



3 March 2009

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Dear Hellene

**Submission on Consultation Paper (Proposal for further changes to the scheme documents to comply with the Achievement Standards)**

Meridian Energy (“Meridian”) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the consultation paper titled Proposal for further changes to the scheme documents to comply with the Achievement Standards set by the Electricity Commission and Gas Industry Co for approval of a scheme.

*General comment*

On the whole, Meridian is comfortable with the proposed changes and supports these further changes if it enables the approval of the scheme as the consumer complaints resolution scheme provider.

However, Meridian has two concerns that, if possible, it would like to see addressed prior to the further changes being put to the vote.

*Process requirement (notice provisions where changes are being made to the constitution)*

Meridian requests that further thought be given to the process set out in clauses 7.10A to 7.10F of the constitution. In particular, where the veto right is exercised by the Electricity Commission and Gas Industry Co under clause 7.10D, the Commission should be required to immediately give notice of this to scheme members. The reason for this is that members will have already received notice of the approved amendments (see clause 7.10C) but not of the exercise of the veto.

Where notice is not given of the veto, it could mean that members are unaware that the changes will not be taking effect. At the very least, it could create confusion as to the status of amendments.

### *Extension of ambit of "complaint"*

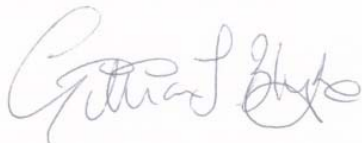
Proposed clause CC4.1(a) of the Code of Conduct for Complaint Handling states that "Council Members must treat any dissatisfaction or concern about a service or good provided by a Council Member as a Complaint". This, in effect, extends the general definition of "complaint" in the constitution which covers an expression of dissatisfaction with services "where a response is implicitly or explicitly expected".

As a result of clause CC4.1(a) referring to a "concern" and not including clarification about a response being implicitly or explicitly required, it means that any minor comment that has negative connotations would need to be treated as a complaint under the scheme. This could create a significant administrative burden for scheme members and could lead to comments by consumers being treated as a formal complaint when this was not intended. From our reading of the Achievement Standards, clause CC4.1(a) does not need to be as broad as it has been drafted. Meridian proposes that this clause be revised to align with the definition of "complaint" in the constitution.

### *Conclusion*

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the consultation paper. Meridian continues to support the Electricity and Gas Complaints Commissioner Scheme and is happy to assist the Commission in ensuring that it achieves approval. Please contact me if you have any query.

Yours sincerely



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