



# Policy

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## **Auditor Independence Policy**

**AGL Energy Limited**

**This Policy relates to:**

All AGL Employees



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## 1. Purpose

This policy provides guidance on the provision of external audit services for the Group.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Audit & Risk Management Committee (ARMC) Charter, which outlines the responsibilities of the ARMC in regards to the provision of audit services.

The AGL Board recognises that the ultimate responsibility for the integrity of the Company's financial reporting lies with the full Board. The Board, via the ARMC, looks to external audit as one form of assurance that the annual accounts are free from material error and internal controls are operating effectively in all material respects in relation to financial reporting.

The purpose of this policy is to define those areas the ARMC should consider in relation to the provision of external audit services.

## 2. Appointment and Removal of the External Auditor

The ARMC has been empowered to recommend to the Board the appointment and termination of the external auditor.

If the role of external auditor becomes vacant, or if the ARMC otherwise considers it appropriate to do so, the ARMC will conduct a formal, selective tendering process. Tenders will be evaluated in accordance with the disclosed criteria as appropriate at the time. However, tenders are not assessed solely on price but on a number of issues including:

- Skills and knowledge of the proposed external audit team;
- Independence of the external audit firm and more specifically the audit partner in relation to AGL;
- Understanding of the industry;
- Quality and thoroughness of proposed audit coverage; and
- Value for money.

## 3. Performance of Auditor

The ARMC, in accordance with its charter, reviews the performance of the external auditor on an annual basis. In reviewing the performance of the external auditor, the ARMC focuses on:

- The quality and rigour of the audit;
- The quality of service provided;
- The audit firm's reputation; and
- The independence of the auditor.

Where the performance of the external auditor is assessed as being unsatisfactory, the ARMC determines and recommends to the Board the course of action, which may include:

- Discussion with the external audit firm to resolve performance issues;
- Replacement of members within the external audit team; and/or
- Commencement of a competitive tender process in order to select a new service provider.

## 4. Auditor Independence

The ARMC will review the independence of the external auditor annually.

In evaluating auditor independence, it is important that the auditor is independent not only in fact, but also in appearance, such that a reasonable third party, having knowledge of all relevant information, would reasonably conclude that the firm's independence had not been compromised.

The external auditor is precluded from providing any services that might threaten its independence or conflict with its assurance and compliance role. Specifically, any firm providing external audit services to AGL will need to satisfy the ARMC that:

- No other services will be provided that will result in a conflict of interest;
- No partner, professional member of staff or superannuation fund of the firm holds any shares or options, either directly or indirectly, in AGL or its controlled entities;
- Any services provided by the firm additional to that of the external audit would not have a material bearing on the external audit and would not create a risk of self-review;
- The firm has an appropriate and agreed audit personnel rotation policy including lead and signing partners;
- No partner or member of staff or spouse or close relative of an audit partner or member of the audit staff holds a position as a director or executive or AGL or its controlled entities; and
- There will be no situations where the auditor assumes the role of management or where the auditor is placed in the role of advocate for AGL.

Attachment A of this Policy highlights those services that are permitted and those that are prohibited.

Half yearly reports on the provision of auditing, audit-related and other services are provided to the ARMC. The ARMC reviews these reports and satisfies itself that services not related to the audit do not compromise the external auditor independence.

## 5. Provision of Non-Audit Related Services

The external auditor can be engaged to perform audit, other regulatory and assurance services or other services in line with the permitted services as detailed in Attachment A of this Policy subject to the prior approval of the Chief Financial Officer, and such approval is to be advised to Chairman of the ARMC. Pre-approval by the Chief Financial Officer of all services provided by the external auditor, regardless of classification in Attachment A of this Policy, must be obtained prior to work commencing.

If the annual fees for other services are reasonably likely to exceed 20 per cent of the combined annual fee for audit services and other regulatory and assurance services, prior approval must be received from the Chairman of the ARMC, and such approval is to be advised to the ARMC at the next ARMC meeting.

## 6. Responsibility of the External Auditor

The external audit firm will maintain a quality control system that provides assurance that its independence will not be impaired. The external auditor semi-annually provides a letter to the Company Secretary on their independence within the meaning of relevant legislation and professional standards.

## 7. Audit Delivery and Reporting

Each year, as part of the external audit assignment, the external auditors will issue an external audit plan for review and discussion with management (and subsequently the ARMC). The audit plan should outline the audit approach, areas of focus (with accompanying explanation / justification), proposed materiality, and any other factors deemed relevant to support the plan.

The plan should also include additional audit procedures, based on the external auditor's analysis and understanding of developments during recent months, which require additional emphasis during the audit.

The external audit plan will apply materiality to assist in determining when the external auditors would expect to involve the ARMC, should it become necessary, in order to resolve an audit or accounting issue. It also affects the extent to which the external auditors perform detailed procedures on smaller account balances in the financial records.

All audit differences in excess of a set limit each year are to be brought to the attention of management for further consideration and action as appropriate.

On completion of the half-year review and annual audit, the Auditors provide the ARMC with a closing Management Report and review or audit report respectively. The Management Report will confirm the audit findings and audit differences that have not been addressed by management, and the potential impact of these on the accounts. The audit report will indicate the auditor's conclusion as to the integrity of the financial statements.

## 8. Review of this Policy

This policy is reviewed every two years and was last reviewed in August 2019.

# Attachment A

## Permitted and Prohibited Provision of External Auditor Services

### 1. Permitted Services – General Approval

#### 1.1. Audit Services

- Audits of consolidated financial statements including interim reviews, consultation on accounting issues, internal control work, attendance at Board Audit and Risk Management Committee meetings, use of specialists in connection with the foregoing, preparation of management letter and other services integral to audits of financial statements;
- Audit of subsidiary financial reports required by local reporting requirements or from time to time by management;
- Assistance in the interpretation of accounting principles;
- ASIC consultation, including review of correspondence relating to filings;
- Audits of opening balance sheets of acquired companies;
- Audits and accounting consultation on acquisition, dispositions and discontinued operations; and
- Audits of financial statements and transactions that are used by lenders, filed with government and regulatory bodies and similar reports.

#### 1.2. Other regulatory and assurance services

Regulatory and Assurance related services:

- Services that result from the role of the firm as independent auditor;
- Compliance letters, agreed-upon procedures, reviews and similar reports based on audited financial statements, financial information or the role of the independent auditor;
- Acting as scrutineer at general meetings of the company;
- Assistance in the implementation of new accounting pronouncements; and
- Provision of training and technical material in relation to application of accounting principles.

Audit Related Services – Specific Approval

- Transactional assistance, such as due diligence\*; and
- Preparation of Investigating Accountant's Reports\*.

\* Prior approval must be obtained from the Chairman of the ARMC, and such approval is to be advised to the Board at the next Board meeting.

**The statutory auditors must only be considered to perform permitted other regulatory and assurance services where there is specific expertise, know-how or company knowledge, which provides a compelling benefit to AGL through their appointment.**



### **1.3. Other Services**

Tax related services:

- Tax return and tax accrual reviews, consultations and assistance; and
- Tax planning and other consultation or services not related to compliance.

Other services:

- Assistance in reviews and tests of internal control and related systems; and
- Assessment of the design and implementation of internal controls.

## **2. Prohibited Services**

- Bookkeeping or other similar services related to the accounting records or financial statements of the audit client;
- Financial information systems design and implementation;
- Appraisal or valuation services, fairness opinions, or contribution-in-kind reports;
- Actuarial services;
- Internal audit outsourcing services;
- Management functions or human resources;
- Broker or dealer, investment adviser, or investment banking services;
- Legal services and expert services unrelated to the audit; and
- Any other service that the Board determines (by regulation or for other reasons) is impermissible.