

PROPOSAL

by

THE DIRECTOR OF GAS

for amendment

of the

GAS CUSTOMER TRANSFER AND RECONCILIATION CODE

May 2005

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Version	Author	Reason for Update	Last Date Issued
0.A1	Peter Bingham	Initial draft	9.3.05
0.A2	Peter Bingham	Amended draft following internal consultation. Circulated for comment.	2.05.05

PURPOSE OF THIS PAPER

The purpose of this paper is to provide interested parties with notice of the intention of the Director of Gas to amend the *Gas Customer Transfer and Reconciliation Code* and an explanation of the reasons for the proposed change.

The Director of Gas is of the view that the change proposed is of a minor nature but, nevertheless, interested parties are invited to make submissions on the proposal. This paper is intended to assist interested parties in making submissions.

Submissions may be forwarded by post to:

The Licensing Officer
Office of the Tasmanian Energy Regulator
GPO Box 770
HOBART TAS 7001

or by e-mail to:

office@energyregulator.tas.gov.au

Submissions must be received by 5:00 pm on Friday 20 May 2005.

BACKGROUND

The Director of Gas is appointed under the *Gas Act 2000* [Gas Act] to be responsible for the regulation (other than in respect of safety matters) of the natural gas industry in Tasmania.

On 20 July 2004, in exercise of the power conferred by section 38A(1) of the Gas Act, the Director of Gas issued the *Gas Customer Transfer and Reconciliation Code* [Transfer Code].

The purpose of the Transfer Code is to set out:

- (a) the obligations concerning the provision of information relating to delivery points to enable a customer to transfer to a different retailer;
- (b) the process by which a customer can be transferred to a different retailer;
- (c) the standards for meters and metering installations at customer delivery points; and
- (d) the allocation and reconciliation of gas quantities between retailers at receipt points.

The National Electricity Market Management Company Pty Ltd [NEMMCO] allocates unique numbers for the identification of electricity meters. These numbers are known as 'national metering identifiers' [NMIs]. During the development of the Transfer Code, NEMMCO advised that it had reserved a section of the list of NMIs for application to gas meters. The decision was made that numbers allocated by NEMMCO should be used to identify Tasmanian gas meters. In line with that decision, those gas meter identifier numbers were designated NMIs and referred to as such throughout the Transfer Code.

It now seems apparent that the natural gas industry standard designation for meter identifier numbers is 'meter installation registration number' [MIRN].

Accordingly, the Director of Gas proposes to remove from the Transfer Code references to 'national metering identifier' and 'NMI' and replace them with 'meter installation registration number' and 'MIRN' respectively.

The Director of Gas is of the view that this change is of a minor or procedural nature and has determined to adopt a process similar to the 'fast track' process provided for under the Tasmanian Electricity Code in respect of minor or procedural matters.

Tasmanian Electricity Code Fast Track Process

This process requires the Regulator to consult with, or seek submissions from, such interested parties as the Regulator considers appropriate. After holding any such consultations or receiving any such submissions, the Regulator must notify all interested parties of the proposed change. Interested parties may object in writing to the proposed change within 7 days (or such longer period as may be allowed in the notice) after the Regulator's notice is published.

The Regulator must consider any timely objections received following the publication of the notice. If, after giving due consideration to any such objections, the Regulator decides to proceed with the proposed change, the Regulator must give notice of the change.

The Director of Gas consulted widely during the development of the Transfer Code. The proposed change, the subject of this paper, was one of the suggested alterations which came out of that consultation. However, it was made too late in the process to be incorporated in the Transfer Code before it was published. The Director of Gas has had further discussions with a number of interested parties and there appear to be sound reasons for making the change. Nevertheless, there will be costs associated with the change and so it is considered appropriate to allow a transitional period to minimise the cost impact.

PROPOSAL

It is proposed to replace the terms 'national metering identifier' and 'NMI' with the terms 'meter installation registration number' and 'MIRN' respectively, wherever they occur in the Transfer Code.

It is further proposed that transitional arrangements be put in place which will allow, until 31 December 2005, persons to refer to a gas meter identifier number as either 'national metering identifier' or 'meter installation registration number'. To this end, the existing definition of 'national metering identifier':

'National Metering Identifier' or 'NMI' means the unique 10 numeric digit identifier assigned to a delivery point by a distributor'

will be amended to read as follows:

'Meter Installation Registration Number' or 'MIRN' means the unique 10 numeric digit identifier assigned to a delivery point by a distributor Provided That, until 31 December 2005, all references to:

- (a) 'Meter Installation Registration Number' shall include 'National Metering Identifier'; and
- (b) 'MIRN' shall include 'NMI'.

RATIONALE

It is anticipated that entities operating in the Tasmanian natural gas market will be active in other Australian jurisdictions. To reduce barriers to entry into the Tasmanian market, it is important that the Tasmanian regulatory regime be as consistent with those other jurisdictions as is reasonably possible.

It is clear that the majority of Australian jurisdictions utilise the term 'meter installation registration number' and so it is appropriate that Tasmania does likewise.

The Director of Gas is of the view that the proposed changes are minor, being merely a change of description and not involving any change to any substantive obligation under the Transfer Code. In preliminary discussions, a number of interested parties indicated that they had no objection to the proposed changes.

The basis for the allocation of meter identifier numbers will not alter. It is simply the description of those numbers in the Transfer Code which will change.

It is noted that the changes will have implications for connection forms and other documents used in the industry. The transitional arrangements are intended to allow persons who have already had stationery printed or have prepared internal procedural documentation to use up their existing supplies or make the appropriate internal changes.

CONCLUSION

Unless reason is shown, by 20 May 2005, as to why the changes should not be made, the Director of Gas will amend the Transfer Code:

- (1) to remove all references to 'national metering identifier' and 'NMI' and replace them with 'meter installation registration number' and 'MIRN' respectively; and
- (2) to amend the definition of 'national metering identifier' to read as follows:

'Meter Installation Registration Number' or 'MIRN' means the unique 10 numeric digit identifier assigned to a delivery point by a distributor Provided That, until 31 December 2005, all references to:

- (a) 'Meter Installation Registration Number' shall include 'National Metering Identifier'; and
- (b) 'MIRN' shall include 'NMI'.