

# QUEENSLAND COMPETITION AUTHORITY

## DRAFT MINUTES OF CONSUMER ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

WEDNESDAY, 29 AUGUST 2007 – 10:00AM  
LEVEL 19, 12 CREEK STREET, BRISBANE

**PRESENT:** Members  
Mr Gary Henry (Presiding Officer - QCA), Mr Eric Danzi (Canegrowers), Mr Ian Baldock (QRTSA), Mr Paul Bidwell (Commerce Queensland), Mr David Lawson (FCAQ), Dr Tenzin Bathgate (CCCL), Ms Penny Carr (TU), Mr Ian Jarratt (Queensland Consumers Association).

Observers  
Mr Barry Adams (EOQ), Ms Kate Ryan (DME), Mr Moston Neck (QCA), Mr Sean Greenup (QCA).

**APOLOGIES:** Ms Jill Lang (QCOSS)

**MINUTES:** The Committee resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 6 June 2007 be accepted as a true record of proceedings.

It was accepted that confidential information would be excluded from the publicly released version of the minutes.

### BUSINESS FROM REVIOUS MINUTES

1. Outstanding Issues. No outstanding issues from the previous minutes were identified.
2. Administration. It was suggested that a list of the Committee's membership also be posted on the QCA's website. It was agreed this would be done.

### MATTERS FOR INFORMATION

1. Benchmark Retail Cost Index. An overview of the QCA's involvement in establishing the Benchmark Retail Cost Index (BRCI) was provided..  
  
The Committee requested that the QCA provide a presentation on the process for considering the 2008-09 BRCI at the next meeting.
2. QCA Price Comparator. The Committee was provided with an update on the price comparator on the QCA's web site. The QCA has been recording significant usage of the price comparator. A demonstration of the comparator was provided for members at the completion of the meeting. It was noted that the comparator did not add the ambulance levy into prices but just reported the energy costs. It was agreed that a footnote to this effect would be added to advise users.

3. QCA Guidelines for Pursuing Civil Penalties. An overview of the *QCA Guidelines for Pursuing Civil Penalties and Referring Matters to the Regulator in Relation to Contraventions of the Electricity and gas Industry Codes* was provided.
- Members noted the requirement for the Guidelines and discussed aspects of the Authority's likely response to such an event.
4. Update from the Ombudsman. The Qld Energy Ombudsman provided the Committee with an update on the activities of his Office, including a discussion of the nature of energy complaints received since the introduction of FRC.

## **MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION**

1. Procedures for handling small customer enquiries for electricity. The agenda papers for both the electricity customer enquiry and gas marketing complaints were discussed jointly.
- Members suggested that the procedures should include:
- a script for a change in retailer;
  - greater explanation of how the procedures are used within the businesses;
2. Procedures for handling small customer complaints and disputes with respect to marketing for gas.
- greater recognition of the different ways in which customers may approach a retailer (eg. internet, phone, mail, in person);and
  - evidence that staff were aware of the procedures and that they were being put into operation.
- Members also noted that the information requested by retailers should not be more than that required to address the customer's issues.
- Members were of the view that:
- a) the procedures need to be succinct and easily understood. Members felt that some procedures failed on both these counts while a balance somewhere needed to be struck somewhere between the commentary approach of some procedures and the flowchart approach of others; and
  - b) while some of the submitted procedures were close to the mark, the Committee suggested the Authority should reject all the procedures submitted to date and provide feedback to the retailers on areas requiring improvement.
- Members also noted that the QCA will be writing formally to those market participants which have not met the Code requirements to submit information.

**NEXT MEETING** The next ordinary meeting will be held on Wednesday 28 November 2007 from 10:00am to 12:00pm.