



Minutes

Meeting Title: Minutes
Meeting Number: 02/2023
Date & Time: Wednesday, 21 June 2023 10:00am (AWST)
Location: Ken Michael Room, Level 4, 469 Wellington Street Perth
Attendees: Members

Noelli Bariacto	CCI WA	
David Modolo	Chamber of Minerals and Energy	
Rowan Kelly	Consumer Credit Legal Service	
Mamta Kochhar	Ethnic Communities Council	
Suresh Rajan	<i>Independent advocate</i>	
Leanne Berard	Financial Counsellors' Association	
Sheldon Mumby	Pastoralists & Graziers Association	Apology
Emily Young Lindsay Duncan	Property Council of Australia (WA)	Apology
Kitty Prodonovich	RCCI WA	Apology
Tim Dymond	UnionsWA	
Graham Hansen	WA Council of Social Service	Apology
John Hassell	WA Farmers Federation	Apology
Daniel Thomson	WA Local Government Association	

ERA

Steve Edwell (Chair), Jenness Gardner (CEO), Danielle Asarpota (Manager Strategic Communications), Jenny Kingsley (Senior Project Officer), Nadia Donatelli (Principal Regulatory Officer) and Roshan Fernandes (Manager Human Resources).

Observers

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

DMS: D262072

- 1. Acknowledgement of Country**
- 2. Welcome by Steve Edwell, Chair ERA**

The meeting opened at 10:10am.

- 3. Apologies**


The Chair noted the apologies.

4. Minutes of meeting 01/2023 held on Wednesday, 1 March 2023

The Chair approved the minutes of Meeting 01/2023 as a formal record of those events.

5. Energy consumers guide: Switched On

Nadia Donatelli provided an overview of the ERA's Energy consumers guide, Switched On, which provides information to residential customers, and the work commencing to update it.

Members discussed the usefulness of the current Switched On guide and suggested possible improvements to make it more accessible to customers, including: 

- The website should use plain English and be easy for people with disability or from linguistically diverse backgrounds to access and understand. Suggestions included using multilingual videos and factsheets. The ERA should involve customer representatives in verifying this has been achieved, noting the importance of culture and language.
- A map of Western Australia showing which retailers serve which locations, and comparisons of the services retailers provide.
- Placing customer needs and interests front and centre, such as through providing links directly to retailers' complaints webpages.
- Working with consumer representatives to ensure visibility of the guide, for example on their websites, as well as gathering consumer views.

Nadia outlined the next steps for the project, including that an update will be presented at the next ERACCC meeting. Nadia welcomed further feedback from members during the development of the new guide.

6. Streetlight tariff

The Chair provided an overview of how submissions from local government were considered in the review of Western Power's proposed price list, including how these were balanced with the need to recover the costs of operating the network.

The Chair highlighted this as an example of why regulation matters. Members commented that the process had worked well and supported this way of engaging in future matters.

7. Energy transition: comments by the Chair

The Chair outlined the main issues that will affect customers as the energy transition progresses, including energy affordability. Members advised that cost was the main issue for customers. Members also discussed the importance of informing and educating customers about the energy transformation process.

8. The ERA's Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

Danielle Asarpota provided an overview of the ERA's draft Disability Access and Inclusion Plan, including the consideration of removing the word 'disability' from the

title of the new plan in recognition of improvements to accessibility resulting in greater inclusion for all people regardless of disability status.

Members discussed that the removal of the word 'disability' must not diminish the Plan's role in ensuring people with a disability are able to receive the supports they need. Members also queried what audit mechanism is in place to verify whether the Plan's objectives are achieved.

Members suggested ways to improve the accessibility of the document, including use of plain English, and other ways to promote the ERA's inclusiveness such as uploading relevant policies with job advertisements.

9. Update on review of the ERACCC

Danielle Asarpota provided an overview of the options the ERA has been exploring to enhance ERACCC and sought views from members on the current preferred approach.

Members advised a preference that ERACCC continue to include both small-use and large-use members, noting many issues crossed over both groups and these should be the issues discussed at meetings. Members suggested that a way to manage the agenda could be to transition from small-use to large-use issues over the course of the allotted meeting time, so that members can elect to attend only the portion of the meeting that is relevant to their organisation.

Members advised it would also be useful to have in depth sessions on particular topics which members could opt in to attend.

10. Member updates

Tim Dymond advised that there have been recent increases in minimum and award wages at both the federal and state level.

Mamta Kochhar advised organisations can contact the Ethnic Communities Council for advice when working with ethnic communities.

Leanne Berard advised of a number of relevant issues including the Financial Counsellors' Association's work on helping communities to be resilient in natural disasters and that there has been an increase in small businesses in financial hardship. Leanne also noted the upcoming Financial Councillors Conference in October which may include discussion about energy hardship.

11. ERA upcoming decisions and consultations

Members noted the overview of the ERA's recent decisions and consultations provided in the meeting pack.

12. Meeting closed at 11:55AM

The next meeting is expected to be held on Wednesday, 11 October 2023.