



# National Irrigators' Council

Food · Fibre · Future

## ENERGY SUB-COMMITTEE MINUTES

3:00pm – 4:00pm Wednesday 20 July 2022 | Chair: Dale Holliss

ITEM	DETAILS
Item 1	<p><b>Present:</b> Dale Hollis (Chair) - Bundaberg Regional Irrigators Group, Michael Pisasale - Murray Irrigation Limited, Steven Ford - Pioneer Valley Water, Jeremy Morton - Ricegrowers Association of Australia, Issac Jeffrey - NIC, Rebecca Turpie - NIC, Rosalie Auricht - Renmark Irrigation Trust, Phil Snowden - Murray Irrigation Limited, Simon Shutz - Barossa Infrastructure Ltd, Jennifer Brown - Cotton Australia, Michael Murray - Cotton Australia, Greg McCarron - Central Irrigation Trust, Sabiene Heindl - The Energy Charter, Matt Toscan - Murrumbidgee Groundwater, Iva Quarisa - Murrumbidgee Private Irrigators</p> <p><b>Apologies:</b> Mike Neville – WealthCheck</p>
Item 2	<p><b>Minutes of meeting held 16 February 2022</b></p> <p>a) Business arising; there were no Actions recorded.</p>
RESO 1	<p><i>Michael Murray moved:</i></p> <p><i>That the Minutes of the Energy meeting held on 16 February 2022 be accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting.</i></p> <p><i>Seconded by Steven Ford</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>CARRIED</b></p>
Item 3	<p><b>General business:</b> New Federal Energy Minister: background (<i>Isaac Jeffrey</i>)</p> <p><b>SEE SLIDES</b></p>
Item 4	<p>Update on Energy Policy Officer engagement (<i>Isaac Jeffrey</i>)</p> <p>Greg Hosking starts in a couple of weeks, dividing his time between water and energy. He will be working four days per week and the additional day can be spent on energy.</p> <p>Energy Taskforce Funding: Isaac suggests we tailor an energy research project to gain funding rather than seeking funding for an Energy staff member.</p>
Item 5	<p>AEMO (Australian Energy Market Operator) Integrated System Plan (ISP) (<i>Isaac Jeffrey</i>)</p> <p><b>SEE SLIDES</b> – Isaac to send “Plan on a Page” out with slides</p> <p>Dale Hollis: It's important to keep our agnostic position on the source of the electrons. Solar and wind present opportunities to irrigators but ultimately, we need to access energy that falls below the 8c/8c level.</p>
Item 6	<p>Ag Energy Taskforce collaboration with The Energy Charter (<i>Sabiene Heindl</i>)</p> <p><b>SEE SLIDES</b></p> <p>Overview: 20 energy businesses make up the Charter. The “Better Together” initiative partners with ag representatives to create a better practice guide that creates a benchmark on engagement practices. The work is being supported by KPMG and it looks at mitigating negative impacts of energy infrastructure. The practical guidelines will be delivered by the end of this year. The second part of the priority work at the Charter are the biannual ag energy roundtables (aiming for September and March) where we will elevate some of the taskforce issues to an energy and ag sector roundtable. Joy Thomas will chair the ag energy roundtables.</p> <p><b>DISCUSSION</b></p>

	<p><b>Michael Murray:</b> As we transition, the concern is for our peaky load users and period users. The way the tariffs are structured is forcing them off the grid. We need a system that encourages people stay on the grid. Demand charges don't work. We're driving people off the grid and that's not good for anyone. The tariffs make no sense.</p> <p><b>Sabiene:</b> CEOs/decision makers will be present at the roundtables. AEMO will be there too. We will invite other market bodies and government on an as-needs basis. We want people who are there for outcomes and solutions.</p>
<b>Action 1</b>	Schedule taskforce meeting for end of August 2022
<b>Item 7</b>	<p>State by state: Perspectives on electricity prices and emerging issues and concerns:</p> <p><b>Michael Murray - QLD:</b> QCA pricing came out 10% increase on average. Puts us back to where we were in 2017/18. Anyone being pushed from the small tariff to the large business tariff are affected more. It's almost a useless process to engage in.</p> <p><b>Steven Ford - QLD:</b> QCA came out with 22.8% increase on tariffs. Ergon followed that up with an estimate for the coming year which was 45% increase on one of our large user stations and 37% on another. No correlation between QCA and ergon on their estimates. It's open slather for ergon to make money.</p> <p><b>Greg McCarron – SA:</b> We are canaries in the coalmine. We're paying the same price as the rest of Australia for renewable energy so there's no advantage going first. Demand charges are driven by transmission costs. Distributors have been over-collecting and need to return the over-collected funds to customers. Those on long term contracts are shielded a bit. As an industry sector we've been working with the productivity commission to see how attractive the state is to renewable companies. It's been hard getting businesses interested though.</p> <p><b>Jennifer Brown - QLD:</b> looking into tariffs about peaky loads. Doing a trial tariff for peaky loads or an option that all of these users go through one station with agreements. Microgrids project key findings – we still need a grid. We need the power to move around. Are we utilizing the infrastructure we have already? We have customers ready to participate in a trial.</p>
<b>Item 8</b>	<p><b>Other issues</b></p> <p><b>Phil:</b> the relationship between ARA water out of snowy hydro and releasing water into a flooded system - resources are going to waste!</p> <p><b>Jeremy:</b> Is the capacity going to be more than demand so we have enough energy when we need it, mixed in with a bit of storage? What does that do to cost?</p> <p><b>Sab:</b> yes, the expectation is that generation capacity will be in excess of what we have now but until technology allows better storage capacity this is how the energy mix will look.</p> <p><b>Steven:</b> We've been talking about 8c/8c but are any of the generators or distributors coming to the party or is this something the ag industry is promoting but nobody is listening to?</p> <p><b>Dale:</b> we can justify the 8c/8c. This is why we are agnostic to where the electrons come from. We need a benchmark of what is affordable. I think 8c/8c is doable. If not, start looking at off-grid with your own solar. The Ag Energy Taskforce and The Energy Charter give us a strong voice. The AER will become its own entity and sit under the ACCC and this might not be a good thing.</p>
<b>Item 9</b>	<b>Meeting close</b>