

# AGN Victorian Albury Reference Group – Meeting 1 Minutes

## 1.1 Details

<b>Date:</b>	Wednesday, 18 November 2015
<b>Time:</b>	2:05 – 4:06 Australian Standard Daylight Time (ASDT)
<b>Resources:</b>	Draft Reference Group Charter (circulated with Agenda) Draft Victorian Stakeholder Engagement Scoping Paper (circulated with Agenda) Albury and Victorian Access Arrangement Consolidation Presentation (circulated with Agenda) AGN Introductory Presentation (provided at the meeting)

## 1.2 Attendees and Apologies

### 1.2.1 Attendees

Reference Group	AGN
Ben Martin Hobbs (Consumer Utilities Advocacy Centre)	Craig de Laine (Chair)
Jon Onley (Australian Industry Group)	Kristin Raman
Ken Gardner (Master Plumbers Association)	Anna Mitchell

### 1.2.2 Apologies

Reference Group	AGN
Gavin Duffy (St Vincent de Paul Society)	Ben Wilson
Mick Butera (NORTH Link)	
Randal Harkin (COTA VIC)	

## 1.3 Agenda

- The meeting commenced at approximately 2:05pm ASDT.
- Agenda item 1: AGN (Craig de Laine) welcomed the Victorian and Albury Reference Group (“the Group”) and thanked them for their attendance. All members introduced themselves. AGN highlighted that the Group is an important part of our stakeholder engagement program and emphasised that we want the Group to help drive the agenda for future meetings.
- Agenda item 2: AGN (Craig de Laine) provided an overview of the AGN business, vision, performance and values (slides 4 through 7). Craig highlighted that AGN would publicly report on the performance of the business against the targets outlined in the Vision.
  - With respect to the AGN vision and performance (slide 7) there was a group discussion about who AGN’s customers actually were – are they gas consumers or retailers – and if they are gas consumers, how do retailers feel about that?
    - In response AGN noted that both gas consumers and retailers are our customers and we are embarking on an engagement program that reaches anyone who are services impact.
    - AGN (Kristin Raman) also highlighted that the business was embarking on a “stakeholder” engagement program which encompasses anyone who is impacted by our services – including non-gas consumers (who may be impacted by activities such as mains replacement).
    - To this point, Ken Gardner noted that the Master Plumbers were keen to be a part of this group, as AGN’s activities certainly impact his constituents.

- Agenda item 2: AGN (Craig de Laine) provided an overview of recent demand trends, natural gas regulation and stakeholder engagement (slides 11 through 16).
  - With respect to recent demand trends (slide 11), several Group members noted that in their opinion the gas versus coal argument was strong and that more needed to be done by the business to get these positive messages out there. To this point, there is an opportunity for AGN to revisit its marketing campaign.
  - On slide 14 (stakeholder engagement plans), the Master Plumbers Association suggested that AGN consider conducting a mini-survey with plumbers to understand the key challenges they face and what they are hearing from consumers.
    - *Action item: AGN to consider conducting a survey of plumbers to help inform our engagement program.*
    - *Action item: Reference Group members to consider appropriate ways for AGN to engage with stakeholders.*
- Agenda item 5: AGN (Craig de Laine) spoke to slides 17 and 18, which outlined the key milestones for engagement and the role of the Reference Group.
  - The Group agreed that the proposed meeting schedule was appropriate.
- Agenda item 3: AGN (Kristin Raman) took the Draft Reference Group Charter (as circulated with the original meeting request) as read, but highlighted several key points in the document, including, but not limited to the importance of meeting minutes and funding.
  - *Action item: The Reference Group to provide feedback on the Charter by 16 December 2015, after which time AGN will finalise.*
  - *Action item: The Reference Group will advise AGN in writing (via email to Kristin Raman) if they would like to accept funding for their participation in the Reference Group.*
- Agenda item 4: AGN (Craig de Laine) spoke to the Victorian and Albury Consolidation presentation which had been circulated with the original meeting request. Craig stopped at various points for the Group to provide feedback.
  - On slide 3, the Group asked if the expected regulatory cost savings would be seen by both residential and commercial users. In response AGN (Craig de Laine) noted that expected cost were uncertain but expected to be at the lower end of forecast estimates and that any savings would be reflected in lower operating expenditure for the network, which figure would then be used as a base for forecasting future costs. As a result any savings would be felt by both residential and commercial consumers.
  - In response to a question from the Group, AGN (Craig de Laine) clarified that the proposed consolidation proposal would have no impact who regulated each network. The Australian Energy Regulator would continue to be the economic regulator in both Albury and Victoria, whilst technical regulation would continue to be the responsibility of the jurisdictional regulators.
  - On slide 11, AGN (Kristin Raman) asked if consolidation was to proceed, did the Group thought it was appropriate to have one Victorian and Albury Reference Group as opposed to separate Groups in each region. Kristin highlighted that AGN would still separately engage with consumers in the region.
    - The Group indicated that they thought it appropriate to have one Victorian and Albury Reference Group and that many organisation will have regional branches that could provide specific input and guidance if required. For example AIG have a regional manager in Albury.
  - In summary, the Group indicated that they thought consolidation was an appropriate approach.
  - AGN (Craig de Laine) noted that AGN intended to submit the consolidation application to the Australian Energy Regulator by Friday 20 November 2015.

- Agenda item 6: AGN (Kristin Raman) stepped through the Draft Scoping Paper (circulated with the original meeting request), periodically stopping for feedback and comment. AGN noted that the Scoping Paper was a key part of the engagement program and would be used to inform the engagement strategy.
  - The Group discussed the challenges associated with stakeholder engagement such as the impact of retailers and ambiguity over who AGN are. A suggestion was made that community engagement programs were a good way to increase visibility.
  - Recommendations were made with respect to additional stakeholders such as disability groups and indigenous communities.
  - Recommendations were made with respect to appropriate ways for engaging with stakeholders, for example relying on deliberative forums to engage with the indigenous community and considering the use of translators for the multicultural community.
  - Ben Martin Hobbs provided AGN with a copy of the Consumer Utilities Advocacy Centre's report on "*Meaningful and Genuine Engagement*".
  - *Action item: The Group committed to providing any additional feedback on the Scoping Paper to AGN by 16 December 2015 (or advising by email if additional time was required).*
- The meeting concluded at approximately 4:06 ASDT.

## 1.4 Action Items

- Victorian and Albury Reference Group:
  - *By 16 December 2015:* Advise AGN if your organisation would like to accept the funding offer for participation in Reference Group meetings.
  - *By 16 December 2015:* Provide feedback on Charter and Scoping Paper.
  - *One week after circulation:* Provide feedback on meeting minutes [complete].
  - *Ongoing:* Advise potential agenda items (at least three weeks prior to meeting).
- AGN:
  - *Circa 23 November 2015:* Circulate draft meeting minutes (final minutes to be circulated post feedback from the Reference Group [complete]).
  - *By 16 December 2015:* Confirm 2016 meeting dates and times.
  - *By 13 January 2016:* Incorporate feedback on Charter with a view to finalisation prior to next meeting.
  - *By 25 January 2016 (tentatively):* Incorporate feedback on Scoping Paper (including potentially surveying plumbers) with a view to forming the engagement strategy.
  - *By 25 January 2016 (tentatively):* Circulate meeting request and meeting resources for next meeting (at least one week prior to next meeting which is scheduled for 1 February 2016).