



Notice

2 February 2016

Contravention of Type 1 electricity distribution licence obligation

ELECTRICITY NETWORKS CORPORATION (T/A WESTERN POWER)

The Economic Regulation Authority (**ERA**) has received notification from Western Power regarding a contravention of clause 7.7(4)(b) of the *Code of Conduct for the Supply of Electricity to Small Use Customers 2014 (Code)*.

Clause 7.7(4)(b) of the Code is classified as a Type 1 (considered the most serious and therefore immediately reportable) obligation for electricity distribution licence EDL1. Type 1 compliance obligations are classified as having a major impact on the basis that:

- the consequences of a contravention would cause major damage, loss or disruption to customers; or
- the consequences of a contravention would endanger or threaten to endanger the safety or health of a person.

Requirements of the Code

Clause 7.7(4)(b) of the Code can be summarised as:

Where life support equipment is registered at a customer's supply address under sub-clause (3)(a) the distributor must, prior to any planned interruption, provide at least three business days written notice or notice by electronic means to the customer's supply address and, unless expressly requested in writing by the customer not to, use best endeavours to obtain verbal acknowledgement, written acknowledgement or acknowledgement by electronic means from the customer or someone residing at the supply address that the notice has been received.

Details of the contravention

As part of the emergency response to the bushfire affecting the Waroona area, on 10 January 2016 Western Power installed a generator to provide a temporary supply to 30 customers in Hamel on the outskirts of Waroona.

The network recovery plan that Western Power developed to restore electricity to customers following the bushfire involved the creation of a number of work packages that would restore supply to approximately 1,000 affected customers, in stages. On the evening of 17 January 2016, Western Power began scoping and planning a work package to be completed in Hamel on Tuesday 19 January 2016; the package involved replacing four damaged poles on the high voltage network. Completing the Hamel work package was a prerequisite to undertaking further work to restore supply to a further 102 customers.

On Monday 18 January 2016, Western Power's Customer Service team (**CST**) was informed about the Hamel work package and performed the necessary checks, which identified one life support equipment (**LSE**) customer would be affected by the planned supply interruption. The CST immediately contacted the LSE customer to notify them of the planned interruption, and to gain an understanding of their circumstances. The LSE customer advised they would be comfortable for the interruption to proceed because they had a sufficient supply of oxygen; consequently the customer declined the offer of a portable standby generator in case of an emergency.

Because of the urgency around restoring power to customers in the bushfire affected areas around Waroona



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and because the LSE customer would not be placed in any danger, Western Power made the decision to proceed with the Hamel work package, despite not being able to provide the required 72 hours advance notice of the planned supply interruption to the LSE customer.

At 8:00am on 19 January 2016, the CST contacted the LSE customer, before the interruption commenced, to confirm they had no concerns about the electricity supply interruption, and to offer any further assistance they may require. The supply interruption commenced at 10:00am and supply from the distribution network was restored at 4:00pm. Western Power periodically contacted the LSE customer to confirm they were not in any danger and to provide updates on the progress of the work. After supply was restored on the distribution network Western Power contacted the customer to confirm the supply to their premises had been restored.

ERA's response to the contravention

The ERA acknowledges that the contravention of clause 7.7(4)(b) of the Code occurred as the result of exceptional circumstances arising from the Waroona bushfires. Western Power considered a range of alternative options to promptly restore power to customers affected by the bushfire, including working on the network while it remained energised, and considered the interruption to the Hamel network represented the best and safest option.

The ERA notes that Western Power gave full consideration to the safety and wellbeing of the LSE customer affected by the supply interruption in Hamel and only proceeded when it was satisfied that it was safe to do so. Performing the works in Hamel subsequently enabled supply to a further 102 customers to be promptly restored.

After considering the circumstances of the incident, the ERA does not propose to take any further action.

For further information contact:

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