

Attachment 2.10

Customer Council Improvement Project scoping paper

January 2015





Ausgrid's Customer Council Improvement Project

Introduction

In November 2013 the AER published its Consumer Engagement Guidelines for Network Service Providers which includes Ausgrid. Following this and other initiatives Ausgrid has been improving and building on existing engagement strategies with its stakeholders, customers and the community, as we look to build a greater customer centric culture.

The Customer Council is a key forum to help Ausgrid understand customer needs, perceptions and preferences.

Customer Council History

The *NSW Electricity Supply Act 1995 (part 7 – Division 4)* requires Ausgrid to appoint at least one customer consultative group to act as a forum for consultation between the distribution network service provider and its customers.

One such forum established by Ausgrid is the Customer Council. A Customer Council was established in each region in 1993 and continued until the late 1990's, it was then re-established in the 2000-01 financial year as part of a customer focussed initiative and has run ever since.

The charter, attachment A, was published in November 2007 and rebranded in May 2013, this determines the purpose, membership and processes of the council.

Ausgrid maintains records of agendas and minutes for each meeting (4 a year) but currently does not publish any information relating to the Customer Council on its website.

Scope and Objective of the Customer Council Review Project

Corporate Affairs has established a project team to review and make recommendations for improvements to the Customer Council to be delivered to the ELT by the end of December 2014, and implemented in 2015. These improvements will ensure that the Customer Council has a clear purpose that benefits, Ausgrid, its members and its customers.

Ausgrid has run its Customer Council the same way since 2007 when the charter was developed.

The objective of the project is to ensure that the Customer Council functions in a way to benefit both Ausgrid and its members and to align it with best practice engagement guidelines. Ultimately, the Customer Council must help serve the long term interests of consumers by helping Ausgrid management understand the preferences and views of its customers and consumers more broadly. The scope of the review will include:

The purpose of the Customer Council, its membership and charter, internal processes at Ausgrid and how Customer Council views are considered, transparency and reporting.

The Review Process

The review will follow the steps below:

STAGE	REVIEW & RESEARCH	CONSULT & ENGAGE	RECOMMEND
Task	Review history of existing Council	Issue scoping paper to ELT	List best practice considerations for Purpose
	Examine the Legislation	Interview ELT members	List best practice considerations for Membership
	Research other Customer Councils	Survey Ausgrid staff	List best practice considerations for Process
	Survey existing members	Survey Ausgrid Customer Working Group	List best practice considerations for Charter
	Review the existing Charter	Consult and survey Ausgrid external stakeholders	Draft recommendations paper
	Facilitate an open discussion with existing members	Review survey and interview responses	Issue draft paper to existing members
	Review AER Consumer Engagement Guideline	Distribute initial results to existing members	Issue final paper to ELT
	Review IAP2 documentation		
WHEN	OCTOBER	OCT/NOV	DECEMBER

The outcome of this review will be a recommendations paper to be considered by the ELT.

Interim Improvement Actions

The project team have performed an initial review of the Ausgrid and other utilities Customer Councils, the first thing to be implemented will be the development of a page on the Ausgrid website with links to the historical information for the Customer Council, its Charter and a list of members. An information page for staff will also be published on The Wire linking to the resources on the website.