



Minutes

Meeting Title: Minutes
Meeting Number: 01/2023
Date & Time: Wednesday, 1 March 2023 10:00am (AWST)
Location: Online via Microsoft Teams
Attendees: Members

Noelli Bariacto	CCI WA	Apology
Liz Crompton	Chamber of Minerals and Energy	Apology
Rowan Kelly	Consumer Credit Legal Service	
Suresh Rajan		Apology
Pam Hartcher	Financial Counsellors' Association	
Melanie Every	Financial Counsellors' Association	Apology
Sheldon Mumby	Pastoralists & Graziers Association	
Lindsay Duncan	Property Council of Australia (WA)	
Emily Young	Property Council of Australia (WA)	Apology
Kitty Prodonovich	RCCI WA	
Tim Dymond*	UnionsWA	
Graham Hansen	WA Council of Social Service	
John Hassell	WA Farmers Federation	
Daniel Thomson	WA Local Government Association	

ERA

Steve Edwell (Chair), Jenness Gardner (CEO), Sara O'Connor (Executive Director Regulation), Matt Shahnazari (A/Executive Director Energy Markets), Bruce Layman (Chief Economist), Brenton Panzich (Director, Legal Services), Nadia Donatelli (Principal Regulatory Officer), Jenny Kingsley (Senior Project Officer), Danielle Asarpota (Manager Strategic Communications).

Observers

Penny Lipscombe	Consumer Protection (DMIRS)	Apology
Marcus Claridge	Energy and Water Ombudsman	
Brent Savage	Energy Policy WA	

*Tim Dymond departed the meeting at 10:48am

DMS: D#####

1. Welcome and acknowledgement of Country by Steve Edwell, Chair ERA

The meeting opened at 10:00am.

2. Apologies

Steve noted the apologies.

3. Minutes of meeting 03/2022 held on Wednesday, 5 October 2022

The Chair approved the minutes of Meeting 03/2022 as a formal record of those events.

4. Statement of Strategic Intent

The Chair provided an overview of the ERA's new Statement of strategic intent and explained it was the first part of a more detailed strategic planning process that the ERA is undertaking.

Steve explained the Statement of strategic intent was an opportunity to highlight the way the ERA is embracing change and being proactive and innovative in the way it operates, with a particular focus on improving stakeholder engagement.

Steve advised members they may see changes in the way the ERA operates over coming months and welcomed members to suggest ways they think the ERA can operate better.

5. Energy retailer and distributor data reports

Sara O'Connor provided an overview of the ERA's recently released energy retailer and distributor data reports which provide some high level trends for electricity and gas residential and business customers.

The Chair explained there appeared to be a growing cohort of electricity customers that are experiencing cost of living pressures and have a reduced ability to pay utility and other bills, and this will be explored in the next retailer report. The Chair also discussed the reliability in the Western Power network, and members advised that reliability was the main issue for regional and rural customers.

6. New customer protections in the Electricity Code

Nadia Donatelli provided an overview of the changes to the Electricity Code of Conduct which took effect on 20 February 2023. The family and domestic violence changes were explained to be for residential customers only and that they have a strong onus on retailers to ensure they have all the requirements in place. Members discussed the evidence requirements for customers to prove family and domestic violence, and noted that evidence is only required in limited and specific circumstances.

7. ERB matter

Bruce Layman provided an overview of the ERA's investigation into Synergy and recent decision by the Energy Review Board that Synergy contravened Clause 7A.2.17 of the Market Rules by pricing its generation above the cost of supply, where this behaviour was related to market power.

8. ERA stakeholder engagement

Danielle Asarpota discussed how ERACCC may evolve following the release of the Statement of strategic intent, which highlighted the importance of stakeholder engagement to the ERA's governing body. Danielle explained this was an ongoing conversation and invited members to provide their views on possible changes to the ERA's stakeholder engagement approaches.

9. Member updates

Graham Hansen advised that WACOSS has recently published the Understanding Utility Hardship report.

Brent Savage advised that the Western Australian Advocacy for Consumers of Energy (WA ACE) Grants program has increased the amount provided in its small grants stream.

Members advised of current pressures on organisations to be involved in government consultation processes and recommended that the ERA ensure consultation timeframes allowed adequate time to develop submissions.

10. ERA upcoming decisions and consultations

Danielle Asarpota provided an overview of the ERA's upcoming consultations and decisions.

11. ERA recent decisions and consultations

Danielle Asarpota provided an overview of the ERA's recent decisions.

12. Meeting closed at 12:00pm

The next meeting is expected to be held on Wednesday, 21 June 2023.