

CONSUMER ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MEETING: April 2019

DATE: 1/04/2019

TIME: 2:00pm

Members present	Mr Charles Millstead Mr Joseph Kelly Ms Robyn Robinson Mr Warren Males Ms Rose McGrath Mr Ian Jarratt	QCA, Presiding Officer Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland Council on the Ageing Queensland Canegrowers Association Queensland Council of Social Service Queensland Consumers Association
Observers	Mr Andrew Thomson Ms Fiona Guthrie Mr Adam Liddy Mr George Passmore	Department of Natural Resources Mines and Energy QCA QCA QCA
Apologies	Mr Andrew Farlow Mr Mark Grenning Mr Jon O'Mally	Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland Energy Users Association of Australia Financial Counsellors' Association of Queensland

- 1 **Previous minutes** The Committee resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 27 March 2018 be accepted as a true record of proceedings.
- 2 **Regulated electricity prices** Members discussed the QCA's draft determination on regulated regional electricity prices for 2019–20. The QCA informed members that prices for most tariffs were forecast to fall, and informed members of the proposed approach to transitional tariffs.

Members discussed price changes for controlled load tariffs, and highlighted that these tariffs were important for vulnerable customers trying to save on electricity bills. Members discussed the 'Default Market Offer' being implemented by the Australian Energy Regulator, and its potential impact on notified prices set by the QCA. Members also discussed the consumption levels used by the QCA to provide 'typical' customer bill impact figures.

Members discussed electricity price levels in general, and their impact on residents, business and the wider economy.

The Chair thanked members for their submissions to the interim consultation notice, and invited submissions on the draft determination.
- 3 **Solar feed-in tariff for regional Queensland** Members discussed the 2019–20 regulated solar feed-in tariff setting process. The QCA informed members that, in response to members' comments at the previous meeting, it had raised the potential for consulting on the methodology. However, the Minister's direction for 2019–20 does not require consultation.

The QCA informed members that if energy costs fall, as per the current forecasts, the solar feed-in tariff would also likely fall.
- 4 **Advice to the Minister on advanced digital metering** Members discussed the QCA's initial advice to the Minister on the costs of advanced digital meters. Members were concerned at the additional costs of these meters. Members were also concerned that there seemed to be little savings for customers at this stage.

Members stated they would like to see open public consultation on future advice on advanced digital meters.
- 5 **South east Queensland electricity market monitoring** The QCA updated Members on the electricity market monitoring process. The QCA informed members that it had released an updated version of the previous report. The updated version included weighted average bills, using data that was not available in time for the original release date.

Members discussed the level of discounting for market offers. Members also discussed concerns with retailer Alinta Energy over their poor performance with hardship customers.
- 6 **Guaranteed service levels review** Members discussed the Guaranteed Service Levels (GSL) scheme review. Members saw the inclusion of a purpose for the GSL scheme as a positive aspect of the review. Members also noted that the scheme still only applied to distributors, and were seeking to have a GSL for retailers introduced through the review into the operation of the National Energy Retail Law.
- 7 **Review of distribution network reliability standards** Members discussed the review of distribution network reliability standards. Members highlighted that the key issue for them was to reduce network costs, and electricity bills, or to at least avoid future price increases.

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| 8 | Enforcement issues | Members discussed enforcement actions the QCA had conducted against two retailers. |
| 9 | Other decisions since last meeting | Members discussed GSL payment reports from Energex and Ergon Distribution. |
| 10 | Forward work program | Members noted the paper. |
| 11 | EWOQ Update | EWOQ provided an update for Members via email. They advised that for Financial 2018–19 to end-February 2019 they had received 5,780 cases, which was a significant fall compared to the previous year (6,593). Billing issues and payment difficulties continue to be major categories of complaints to EWOQ. |
| 12 | Department of Natural Resources Mines and Energy update | The Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy (DNRME) updated Members on its activities. Members discussed the review of the operation of the National Energy Retail Law in Queensland. |