

Biographies of the Expert Panel Members

Jo Benvenuti

Jo is an experienced consultant across a range of consumer matters, specialising in consumer engagement and energy and water policy.

Jo is currently a sole trade consultant, as well as a Director at Gippsland Water and a Panel Member of the Energy National Cabinet Reform Committee Independent Selection Panel.

As part of her consulting work, Jo produced a 2016 research report on embedded networks for the Energy and Water Ombudsmen of SA, NSW and Victoria. The research report examined the applicability of ombudsman jurisdiction for Australian energy consumers in the midst of energy market reform and innovation, with particular focus on identifying energy transactions that fall outside of the jurisdiction of ombudsmen schemes.

During 2016-17, Jo provided consultancy services to the Consumer Policy and Research Centre on embedded networks.

Prior to her current roles, Jo was the Chair of the Consumers' Federation of Australia from 2013 to 2015 and Executive Officer of the Consumer Utilities Advocacy Centre from 2008 to 2015. Jo has previously held executive positions for the Energy and Water Ombudsman Victoria and RSPCA Victoria.

Jo holds a Higher Diploma of Teaching Secondary from the Melbourne College of Education and a Graduate Diploma in Public Policy from the University of Melbourne.

Gerard Brody

Gerard has been the CEO of the Consumer Action Law Centre for more than six years and is a leading consumer rights advocate and lawyer. Prior to his role as CEO, he spent around ten years in various policy officer, solicitor and management roles at both the Consumer Action Law Centre and the Brotherhood of St Laurence.

Gerard has also held the role of Chairperson at the Consumers' Federation of Australia for the past four years.

Gerard has represented consumers on a number of bodies, including the ACCC's Consumer Consultative Committee, the Australian Securities and Investments Commission's Consumer Advisory Panel and the Australian Energy Regulator's Customer Consultative Group.

Gerard holds a Bachelor of Laws and Bachelor of Arts (both with Honours) from the University of Melbourne and also holds a Master of Public Policy and Management from the University of Melbourne.

Neil Gibbs

Following a career in global energy markets, Neil now actively supports the decarbonisation of the electricity system, specialising in the evolution of technology, business models, regulation and markets at the "grid edge" – harnessing the value of innovation and customer engagement to deliver secure, reliable, affordable and low-emissions energy and services. His core skills are in strategy development, the art of building organisational support for change, and the diligence of strategy execution.

He is the Founder & Principal of OnLine Power, a boutique advisory firm serving the Australian energy industry. He is also Co-Chair of the Clean Energy Council's Distributed Energy Leadership Forum, and is currently engaged to support the Energy Security Board's Post 2025 Electricity Market Redesign process with a focus on Distributed Energy Resource markets. His previous roles include as the Founding Chair of both GreenSync and i.n. concepts, Founder & CEO of Marchment Hill Consulting, VP for AT Kearney (Asia Pacific Energy), VP for Cap Gemini Ernst & Young, and Global Energy Practice leader for PA Consulting Group.

Andrea Steele

Andrea is a lawyer who specialises in providing legal, regulatory, compliance and energy-related strata law advice to the Australian electricity and gas sectors.

Andrea is currently a Principal Consultant at ENRG Consulting, which specialises in providing advice to the Australian energy sector – with a particular focus on the embedded network industry.

Between 2012 and March 2019, Andrea worked in-house at WINconnect, an embedded electricity network provider in Australia, as an Executive General Manager and General Counsel. Andrea advised WINconnect on their retail electricity and gas operations, embedded network, hot water and solar businesses.

Andrea's key focus and capabilities include advice relating to the national electricity and gas markets and their respective regulatory frameworks, including how the regulatory instruments apply in these markets.

Andrea holds Bachelor's degrees of Law and Commerce from Bond University. In addition, Andrea holds a Masters of Laws (International Banking & Finance and European Law) and a Masters of Legal Practice.