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Ministry of Economic Development
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Submission on the Draft Revised GPS on Electricity Governance

This submission is from the Electricity and Gas Complaints Commission.

The Electricity and Gas Complaints Commissioner Scheme (the %Scheme+) provides an independent complaints resolution system for consumer disputes relating to gas and electricity. The scheme was established as an industry funded initiative with the majority of electricity and gas distributors and retailers as participating members.

The Scheme commenced on October 1, 2001 dealing with electricity complaints. In April 2005, jurisdiction was extended to include gas and in October 2006 the land code took effect covering disputes between members of the scheme and owners and occupiers of land. Although membership is voluntary, almost all electricity and gas retail and lines companies (including Transpower) are members.

The Scheme aims to provide an effective complaint resolution service and work with industry to achieve in-house resolution of complaints and improve service delivery to consumers. The service is free to consumers. The Scheme subscribes to the international benchmarks for consumer dispute resolution schemes identified in the Government Policy Statement, including accessibility, independence, fairness, accountability, efficiency and effectiveness.

The Electricity and Gas Complaints Commission:

- Supports the statement's proposal to have the Electricity Commission work closely with the Gas Industry Co to coordinate the approval and governance between the gas and electricity sectors, resulting in one scheme.
- Notes the significant overlap between customers using gas and electricity, and many customers have dual fuel accounts, which overlap. A combined consumer complaint resolution system provides easier access for all parties (including consumers in their capacity as producers of electricity) to a dispute. A critical

mass of trained people can deal with similar kinds of consumer disputes in a consistent and more cost efficient way.

- Endorses the international benchmarks which are identified in the statement. These benchmarks are, and have been from the outset, the foundation for the Electricity and Gas Complaints Commissioner Scheme.

Based on our experience in dealing with both gas and electricity complaints, the Commission believes the Draft Revised Government Policy Statement on Electricity Governance is the right proposal - a combined complaints resolution system which is consistent in its approach, easily accessible, managed in an efficient and cost effective way, practical and resolves disputes quickly and cheaply without unduly protracted or costly processes.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Richard Janes". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Richard Janes
Chair
Electricity and Gas Complaints Commission