



Report on independent review of the Electricity and Gas Complaints Commissioner (EGCC) Scheme

The EGCC Board has received the report of the independent reviewer of the EGCC Scheme. The Scheme became the approved complaint resolution scheme for the electricity and gas industries in April 2010.

The Scheme document requires the Board to obtain an independent review of the Scheme within one year of approval of the Scheme. John Wood of Baljurda Comprehensive Consulting did the review. Mr Wood is a former deputy Commonwealth Ombudsman. The Baljurda report on the review has been presented to the EGCC Board and sent to the responsible Minister, Hon Chris Tremain as Minister of Consumer Affairs.

The Board accepts almost all the recommendations in the report for consultation with stakeholders (including members and the Ministry of Consumer Affairs). This consultation will start early in 2012.

The recommendations not accepted (in whole or in part) were:

1. The recommendation that the Commissioner be given the power to refer complaints to a higher level, if she considers the complaint could be resolved by so doing.

The Board accepted the Commissioner's view that this is her practice, and a change to the Scheme document is not needed.

2. The recommendation to allow companies to negotiate directly with the complainant to extend the time for considering a complaint.

The Board preferred the previous approach (constitution pre 1 April 2010) where the member could claim a further 20 working days so long as they advised the complainant of this, and the reasons for needing extra time. The Board believes this would give some flexibility to members, but with some certainty of a maximum time for complainants.

3. On systemic issues, the Board accepted the report's recommendations, apart from the recommendation that the levy for systemic issues should be the same as for other complaints.

The Board believes it is more appropriate for work on systemic issues to be covered by the fixed proportion of the levy.