

# OTTER CUSTOMER CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

## MINUTES

MEETING NO. 1/2024 - THURSDAY 28 MARCH 2024

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

9:30 am Meeting commenced

### 1. Welcome and apologies

#### Present

Ms Stacey Milbourne (Salvation Army)  
Mr Ben Morris (Local Government Association of Tasmania)  
Mr Stephen Durney (TasCOSS)  
Mr Robert Mallett (Tasmanian Small Business Council)  
Mr Luke Doerner (Property Council of Tasmania)  
Mr Heath Gilmore (Aurora Energy)

#### In attendance

Mr Joe Dimasi (Tasmanian Economic Regulator)  
Ms Kirstan Long (Director, OTTER)  
Mr Glenn Bounds (Assistant Director, OTTER)  
Mr Tristan Patterson (Assistant Director, OTTER)  
Mr David Richardson (Specialist Policy Analyst, OTTER)  
Ms Cassandra Pavez (Senior Research Officer, OTTER)  
Mr Victor Hou (Research Officer, OTTER)  
Ms Eve Fulton (Assistant Research Officer, OTTER)  
Ms Estella Walker (Executive Officer, OTTER)

#### Apologies

Mr Geoff Fader (Tasmanian Small Business Council)  
Mr Michael Bailey (Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry)

## **2. Ratify minutes from October 2023 meeting**

The minutes from the meeting of 19 October 2023 were ratified.

## **3. Tasmanian Ombudsman Update**

The Ombudsman's Office provided quarterly reports for energy and water which were circulated with the papers prior to the meeting. Questions for the Ombudsman's Office can be handled through OTTER.

## **4. Rollout of AER's Better Bills Initiative**

Heath Gilmore delivered a presentation on the rollout of the AER's Better Bills Initiative.

OCCC members questioned Mr Gilmore regarding Aurora Energy's intentions in relation to grandfathering of flat rate tariffs in response to TasNetworks' proposal to the AER to grandfather its flat rate network tariffs.

## **5. Sewerage and Trade Waste Charging Inquiries**

David Richardson and Victor Hou delivered a presentation on the Sewerage and Trade Waste Charging Inquiries.

Mr Doerner stated that he is supportive of moving sewerage and trade waste charging to a fixed and variable charging framework and noted the very high water usage of a small number of customers.

Mr Dimasi confirmed that he is seeking to make improvements to the charging approach for sewerage and trade waste, but there is imperfect information available regarding the impacts on all customers.

## **6. Energy in Tasmania Report 2022-23**

Tristan Patterson delivered a presentation on the Energy in Tasmania Report 2022.

In response to a query on Rooftop Solar data sources, it was confirmed that information is obtained from TasNetworks.

## **7. Guaranteed Service Level Review**

Tristan Patterson delivered a presentation on the Guaranteed Service Level Review.

## **8. Draft Price and Service Plan for TasWater**

Glenn Bounds delivered a presentation on the Draft Price and Service Plan for TasWater and the submission received from TasWater on the Draft Price and Service Plan Guideline, which included a number of proposed changes to the regulatory framework.

It was noted that OTTER is preparing an Issues Paper on TasWater's proposals, which will be circulated to OCCC members upon its completion.

Mr Mallet noted that he is happy to arrange a meeting between members of the Tasmanian Small Business Council and OTTER to discuss the items raised in the Issues Paper. OTTER is to arrange a meeting upon the publication of the Issues Paper.

## **9. Projects on the Go**

Mr Dimasi confirmed that the investigation is a statutory obligation on the Regulator with respect to the approvals contained in the current wholesale contract regulatory instrument. Mr Dimasi also noted that a broader review of the wholesale contract regulatory framework is a policy issue for the Government's consideration and is outside the Regulator's functions and powers.

Mr Durney queried if the Regulator has any role to play in correcting or refuting incorrect statements made by the government, particularly when such statements relate to the work of the Regulator. Mr Dimasi noted that he and OTTER endeavour to provide accurate information and present it in a way that is clear and easy to understand

## **10. Other Business**

The meeting closed at 11.31am.

Next Meeting: Wednesday 19 June, 10.00am