



22 December 2004

## **SUBMISSION ON MCE EXPOSURE DRAFT OF NATIONAL ELECTRICITY LAW**

### **BACKGROUND**

The Queensland Consumers' Association (the Association) is the peak body for consumer groups in Queensland. The Association's members work in a voluntary capacity. The Association is a member of the Consumers' Federation of Australia, the peak body for Australian consumer groups.

The Association welcomes the opportunity to comment on the exposure draft. However, as noted in the Association's submission on the issues paper on a national framework for electricity and gas distribution and retail regulation, its ability to produce detailed submissions on complex matters is severely restricted by the inadequate public funding available to develop member skills and knowledge, employ staff, and use consultants.

Accordingly, in this submission the Association addresses only one issue – arrangements for on-going AEMC and AER consultation with stakeholders.

### **STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION ARRANGEMENTS FOR AEMC AND AER**

The Association considers it essential for both the AEMC and the AER to have effective arrangements for on-going consultation with stakeholders.

Such arrangements are required to:

- Assist both bodies to be, and remain, stakeholder focused
- Provide stakeholders with easy, guaranteed and on-going involvement with the development and operations of the bodies
- Provide effective two way exchanges of information about the needs of stakeholders and the operations of the bodies.
- Assist stakeholder organisations and representatives to develop and maintain detailed knowledge of the bodies' roles and operations.

The provisions in Part 4 Division 3 for the AEMC to establish its own committees, panels and working groups and for the continuation of The Reliability Panel will not meet this need.

The Law should **require** the AEMC and the AER to each establish and fund a Consultative Council. Each Council should comprise representatives of relevant stakeholder groups and/or organisations (including household consumers), should meet at least four times a year, and members should be paid a sitting fee.

This is the model adopted for most other national regulatory bodies and is required for the AEMC and the AER.

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