

Welcoming Karen Boyes as Executive Director of MEUG

MEUG is delighted to have appointed Karen Boyes as Executive Director. Karen has a wealth of regulatory and policy experience in roles across the energy sector, central government and with advocacy organisations. We will be introducing Karen to many of you over the next few months.

In her most recent role, Karen was Regulatory Policy Manager at Firstgas Group, where she had responsibility for compliance with price-quality path regulation and information disclosure requirements under Part 4 of the Commerce Act. At Firstgas, Karen also led government advocacy across energy sector and climate change issues, as well as broader regulatory issues.

Prior to her role at Firstgas, Karen was Principal Policy Advisor at Local Government New Zealand where she drove the development and implementation of the CouncilMARK programme, including leading extensive stakeholder engagement.

In the electricity sector, Karen was a Senior Regulatory Advisor at Genesis Energy from 2010 to mid-2014, where she worked across a range of regulatory and policy issues including the Consumer Guarantees Act, the Emissions Trading Scheme, and distribution-sector issues.

Karen has extensive experience working in the Beehive and within the public sector. She is familiar with how the Beehive operates, having worked as a Private Secretary to the Associate Minister of Transport. She has also held policy advisory roles at the Tertiary Education Commission, the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority (EECA), and the Ministry of Transport, where she advised on energy use, climate change, biofuels and wider environmental issues.

Farewelling Ralph

MEUG's long-serving Executive Director, Ralph Matthes, is remaining in his role until the end of March. Ralph is helping Karen settle in and ensuring a smooth transition.

MEUG will host a function to welcome Karen and farewell Ralph in on Wednesday 22 March. We are nailing down the final details now and invitations will follow soon.

On behalf of MEUG's members, I would like to thank Ralph for his many years of service. Ralph started as Executive Director of MEUG in early 1996. As MEUG's first Executive Director, Ralph has helped shaped MEUG into the organisation that it is.

Key dates

What's on	Who	When	Notes for members
Submission: Input Methodology (IM) review – cost of capital (WACC)	Commerce Commission (CC)	3 February	Setting regulatory WACC has for several years been a relatively mature standard regulatory practice. One aspect where NZ differs from overseas regulators is the use of an uplift in the WACC (a percentile uplift above the mid-point). This adds tens of millions of dollars and potentially over \$100m to consumer line charges annually. MEUG opposes the uplift.
Submission: Starting Benefit Based Investment (BBI) customer charge allocations using the new TPM for the Waikato Upper North Island Voltage Management stage 1a project (~\$43m)	Transpower	9 February	First resiliency project that uses the new Transmission Pricing Methodology (TPM) for calculating starting prices. Non-controversial. Cross-submissions close 23 February.
Submission: IM review – regulatory approach to manage declining demand	CC	10 February	Of current relevance to the gas lines sector. A few years ago, asset stranding for electricity lines businesses was an issue. Issue now is what will be, and how to meet, growth in demand.
Monthly meeting: MEUG Executive Committee	MEUG	22 February	MBIE, EA and CC will discuss their work programmes for 2023.
Submission: Starting BBI customer charges using new TPM for Pole 2 refurbishment project (~\$33.5m)	Transpower	23 February	Second non-resiliency project using new TPM. More complicated than resiliency projects. The work is needed. Allocations mainly mechanical as assumptions and scenarios previously consulted on.
Submission: Enabling distributed flexibility	System Operator	28 February	Critical for supply and demand side investment decisions and to facilitate and realise economic innovations.