



# FAIR GO RATES SYSTEM

Technical Working Group - Engagement  
Terms of Reference

May 2017



# CONTENTS

1. OBJECTIVE	1
2. MEMBERSHIP	1
3. GOVERNANCE	2
4. MEETINGS	3
5. REVIEW	3

## 1. OBJECTIVE

The Essential Services Commission will convene a technical working group with a focus on engagement with the local government sector and other interested groups to assist in achieving the intended purposes of the Fair Go Rates system of:

- promoting the long term interests of ratepayers and the community, and
- ensuring that councils have the financial capacity to perform their duties and exercise their powers.

The group, particularly in the first two years of the Fair Go Rates system, will be facilitated by the Commission to act as a forum for sharing ideas and expertise in community engagement with the aim of building capacity across the local government sector.

The group will act as a conduit between the sector and the Commission to help us continually refine our guidance to local government on the engagement requirements for applications for a higher rate cap.

The group's main priorities for 2017 will be:

- promoting the sector's application of a principles and outcomes based approach to community engagement as an integral part of each council's long term planning and budgetary processes
- facilitating the sharing of ideas and experiences for improving community engagement in long term planning and budgetary processes.

## 2. MEMBERSHIP

The group will consist of the following members:

- At least one council staff representative, ideally an engagement practitioner, from each of the following council types:
  - metropolitan
  - interface

- large rural
- small rural
- regional centre
- a board member or nominated representative of IAP<sup>2</sup> Australasia
- a representative from Local Government Victoria a representative each from the Municipal Association of Victorian and the Victorian Local Governance Association relevant members of the Commission's local government and strategic communication team
- an independent facilitator (chair).

### 3. GOVERNANCE

Membership of the group will be for a two year period from the date of the first meeting.

In early 2016, council representatives were selected following an expression of interest process aimed at ensuring diversity of experience and representation from across the state and different types of councils. Councils were invited to nominate representatives with the final membership selected by the Commission and alternative members identified where required. IAP<sup>2</sup> Australasia and Local Government Victoria were also asked to nominate representatives.

The group has an advisory status only.

Meetings are to be chaired by an independent facilitator appointed by the Commission. The Commission will provide secretariat services. Meeting notes will be approved by the independent chair prior to distribution to members. They will be posted on the Commission's website within one month of each meeting.

## 4. MEETINGS

The group meets quarterly at the Commission's office in Melbourne with facilities for regional members to teleconference by phone.

The first meeting of each calendar year is focused on identifying key areas of work that may assist the sector with complying with the requirements of the Fair Go Rates system. A draft work plan is developed to guide future meetings.

During 2017, group meetings will be focused on meeting the purposes outlined in section 1.

## 5. REVIEW

During 2017, the role of the group and the terms of reference will be reviewed and evaluated. This will include consultation with members of the group as well as the sectors and organisations they represent. This evaluation will inform plans for 2018.