

OTTER CUSTOMER CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

MEETING NO. 4/2018

9.30 AM THURSDAY 13 DECEMBER 2018

FRANKLIN ROOM, THE TREASURY BUILDING,

21 MURRAY STREET, HOBART

MINUTES

9:30 am Meeting commenced

1. Apologies

Present

Ms Bernadette Jago (TasCOSS)
Ms Margie Law (Anglicare Tasmania)
Mr Geoff Fader (Tasmanian Small Business Council/Rural Business Tasmania)
Mr Robert Mallett (Tasmanian Small Business Council)
Ms Tracey Brown (Energy Ombudsman Tasmania)
Ms Georgia Palmer (Local Government Association of Tasmania)
Cr Peter Rhodes (Flinders Council) - by phone

In attendance

Mr Joe Dimasi (Tasmanian Economic Regulator)
Mr Dean Burgess (Director, OTTER)
Mr Jonathan Roe (Senior Research Officer, OTTER)
Mr Dan Hanek (Principal Policy Analyst, OTTER)
Ms Lana Hutchinson (Principal Policy Analyst, OTTER)
Ms Liv Sindorff (Assistant Research Officer, OTTER)
Ms Toulia Alvanos (Administrative Assistant, OTTER)

Apologies

Mr Ray McKendrick (Energy Ombudsman Tasmania)
Mr Peter Skillern (Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association)
Mr Nick Steel (Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association)
Mr Michael Bailey (Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry)
Mr David MacFie (Australian Competition and Consumer Commission)
Mr Brian Wightman (Property Council of Australia - Tasmania Division)
Ms Kate Cox (Energy Ombudsman Tasmania)
Ms Elizabeth Skirving (CEO, Rural Business Tasmania)
Mr Charles Scarafiotti (Property Council of Australia - Tasmania Division)

2. Ratify minutes from meeting 20 September 2018

The minutes from the meeting of 20 September 2018 were ratified.

3. Update on Aurora Pay as You Go Plus (APAYG+)

Mr Giles Whitehouse and Mr Leroy Pereira from Aurora Energy delivered a presentation on the new Aurora Pay as You Go Plus (APAYG+). The presentation provided an overview of how the product will work and the benefits to customers. APAYG+ is an app based/web based product that can be used to manage electricity accounts via a debit card or credit card. It will allow customers to track their electricity usage on a daily basis. APAYG+ differs from the current pay as you go product in that it does not allow self-disconnection when customer credit has expired. Rather it will generate a bill, with advice through the app on account status and payment options. The App itself has an annual fee.

The APAYG+ has been trialled on over 120 customers, which has allowed Aurora to monitor customer behaviour. Aurora Energy has modelled that, even without customers making behavioural changes, customers are expected to be better off on APAYG+ relative to the current pay as you go product.

It was mentioned that the app will be officially launched in early 2019. It was noted that APAYG+ requires the use of advanced meters. Aurora has commenced the program to schedule the installation of advanced meters for all current pay as you go customers (approx. 20 000 customers). This meter rollout program is expected to be completed in December 2019.

4. Electricity - Feed-in Tariff Review and Investigation - Update

Ms Lana Hutchinson (Principal Policy Analyst, OTTER) delivered a presentation on the Feed-in Tariff (FiT) review and investigation. The presentation outlined:

- that the Regulator has already announced its intention to conduct a pricing investigation in relation to Regulated FiT rates in 2019, and Ms Hutchinson provided an overview of the key steps and timing for the investigation;
- the issues that are matters of Government policy and outside the scope of the Regulator's investigation;
- a summary of the key findings of the Government's FiT review;
- and a summary of the revised FiT arrangements that apply from 1 July 2019.

5. Energy in Tasmania Performance Report 2017-18

Mr Jonathan Roe (Principal Policy Analyst, OTTER) delivered a presentation on the Energy in Tasmania Performance Report. The Regulator released the Energy in Tasmania Report on 30 November 2018. The Report provides performance information about the Tasmanian electricity and gas supply industries. The presentation covered:

- a summary of significant outage incidents that occurred throughout the year;
- a brief outline of the performance for TasNetworks, Basslink and Aurora Energy;
- and an overview of industry performance on the Bass Strait Islands.

It was noted that, overall, 2017-18 was a good year for the energy industry in Tasmania with relatively few major incidents and sufficient rainfall to allow the state to be a net exporter of energy.

6. Energy Security Monitor and Assessor - Annual Energy Security Review Report 2018

Mr Dan Hanek (Principal Policy Analyst, OTTER) made a presentation to members on the Energy Security Monitor and Assessor role that is being performed by the Tasmanian Economic Regulator. The presentation covered the:

- an overview of the Government's Energy Security Risk Response Framework;
- the High Reliability Level and Prudent Storage Level determined by the Government in relation to Hydro Tasmania storage levels;
- a description of the role and functions of the Energy Security Monitor and Assessor and the separate Energy Security Coordinator; and
- an overview of energy security during 2017-18, which indicated that energy supply security was strong throughout the year.

7. Tasmanian Ombudsman update

Ms Tracey Brown, (Office of the Energy Ombudsman) outlined the recent experience with complaints regarding electricity entities for the quarter ending September 2018, and advised that the most significant issue of late related to the timeliness of advanced meter installations, and noted that Aurora and Metering Dynamics had recently taken steps to try to address these issues.

8. Projects on the go

The Committee noted the December 2018 edition of Projects on the Go.

9. Other Business

Future meeting dates

It was agreed that the next meeting would be scheduled for Thursday 14 March 2019 at 9.30am.

The meeting closed at 11:45 am.