

PACCC MEETING SUMMARY

Tuesday 25 March 2008

CitiPower and Powercor Boardroom, Melbourne

ATTENDEES: Brian Sullivan - General Manager Human Resources & Corporate Affairs
Peter Bryant - General Manager AIMRO
Brendan Bloore – General Manager Customer Services
Craig Hobbs – Acting Manager Electricity Networks
John Pye - Victorian Farmers Federation
Christine May - Rural representative
Gavin Dufty - St Vincent De Paul
Rob Lorenzon - Australian Industry Group
Peter Brown – City of Moreland
Jeff Filip – Manager Business Growth
Hugo Armstrong – Corporate Affairs Manager (Committee Secretary)
Lyndall King – CA Administrative & Events Officer (Minute Secretary)

PRESENTERS: Craig Hobbs Acting Manager Electricity Networks
Hugo Armstrong – Corporate Affairs Manager (Committee Secretary)
Brian Sullivan - General Manager Human Resources & Corporate Affairs (Acting Chair)
Jeff Filip – Manager Business Growth
Peter Bryant - General Manager AIMRO
Gavin Dufty - St Vincent De Paul

APOLOGIES: Shane Breheny - CEO CitiPower and Powercor
Garry Audley – General Manager Electricity Networks

The Business Performance Report was tabled and discussed. Craig Hobbs reported that both networks are doing well in terms of reliability. A major storm front moved across western and central Victoria on 24 March, which caused power to be interrupted to approximately 60,000 Powercor customers. As a result, clean-up operations meant that planned works for the following day were cancelled. Brendan Bloore reported a high number of calls (9,400) received by the call centre on 24 March. Committee members asked about the impact of ETSA's Direct Load Control program in South Australia during the March heat waves. This data will be given to the committee.

An issue still of concern to the business is copper theft, and Powercor has been working with the Police to catch culprits in recent thefts. There was a discussion around the report, actions and the task force.

The topic of tree clearing was raised. Craig Hobbs advised that in urban areas, local councils are responsible for clearing the trees away from poles, while Powercor undertakes this work in regional areas. Sometimes the business has trouble getting councils to meet their obligations.

There was positive comment on how Powercor pays GSLs compared to other Distribution Business who pay annually. Brendan Bloore also explained there was a stable workforce in the call centre which could relate to many factors, one being the regional location of the call centre.

Corporate Affairs Manager (Committee Secretary) Hugo Armstrong outlined Community Reputation Survey results, which showed a slight decrease in customer satisfaction. This is perhaps associated with the view that customer expectations of electricity distributors have gone up with the success of the sector, particularly those of city customers.

Manager Human Resources and Corporate Affairs (Acting Chair) Brian Sullivan reported the results of the Employee Opinion Survey which showed a slight decrease in overall employee satisfaction, but stronger employee engagement. The Australian Industry Group reported seeing strong employee engagement with businesses' environmental performance. The committee asked if there was any analysis of customer satisfaction and employee satisfaction within the business and Brendan Bloore and Brian Sullivan commented that this was a good suggestion.

Manager Business Growth Jeff Filip tabled a presentation about the Solar Cities project in central Victoria, which Powercor is a member of. This generated general discussion on the accuracy of the measurement of emissions per household. Committee members also questioned the impact of GST on the money earned by customers through feed in tariffs. Jeff will contact the ATO regarding this. The current goal is to have the solar cities operating in the Bendigo and Ballarat regions by November.

It was noted Energy Australia will soon be releasing the results of its trials of in home displays. Peter Bryant will follow up the installation of meters for PACCCC members.

General Manager AIMRO, Peter Bryan, presented an update on the Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) project. The committee was told that national policies and procedures will not be developed in time for Victoria and a phased implementation of services may not be acceptable. There may be a shift in the program - i.e.: meters may be installed in household, but remain inactive whilst waiting for the policies and procedures to be put in place. A National Cost Benefit Analysis showed positive benefits in Victoria, NSW, and Queensland, but the situation in other states is not so clear. Peter advised that procurement commitments would need to be made in Q3 this year to meet the current timetable, although there would be further small trials and demonstrations of technologies in 2009. The creation of business processes and procedures are well underway.

St Vincent De Paul representative Gavin Duffy tabled and spoke to a presentation outlining the AMI project from a consumer perspective.

In other business Brendan Bloore outlined an outage in Horsham on 5 February and agreed to consider other ways to inform customers during outages. It was noted that current information regarding outages on the website was not consistent with the information received from the call centre and it was not showing all outages. Hugo Armstrong advised the IT business unit is currently working on a way to adapt the internal system that is on the intranet to the website for customers to view.

It was noted SP AusNet was negotiating a "Sustainability Covenant" with the Victorian Government.