

Catriona Lowe and Fiona McLeod  
Consumer Liaison Representatives  
c/- Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism

Submitted by email to [consumeradvocacy@ret.gov.au](mailto:consumeradvocacy@ret.gov.au)

20<sup>th</sup> September 2013

Dear Catriona and Fiona,

**RE: Australian Energy Consumers Organisation – Discussion Paper**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Discussion Paper.

As the peak body for the community services sector in South Australia, SACOSS has a long-standing interest in the energy sector because the consumer issues related to energy services are extremely significant for low income and disadvantaged consumers.

SACOSS has engaged in each of the consultation stages related to the Australian Energy Consumers Organisation, including participation in the 10 person Project Working Group to support the creation of a national energy advocacy body and representation in meetings surrounding the *Proposal for a National Energy Consumer Body, Final Report* by Dr John Tamblyn and John Ryan. SACOSS was also pleased to meet with Catriona as part of this current consultation.

SACOSS wishes to endorse the submission prepared by the Consumer Action Law Centre and the Consumer Utilities Advocacy Centre prepared in response to the Discussion Paper. Every aspect of this submission is supported by SACOSS, except in two important respects:

- SACOSS does not support the proposal for AECO to be invested with the grants function held by the Consumer Advocacy Panel (CAP). SACOSS believes that keeping CAP separate from the new advocacy body is crucial for maintaining diversity in advocacy, effective functioning with peer organisations and effective jurisdictional and sectoral advocacy arrangements.
- In relation to the AECO Board, SACOSS would encourage the SCER CAWG to also consider the role that The Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS) can play in identifying representatives for the selection panel, in addition to the role that the Consumers' Federation of Australia should play. As the peak body of the community services and welfare sector and the national voice for the needs of people affected by poverty and inequality, ACOSS is also well placed to help ensure the breadth and depth of energy consumer interest is well represented.

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SACOSS thank you in advance for your consideration of our comments. If you have any questions relating to the above, please contact SACOSS Senior Policy Officer, Jo De Silva on 8305 4211 or via [jo@sacoss.org.au](mailto:jo@sacoss.org.au).

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'RWomersley', with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Ross Womersley  
Executive Director