

SPAA Executive Committee Independent Chair's Review of 2017

I am delighted to have been appointed the role of Independent Chair for the SPAA Executive Committee (EC), my tenure beginning in August 2017. I know from experience the important role the various Codes make to the smooth running of our industry, providing comfort to the Government and its Regulator that there is a level playing field for all industry actors, and that consumer interests are safeguarded.

The Codes evolve over time because the context for the industry is changing, brought about by new entrants and through innovation; of critical importance then, is that there are clear and transparent processes and procedures for all parties to the Codes. The role of the Code Administrators cannot be underestimated, providing support in so many areas: from carrying out expert analysis to overseeing legal text, from chairing Committees to providing secretariat services. They work closely with other industry experts to ensure the Code work-programmes are delivered in a timely, effective, and efficient manner.

My first impressions since taking on the role of Chair for the SPAA EC are very positive. I have been impressed by the work of the Board, Executive Committee, and various Expert Committees that oversee the work of the SPAA; I am also very impressed by the professionalism and expertise that resides within the Code Administrator, Electralink. What is evident is that industry and Code Administrator experts work together to deliver outcomes that are fair for all parties, and ultimately benefit the consumer.

I am pleased to highlight some of the successes within SPAA in 2017: 39 SPAA and 77 MDD Change Proposals were raised, and an overall programme of 81 meetings organised by Electralink and supported by many industry experts. Major developments included AMICoP being transitioned into the SPAA Governance, the RGMA Data Flow Catalogue going online, and a refined Changed Process introduced. These activities were a major achievement by all involved. ElectraLink's efforts were recognised with SPAA being ranked second in the Customer Code Satisfaction Survey for 2017.

As newly appointed Independent Chair, I believed it was important that EC members, the Code Administrator, and the regulator met in a forum to discuss a number of key issues for SPAA: its strengths and weakness, the main challenges in the immediate future, and a vision and plan for the longer term. A strategy day was organised to consider a range of subjects that touched on these key issues, from Ofgem's views on the new Retail Energy Code (REC), to Electralink's engagement programme with SPAA members. This was a highly productive day with a number of important outcomes; for example, the creation of a high-level plan for SPAA transition into the REC; on how best to work with other Codes and the role of the new CACoP; and on a more proactive engagement programme within SPAA.

Looking ahead then, SPAA faces a number of important challenges in 2018. It needs to continue to work on prominent issues such as theft, erroneous transfers, and the role-out of smart-meters. It also needs to begin preparations for the transition of SPAA functions to the new REC, working closely with other stakeholders in this project. And there will also need to be a watching brief on the implications of Brexit with CACoP providing an important discussion forum. Both the creation of the REC and Brexit have potentially major implications and the Code Administrator and industry Committees will need to be flexible when addressing the SPAA work-programme during this period.

Finally, it is important that SPAA continues to serve its members and to ensure continued confidence that the processes and procedures deliver outcomes that are fair and enduring. This is best achieved by a proactive and transparent approach by the SPAA Board, EC and the Expert Committees, and the continued active engagement by members.

*Dr Chris Anastasi, Independent Chair SPAA Executive Committee
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