



meridian

16 April 2013

Submissions
Electricity Authority
By email: submissions@ea.govt.nz

Review of advisory group administrative arrangements – Consultation paper

Meridian appreciates the opportunity to submit on the Authority's proposed changes to advisory group administrative arrangements.

Meridian agrees with the Authority's premise that current arrangements are generally working well and supports the small adjustments it has proposed.

Further details are provided in the attached appendix containing our responses to the consultation questions.

If you have any queries regarding this submission please contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Alannah MacShane
Regulatory Analyst

DDI 04 381 1378
Mobile 021 811 362
Email alannah.macshane@meridianenergy.co.nz

Appendix 1: Responses to Consultation Questions

	Question	Response
1	What is your view on the effectiveness of the current advisory group model?	<p>Meridian agrees with the Authority’s assessment that current arrangements are generally working well. As we discuss further in our responses to questions 2-7, Meridian:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not consider any changes are needed to the existing process for agreeing work plans. • Considers the current size of the groups and mix of members is appropriate given the other avenues interested parties have available to offer their perspectives and the importance of ensuring the effectiveness of the groups is not compromised. • Considers rules regarding terms of appointment to be largely suitable but supports some modifications, as suggested by the Authority, to ensure changes in membership are managed in a smooth and orderly way. • Does not consider there is a need for the number of potential Authority staff attendees to be specified in the terms of reference. <p>As indicated in our submission on the Authority’s ‘2013/14 appropriations’ consultation paper¹, Meridian considers working groups like the WAG and RAG have an important role to play in progressing the Authority’s forward work programme.</p> <p>Meridian submits it is important the Authority considers operational changes that could improve the way technical working groups, such as the Settlement and Prudential Review Technical Group (SPRTG), are used to progress the work of the advisory groups. As part of this, we consider access to the Chair and other members, as appropriate, for a smooth handover needs to be considered. To ensure role clarity, Meridian considers representatives of technical groups, where possible, should be distinct from representatives of advisory groups.</p>

¹ Available at the following link: <http://www.ea.govt.nz/dmsdocument/14123>

	Question	Response
2	Do you agree the process for agreeing work plans between the Authority and advisory groups does not need refinement?	Yes. As the consultation paper points out, current arrangements allow for suggestions to be made as part of the annual 'appropriations' consultation and discussions with group members. We note that we consider it is important the process continues to allow advisory group members the opportunity to provide their input.
3	Do you agree the range of skills and experience on advisory groups does not need to be broadened?	Meridian considers the terms of reference and charter contain appropriate criteria for appointing members to the advisory groups and does not have any concerns regarding the range of skills and experience of representatives.
4	Do you agree the sizes of the advisory groups do not need to be increased?	<p>Yes.</p> <p>As the consultation paper points out, interested parties have the ability to participate in consultation processes and request the opportunity to present to advisory groups in order to provide their perspectives. Meridian also considers there are a variety of existing larger forums (for instance, the Electricity Industry Retailers' Forum) that could be used to discuss emerging thinking from the advisory groups.</p> <p>Meridian agrees with the Authority's concerns that increasing the sizes of the advisory groups may impede effectiveness and delay progress.</p>

	Question	Response
5	Do you agree with the Authority's proposed amendments regarding members' terms of appointment?	Meridian considers it is important changes in membership are dealt with in a smooth and orderly way and supports the Authority's proposed changes.
6	Do you agree it is not necessary to specify how many Authority staff should be present at each advisory group meeting?	Meridian does not consider there is a need to specify the number of Authority staff that may attend meetings in the terms of reference.
7	Do you agree with the Authority's proposed amendment regarding the publication of meeting papers?	Yes. In Meridian's view the publication of meeting papers should not occur any later than one day following the meeting.
8	Do you consider any other changes are required to improve the effectiveness of the advisory groups?	Not at this stage.