

OTTER CUSTOMER CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

MINUTES

MEETING NO. 3/2023 - THURSDAY 19 OCTOBER 2023

Murray Room, 21 Murray Street, Hobart / MS Teams*

10:00 am Meeting commenced

1. Welcome and apologies

Present

Ms Stacey Milbourne (Salvation Army)
Mr Ben Morris (Local Government Association of Tasmania)
Mr Geoff Fader (Tasmanian Small Business Council)
Mr Michael Bailey (Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry)
Mr Stephen Durney (TasCOSS)*
Mr Ray McKendrick (Ombudsman Tasmania)
Mr Scott Alexander (Property Council of Australia - Tasmania Division)
Mr Robert Mallett (Tasmanian Small Business Council)
Ms Chantal Hopwood (TasNetworks)*
Ms Jessica Rae (TasNetworks)*

In attendance

Mr Joe Dimasi (Tasmanian Economic Regulator)
Ms Kirstan Long (Director, OTTER)
Mr Glenn Bounds (Assistant Director, OTTER)
Mr Tristan Patterson (Acting Assistant Director, OTTER)
Ms Adele Sobolewski (Principal Policy Analyst, OTTER)
Ms Cassandra Pavez (Senior Research Officer, OTTER)
Mr Victor Hou (Research Officer, OTTER)
Mr Sam Williams (Research Officer, OTTER)
Ms Kalia Combs (Assistant Research Officer, OTTER)
Ms Estella Walker (Executive Officer, OTTER)

Apologies

Mr Charles Scarafiotti (Property Council of Australia - Tasmania Division)
Mr John Pauley (Council of the Ageing)

2. Ratify minutes from June 2023 meeting

The minutes from the meeting of 22 June 2023 were ratified.

3. Tasmanian Ombudsman Update

Mr McKendrick presented an update from the Tasmanian Ombudsman's Office in relation to energy issues.

It was noted that the Australian Energy Regulator's Better Bills Guideline has come into effect and been implemented by retailers. It is expected that the changes will lead to an increase in queries from customers regarding electricity bills.

4. Network upgrades for Electric Vehicle charging

Ms Rae delivered a presentation on the network updates required to facilitate the installation of electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

Mr Bailey queried the availability of Government support as businesses have reported receiving substantial quotes from TasNetworks in relation to the costs of the associated network upgrades. TasNetworks will investigate this issue and provide fact sheets to OTTER for distribution to members. Mr Dimasi noted that the decision to provide support to affected businesses is outside the Regulator's responsibilities as it is a policy issue and therefore a matter for the Government to consider.

5. Comparison of Electricity and Gas Prices Available to Small Customers Report 2023

Ms Pavez delivered a presentation on the Comparison of Electricity and Gas Prices Available to Small Customers Report 2023.

It was noted that the report is yet to be finalised and it is expected that it will be published next week. Members will be emailed a copy of the report when it is published.

6. Update on water and sewerage inquiries

Mr Bounds delivered an update on the water and sewerage inquiries currently being undertaken.

Copies of the draft and final reports relating to the inquiries will be emailed to members when the reports are published.

7. Projects on the Go

The Committee discussed the number of small business customers on Aurora's standing offer tariffs and whether the figure of 29 293 for the fourth quarter of 2022-23 represented the number of customer accounts or the number of meters. The Regulator undertook to seek clarification from Aurora.

8. Other Business

The meeting closed at 11.30am.