TO: DMS & DMC Contracts

FROM: Wholesale Energy Dispute Resolution Adviser

DATE: April 2014

**RE: End of Quarter Report – January to March 2014**

**Summary**

1. **Disputes**

Stage 1: Nil

DRP Stage 2: Nil

**Summary of Outputs**

* Website revamped (October- December quarter)
* Integrated system for updating DMS and DMC contacts
* Communication mechanism and data base of contact details with password control.
1. **Update and Outputs for the Quarter**
	1. There have been no disputes, nor queries re scheduling errors in the market for some time. This gave me an opportunity to review the role and workflow of the Wholesale Energy Market Dispute Resolution Advisor (WEMDRA).
	2. At this point there are a number of projects which have not been completed, most notably:
2. An extension of the expert pool to cover both the retail market and also replace those that have retired.
3. A review and recommendations in relation to appeals from the Wholesale Energy Market.
	1. In the absence of any disputes, I was of the view that work on extending the pool and the appeals was not a priority. Instead I turned my mind to a review of the expenditure in the position over the last three years to see what could be rationalised. Given the government cuts in all sectors, and the lack of disputes, I thought this was important.

* 1. The main area of expenditure that I thought could be rationalised is administration. Under both the NER and NGR, participant organisations are required to provide the WEMDRA specific contacts (DMC contacts in the case of gas). In electricity, DMS contacts are also required to keep a DMS system up to date. Since its inception, organisations have not been aware of this obligation and a substantial amount of time each year is spent contacting the organisation and explaining the obligation and finding the requisite DMS/DMC contact. When there are changes within the organisation (people leave) the WEMDRA is seldom notified and once again, a substantial amount of time can be spent on finding a relevant replacement. This has been more of an issue without a regular number of disputes as when there is a need to inform DMS and DMC contacts about the disputes, it has quickly become evident to organisations that there are changes and that they need to notify them.
	2. In the absence of disputes, I have had to be proactive in seeking out and checking contacts). I am conscious that if there are cost cuts, this will not be possible. I thought it prudent to spend the budget/time on finding a means of automating this process to make it easier for organisations and to also move the onus of the administration out of this position. There was another small issue that could also be consolidated at the same time. At the recommendation of the WEMDAGs (the advisory committee that assists in setting direction for the WEMDRA) the phone numbers of the DMS contacts and their direct mobile numbers were removed from the AER website. This was because there were a number of members of the public who used these numbers to lodge complaints generally in relation to the requisite organisations. Whilst this was effective in solving that problem, it meant that any correspondence between DMS contacts would often need to go through the WEMDRA necessitating me keeping a manual directory up to date.
	3. I have implemented a web-based solution which:
1. Provides an integrated list of DMS/DMC contacts in a secure password controlled portion of the Resolve website.
2. Allows participants, with use of the password, to upload a photograph and update their DMS/DMC contacts.
3. Will allow any participant organisation (provided they have the password) to ensure that their contacts are correct and up to date.
4. Allows the WEMDRA to send group emails to all contacts through the website thereby automating what has, in the past, been a manual process.
	1. The software implementation was, as with all software implementations, a bit more time consuming and complex than envisaged. However, stage one has been successfully completed If you have not already been on the website to check your contacts and its functionality, please do so.
5. **The April- June Quarter**
	1. My focus until the end of June will be on finalising and making sure that the new web functionality is operational. In order to do so, I intend to hold a webinar to explain how to use the site, and also updating DMS and DMC contacts on the role and obligations of a DMS/DMC contact.
	2. The reason for the webinar format (rather than my face to face format) is once again to save costs for organisations. Clearly this function cannot be used for everything but it should (with a bit more training by me) be 100% appropriate for this kind of information forum.
	3. I will also shortly also be making available a more general training programme (“Under Attack”). This training programme will deal with:
6. Ten common mistakes people make in de-escalating complaints;
7. An exploration of why we make these mistakes; and
8. Tools and tips for dealing with such mistakes.
	1. This webinar will be open at no cost for any organisation that has updated and completed their DMS or DMC contact profile.

As always, I look forward to hearing from you and answering any questions that you may have.

Kind regards

**Shirli Kirschner**

Wholesale Energy Market Dispute Resolution Adviser