



24 May 2013

CCAAC Secretariat
The Manager, Consumer Policy Framework Unit
Competition and Consumer Policy Division
Treasury
Langton Crescent
PARKES ACT 2600

Emailed to: CCAAC@treasury.gov.au

Dear Secretariat

Re: Review of the Benchmarks for Industry-Based Customer Dispute Resolution Schemes

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Commonwealth Consumer Affairs Advisory Council (CCAAC)'s review of the *Benchmarks for Industry-Based Customer Dispute Resolution Schemes* (the Benchmarks Document).

The Energy and Water Ombudsman (Victoria) (EWOV) is an industry-based external dispute resolution (EDR) scheme that helps Victorian energy and water consumers by receiving, investigating and facilitating the resolution of their complaints. EWOV is a founding member of the Australian and New Zealand Ombudsman Association (ANZOA) and has been active in the 2009/10 internal review of the Benchmarks Document.

EWOV wholly supports ANZOA's submission which outlines its review of the Benchmarks Document.

Since its publication in 1997, the Benchmarks Document has continued to meet its objective of operating as a rigorous measure of whether an Ombudsman office meets suitable EDR standards. The Benchmarks Document is a valuable guide to the core principles and practices that underpin the operation of our office in providing an effective dispute resolution service. However, it is not too prescriptive to exclude its wide application across a range of Ombudsman offices across different industries and sectors.

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As such, we agree with the ANZOA submission that the core framework of the Benchmarks Document remains very relevant and contemporary to EDR practice, but can be enhanced by a strengthening of some benchmark principles and the use of more current language and terminology.

Should you require further information or have any queries, please contact Justin Stokes, Senior Research and Communications Advisor on (03) 8672 4272.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cynthia Gebert', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Cynthia Gebert

Energy and Water Ombudsman (Victoria)