short term?

Tony Westmore, Senior Policy Advisor, ACOSS

Lauren Solomon, Policy Manager, Clean Energy Council

Tony Wood, Program Director Energy, Grattan Institute

Rod Sims, Chairman, Australian Competition and Consumer Commission

### 13:30-14:15 Lunch

### 14:15-16:00 Session 3: What can be done? in the longer term?

Chris Dunstan, Research Director, Institute for Sustainable Futures, University of Technology, Sydney

Iain MacGill, Joint Director, Centre for Environment & Energy Markets, University of New South Wales

John Pierce, Chairman, Australian Energy Market Commission

**Enquiries:** email [tony.westmore@acoss.org.au](mailto:tony.westmore@acoss.org.au), phone 0419 256 339

**Presented by:** ACOSS - [acoss.org.au](http://acoss.org.au) and CHOICE - [choice.com.au](http://choice.com.au)

This conference is supported by



and



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**Lish Fejer, Science and Sustainability Communicator**

Lish Fejer is science and sustainability communicator, presenter, educator and slightly crazed experimenter. Lish has worked in the field of science communication as a presenter, speaker, writer and exhibition developer for over 15 years. She was co-host of ABC TV's eco-home-reno show Carbon Cops, a 6-part series looking at simple, savvy and smart things to do in our homes to make them more energy efficient without losing our lifestyle. Well aware of how hard it is to get green jobs done Lish has developed a video-based website GIY: Green It Yourself to help the non-traditional DIYer make green improvements to their home with the aim of making energy efficiency effortless and invisible. Lish lives in Canberra with her husband, two little kids, 15,000 worms and, to date, has never killed a chicken.

**Paul Simshauser, Chief Economist and Group Head of Corporate Affairs, AGL Energy**

Prior to his current appointment, Paul was the Chief Executive Officer of Babcock and Brown Power, the largest ASX-listed power generator in Australia. Babcock and Brown Power owns and operates eight power stations and a coal mine and has a market capitalisation of more than \$1 billion. Paul has also worked as Chief Economist and General Manager – Marketing and Trading at Stanwell Corporation, following a range of positions in corporate finance within the electricity supply industry in Queensland. Paul graduated from the Griffith Business School with a Bachelor of Commerce and Master of Commerce (Accounting and Finance). He also has a PhD in Economics, and is Adjunct Professor at the Department of Accounting, Finance and Economics, Griffith University. He is an AFMA Accredited Dealer, a CPA and a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

**Matt Levey, Head of Campaigns, CHOICE**

CHOICE was founded in 1959 and is completely self-funded and independent. As Head of Campaigns, Matt Levey leads CHOICE's advocacy and campaigning across a range of consumer issues, including banking, energy and food policy. Matt was previously an adviser to the Australian Government, working in environment and climate change policy, and has also worked as a consultant on energy policy.

**Clare Petre, Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW**

Clare Petre was appointed Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW in 1998. Prior to this appointment, she was the Senior Assistant Commonwealth Ombudsman. Clare has extensive experience in the community sector, with government, and the media. She has worked with community legal centres, as a reporter with ABC TV's 4 Corners and The Investigators, and in the health system. Ms Petre has served on a range of NSW and Commonwealth government advisory bodies, and on the boards of community groups, including ACOSS. Clare has a Bachelor of Social Studies and Diploma of Criminology (Sydney University) and a Masters in Social Administration (London School of Economics).

**Tony Westmore, Senior Policy Officer, Australian Council of Social Council**

ACOSS is the peak body of the community services and welfare sector and the national voice for the needs of people affected by poverty and inequality. Tony is a policy analyst and advocate with a focus on issues affecting low income households in the national energy markets, including regulation of retail customer matters, affordability, energy efficiency and amenity, intelligent networks and climate change and related policy responses. Tony has worked for non-government, not-for-profit organisations for twenty-five years, mostly in legal services, public policy and research.

**Lauren Solomon, Policy Manager, Clean Energy Council**

Lauren Solomon is a Policy Manager at the Clean Energy Council. She has a particular focus in the policy areas of emerging technologies and energy efficiency. Lauren previously worked as a Policy Advisor in the NSW Government and graduated from Sydney University with an Honours Degree in Resource Economics.

**Tony Wood, Program Director – Energy, Grattan Institute**

Tony joined Grattan Institute after two and a half years as Program Director of Clean Energy Projects at the Clinton Foundation. Before that he spent 11 years working at Origin Energy, which included a secondment to the first Garnaut review. He has built widespread relationships within the energy sector and is seen as a trusted adviser by government.

**Rod Sims, Chairman, Australian Competition and Consumer Commission**

Rod was appointed to the ACCC in August 2011 for a five year term. Rod has extensive business and public sector experience. Immediately prior to his appointment to the ACCC, he was the Chairman of the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal of New South Wales, Commissioner on the National Competition Council, Chairman of InfraCo Asia, Director of Ingeus Limited, and member of the Research and Policy Council of the Committee for Economic Development of Australia. Rod was also a Director of Port Jackson's Partners Limited where he advised the CEOs and Boards of some of Australia's top 50 companies on commercial corporate strategy over many years. Rod relinquished all of these roles on becoming Chairman of the ACCC. Rod is also a past Chairman of the NSW Rail Infrastructure Corporation and the State Rail Authority and has been a Director of a number of private sector companies. During the late 1980s and early 1990s, Rod worked as the Deputy Secretary in the Commonwealth Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet responsible for economic, infrastructure and social policy and the Cabinet Office. He also worked as Deputy Secretary in the Department of Transport and Communications. Rod Sims holds a first class honours degree in Commerce from the University of Melbourne and a Master of Economics from the Australian National University.

**Chris Dunstan, Research Director, Institute for Sustainable Futures, University of Technology, Sydney**

Chris Dunstan is a Research Director at the University of Technology, Sydney's Institute for Sustainable Futures. Chris has over 20 years' experience in energy policy, strategic management and sustainability. Chris' current research focuses on addressing regulatory and market barriers to the development of sustainable energy. Between 1997 and 2004, Chris led strategic planning and policy development at the Sustainable Energy Development Authority of NSW (SEDA). Chris is a Project Leader for the CSIRO Intelligent Grid Research program. Chris regularly advises government and business clients on sustainable energy issues. He is regularly approached by the media for expert comment. Chris has a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Melbourne and a Bachelor of Economics from Sydney University and a Master of Economics (Social Sciences) at Sydney University in 1997.

**Iain MacGill, Joint Director, Centre for Environment & Energy Markets, University of New South Wales**

Dr Iain MacGill is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Electrical Engineering and Telecommunications at the University of New South Wales, and Joint Director (Engineering) for the University's Centre for Energy and Environmental Markets (CEEM). Iain's teaching and research interests at UNSW include electricity industry restructuring and the Australian National Electricity Market, sustainable energy technologies, renewable energy integration into power systems, energy policy and environmental regulation. He has run industry short courses and consulted to industry and government clients in these areas here in Australia and internationally.

**John Pierce, Chairman, Australian Energy Market Commission**

Commissioner Pierce was appointed AEMC Chairman in June 2010. His commitment to industry and regulatory reform has underpinned his contribution to national energy reform through a number of senior roles including his tenure as Secretary of the Federal Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism which followed 12 years of service as Secretary of the New South Wales (NSW) Treasury. He was a key adviser to Government and Chairman of the NSW Treasury Corporation. Prior to his time at NSW Treasury he was Chief Economist at Pacific Power. John holds a BEc, Hon. (UNSW). He was a Visiting Scholar at Boston University during 2004-2005 working with Professor L. Kotlikoff on the economic and fiscal implications of an ageing population and with R. D. Behr from the Kennedy School of Government on public sector performance management.