

Registry Amendments Project Team: Meeting #1

Date: Wednesday 26 February 2014

Time: 10:00 – 14:00

Venue: Gas Industry Co, Level 8, the Todd Building, 95 Customhouse Quay, Wellington

Minutes

Present

Members

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------|
| ❖ Jo Iggulden | ❖ Bill Miller |
| ❖ Tara Gannon | ❖ Robert Barr |
| ❖ Andrew Maseyk | |
| ❖ Mark Hermann | |
| ❖ Campbell Wilson | |
| ❖ Melanie Joyce | |
| ❖ Helen Taylor | |

In attendance from Gas Industry Co

- | |
|-----------------|
| ❖ Andrew Walker |
| ❖ Ian Dempster |
| ❖ Kate Turner |
| ❖ Pip Kerfoot |

1 Welcome and introduction

The meeting opened at 10:00.

Gas Industry Co staff welcomed members of the Registry Amendments Project Team (RAPT).

Ian Dempster covered the background of the work stream and discussed the steps, from the implementation of the registry in 2009, that have lead up to this point. He also acknowledged that the work was initiated by Gas Industry Co in 2011, but has

been delayed due to various industry priorities.

2 Terms of Reference

Andrew Walker gave an overview of the Terms of Reference (document *RAPT Terms of Reference_183247.2*), and called for comments. No comments were made.

The following points were discussed:

- The RAPT was emphasised as an important vehicle to get industry input to the eventual statement of proposal, in the design stage.
- The role of “observers” was clarified; the designation being a way to inform members of participating organisations who wish to be aware of the work stream development. Observers are notified of official communication (agendas and meeting minutes etc.) but are not engaged for feedback.
- Future meeting dates were run through, with the 2nd of April being acknowledged as business day 2, which is already busy for operations. The meeting was moved to the following week, Wednesday 9 April to accommodate this.
- Gas Industry Co’s timeline and the potential effect of a general election within the recommendation phase. It was noted that the effect of this is planned to be mitigated through early and consistent engagement with MBIE.

Action:

- Move the second RAPT meeting to Wednesday, 9 April
- Publish RAPT Terms of Reference on Gas Industry Co’s website

3 Overview of issues

Andrew ran through an overview of the issues that have been raised and documented in the *Considerations for RAPT_189583.1* paper, which had been circulated.

Members were requested to put forward any additional suggestions if they had any, although it was noted that suggestions could be included as the material was being covered. No suggestions were put forward.

Members were directed to a set of additional illustrative slides that were handed around, to assist with the understanding of certain changes.

4 Preliminary discussion of additional metering fields – consideration 1

Andrew ran through the general questions that should be kept in mind for any changes. He noted the need to identify all practicable options, and invited members to offer any suggestions if they believed that any change could be better achieved through a different method.

The group then proceeded to discuss each suggested addition.

a) Core fields – draft FS circulated on additional slides

It was noted that these are already provided by the meter owner monthly on request.

i) *Meter pressure*

- ◆ It was asked whether four digits (as specified in draft FS) would be sufficient as often meter pressure is noted as three digits, plus two digits after the decimal point
- ◆ It was noted that the field is Num(6,2) in the GTN file
- ◆ It was noted that at TOU sites meter pressure often fluctuates also, and it would be helpful to record meter pressure even with a corrector for validation checks
- ◆ Meter pressure is present in GTNs, but this is sometimes “lost in translation”. Also noted that the pressure recorded is gauge pressure, not absolute pressure

ii) *Meter reading digits*

- ◆ It was questioned how much effort would be required to get the information for every meter

iii) *Register multiplier*

- ◆ One member noted that it may be worth it as they are so uncommon, meter readers often overlook them
- ◆ Meter owners agreed they were rare and/or had generally been phased out, but this would need to be verified with metering teams. The suggestion was made to form a sub-group of meter owners to define what is actually being used, and find a common definition.

b) Other metering fields:

i) *Logger and corrector fields (1.(b) iv. – vii. of Considerations paper)*

- ◆ A general comment was made that a cost/benefit analysis would

need to be made to assess whether or not these fields would be worth adding to the registry. This is an overall comment valid throughout the full discussion.

- ◆ Members noted that they always verify these fields with the meter owner during a switch anyway, as TOU switches are account-managed, not bulk processed
- ◆ Another member noted that this change would effectively act to subsidise TOU customers, with the cost ultimately borne by all customers
- ◆ No strong views were held for or against the inclusion of these fields but it was noted that the current process of checking with the meter owner seems to work ok
- ◆ There was no support for a formal information exchange protocol specifically for TOU metering set up

ii) *Meter pressure max/min*

- ◆ There was a general consensus that this field was irrelevant and did not have any perceived benefit. Consequently, this field was removed from further consideration

iii) *Meter type (make/model)*

- ◆ It was noted that this is not useful unless the year of the meter is known, as the specs are not consistent throughout the years of manufacture
- ◆ However, several members did say that—notwithstanding the fact that meters can have different indexes fitted in turnarounds—knowledge of the meter type is useful to give an indication of load size and to determine/validate a suitable tariff
- ◆ There was the question raised about whether the MHQ would be sufficient to give this information, and could be included in the registry

iv) *TOU flag*

- ◆ The general consensus was that this field would be helpful; however, that it would need to be defined what “TOU” actually meant, i.e. it would be necessary to draw a distinction between ‘large’ C&I customers/account managed customers and domestic customers with smart meters

c) Network fields

i) *Network pressure max/min*

- ◆ Meter owners noted that this was of relevance to determining the best fit between network connection and metering set up, but

members were generally unsure as to the benefit of including this field in the registry. This field was removed from further consideration

ii) *GPS co-ordinates / long-lat co-ordinates*

- ◆ It was noted that, while it would be relatively easy in urban areas, this would be difficult information to mandate for all meters, especially the most difficult-to-find 20% (for which the field would serve the greatest benefit)
- ◆ Often it is the case that the network connection and meter are in totally different places, so again it would be very difficult to collect data for current meters; however, this information could be caught going forward
- ◆ It was also noted that these details were chosen for inclusion in the electricity registry because the electricity registry was initially populated before NZ Post implemented a country-wide address format change. The gas registry was implemented after that change, implying that the address data may be more accurate. There was some general discussion around accuracy of address data.
- ◆ The consensus was that this field should be removed from further consideration

iii) *Reduction of number of location codes*

- ◆ It was noted that this was attempted in electricity as a part of the Part 10 changes. It resulted in a lot of work, with a very minimal eventual reduction. Retailers generally have their own subset of codes, with specific mapping built in to their systems to deal with alternate codes used by meter owners
- ◆ One suggestion was to reduce the number of codes going forward, for new installations
- ◆ A second suggestion was for Gas Industry Co to do an analysis of what codes are used and what their frequencies are; to determine how many exist that could potentially be removed
- ◆ Andrew brought up a previous analysis on screen that tabled this, showing that around 1/3 of all meters were labelled with a location code of "<blank>" or "unknown". There were various codes being used that had less than 100 meters under them
- ◆ A change to the number of location codes was not seen as a priority, but it was regarded as a potentially beneficial change going forward

d) *System changes*

- ◆ Regarding output files: It was noted that systems would need to

change even if participants didn't use the new fields. If fields were already in systems then it would be an easy change but if they were not, the system would most likely need to be set up to bypass them

- ◆ Noted that if there can be some clarity/certainty around scale and timing of changes this can be built into IT budgets for the coming financial year
- ◆ Jade suggested that they may be able to provide old and new versions of lists and notifications, where participants could opt in to the new version when ready, to avoid a "big bang" effect. It was noted that this is technically possible; however, they have not set this up before
- ◆ It was noted separately that there will have to be a period of non-compliance whilst fields are being populated, and that this may need to be accommodated within the rules

e) *Smart gas metering fields*

Emerging from the discussion was the idea of "future-proofing" the registry by making it compatible with a potential influx of smart meters. This would include fields such as classification of the meter (i.e. ½ hour domestic or ½ hour TOU), frequency of reads etc. The aim would be to physically understand what is happening on the site. An alternative put forward to this was to introduce a smart meter "flag" that would then prompt the retailer to get in touch with the meter owner for more information.

More thought and discussion is required around this.

Actions:

Gas Industry Co to follow up on relevant cost estimates with Jade

a) Core fields:

- ◆ Gas Industry Co to engage with meter owners to determine how many of their sites would require the "meter reading digits" and register multiplier" fields

b) Other metering fields:

- ◆ No action required

c) Network fields:

- ◆ Gas Industry Co to prepare an analysis of the location codes actually in use

a) Switching process

i) *GTN discrepancy handling*

- ◆ Two options were discussed: flagging any inconsistencies between registry data and incoming GTN data, and simply “bouncing back” any GTN files that were not consistent with registry data
- ◆ Assuming that the initial data population will be comprehensive and accurate, and some alignment could be reached between the timeframes allowed for meter owners and retailers to populate the registry, members were happy with the idea that the registry would reject inaccurate GTN files
- ◆ On the discussion about timeframes to populate data, one member noted that timeframes would need to take into account a suitable time to get information from sub-contractors (of meter owners)

ii) *Switching timeframes*

- ◆ Members admitted that the electricity rules regarding switching timeframes were not really consulted by operations teams, and that data accuracy and customer experience were higher priorities than speed; however, that the timeframes did not pose a problem
- ◆ Most members acknowledged that they did not use the full 23 days as allowed under the switching rules to process a switch, and would be happy to move to 10 days
- ◆ One member noted that consistency between electricity and gas timeframes would inevitably help dual fuel switches to occur on the same day (less likelihood of gas being deferred to next read) and there is a real benefit in being able to tell customers a maximum amount of time that it will take
- ◆ Also noted that from a customer perspective, they don't care about 'switching time frames' and the real focus is on the accuracy of the final bill from the old retailer and the first bill from the new retailer. There is a general perception that it should be completed within a billing cycle.

iii) *Back-dating standard switches (misuse of SMs)*

- ◆ It was noted that in electricity, you can back date standard switches within the current calendar month, and the previous month can be entered by arrangement

- ◆ Andrew mentioned that the Compliance Regulations allow for a threshold timeframe to be applied that would give some flexibility. This would allow for back-dating up to a certain date (i.e. up to one week previous to the current date), which would also avoid a rule breach. It was noted that you shouldn't be able to back-date to a date before the requested switch date
- ◆ One member noted that the rules may need to distinguish between residential and commercial customers
- ◆ Another member requested that a process flow be drawn up as to how these changes could play out

b) ICP lifecycle

i) *Allow meter owner to input meter information before uplift*

- ◆ There was general agreement to progress with this suggestion, contingent on the details
- ◆ Jade noted that you would only need to take out the original dependency of the meter owner on the responsible retailer
- ◆ It was noted that after the initial meter owner population, any changes to the meter owner would have to be processed by the responsible retailer, as is now currently the case

ii) *Allow edits to ICP parameters during a switch*

- ◆ There was general agreement to progress with this suggestion
- ◆ Details would need to be defined around whether or not all fields would be editable during a switch, but no argument was made to exclude any particular fields from the change
- ◆ It was noted by one member that this should be allowed if you currently have a contract with the customer
- ◆ No-one could specify why this restriction had been applied to the registry fields during a switch originally

c) Audit provisions

- ◆ Members were in general agreement that this is a logical change and should make audit processes simpler

d) Changes to interfaces

i) *Participant access to / use of the Data Hub on the electricity registry*

- ◆ Andrew explained that they are looking to change the electricity registry to allow non-electricity registry participant to access it, and that perhaps the gas industry could join the change and have a service agreement with the EA. This was considered but the

general conclusion was that it would be cleaner and less contractually complex to implement the change separately

- ◆ Members were generally happy to progress this

ii) *SFTP*

- ◆ Members generally agreed with this, as industry best practice. It was noted that it would probably be more important for the data hub
- ◆ Strong view that if the transition occurs, the phase out of FTP shouldn't be rushed

iii) *Extended web browser time out*

- ◆ No members noted any real issue with the current time out timeframe; however, one member mentioned that the site did not notify you that it had timed out, (e.g. only after you had tried to do an action would it revert to a login page). Jade agreed to look into this as a possible change
- ◆ Several members agreed that it could be helpful to have different log-out timeframes for different role types; i.e. a short timeout for call centre staff. However, noted that the implementation cost of this may outweigh the benefits
- ◆ Jade did not see any consequential implications to these changes

iv) *Improved browser capability*

- ◆ No members cited any issues with this, and decided to remove it from further consideration

e) Changes to current metering fields

i) *Registry to map all physical gas gates to notional delivery points*

- ◆ Members noted that they all had internal mappings in their systems to manage this difference between reconciliation and the registry. Changing this would require a large change to these systems
- ◆ One member noted that in contingency/outage situations, physical gates are required, and also that different networks have different pricing zones over greater areas
- ◆ For these reasons, it was decided that this suggestion would be removed from further consideration

ii) *Status code for credit disconnections*

- ◆ Members discussed the practicalities of this change, and agreed that the field could not be updated for every disconnection – reconnection, as often this happens within a 24 hour period (and

would generate 3-4 times more traffic). It was also noted that the registry does not necessarily load changes in the order they are entered, and a net position would have to be entered to ensure the update was correct

- ◆ There was agreement to look at a solution where a retailer would only update the field if the disconnection had not been reversed after a certain time period (e.g. 2-3 days); however, this would not completely fix the health and safety issue
- ◆ Members mentioned that a registry field would be easier to work with than an additional IEP, as systems are already geared towards overnight batch interfaces with the registry
- ◆ The issue was also raised that care would have to be taken to avoid flagging credit history to other potential retailers as this may be a privacy issue
- ◆ It was noted that EA has recently requested legal advice around the publishing of customer information on the registry
- ◆ Members were interested in further discussion around this

f) Side issues

Both side issues were covered off as noted in the *Considerations* paper.

Actions:

Gas Industry Co to follow up on relevant cost estimates with Jade

a) Switching process

- ◆ Gas Industry Co to investigate the implications of these changes

b) ICP lifecycle

- ◆ No action required

c) Audit provisions

- ◆ Gas Industry Co to investigate change to the Switching Rules to incorporate audit provisions

d) Changes to interfaces

- ◆ No action required

e) Changes to current metering fields

- ◆ Gas Industry Co to investigate legal issues with access to customer information

f) Side issues

- ◆ No action required

7

Wrap up

Minutes will be circulated amongst members for comments. Observers will be sent copies to view.

Next steps are detailed in Actions above, and the next RAPT meeting will convene on 9 April.

Meeting closed at 13:55