



## Media Statement

19 April 2017

### Energy connections continue to grow in WA

A report on Western Australia's electricity and gas distributors has found continued growth in new customer connections, despite a flagging economy.

Economic Regulation Authority (ERA) Chair, Nicky Cusworth, said the growth in new connections is a sign that property development is withstanding the effects of the economic downturn.

The ERA's [2015-16 Annual Performance Report Energy Distributors](#) found in the past five years that electricity connections have grown by more than 10 per cent and gas connections have grown by almost 16 per cent.

The report found Western Power improved the reliability of its network in the reporting year, with the average length of interruptions for customers falling by 10 per cent to 152 minutes.

Customers on Horizon Power's network experienced an almost 32 per cent increase in outages to 199 minutes.

"Horizon Power said its network was badly affected by the Esperance bushfires in November 2015," Ms Cusworth said.

Routine testing by ATCO Gas Australia, the State's largest gas distributor, found more leaks on its gas mains and property connections than last year.

The report found the number of metropolitan and regional streetlights maintained by Western Power and Horizon Power increased by a small amount over the reporting year.

Ms Cusworth said that, while the number of faults with metropolitan streetlights was at a six-year low, faults with regional street lighting were at a six-year high.

Ms Cusworth said the number of people contacting energy distributor call centres was down on the previous year, but most gas and electricity customers lodge their complaints by phone.

She said the only exception was Horizon Power, which received 11.7 per cent more calls than last year.

"Western Power said the decline in calls was because customers were making use of its social media platforms and website to log problems with the service," she said.

**ENDS**

## Background

- There are three electricity distributors in Western Australia that supply small use customers, each operating in a different area of the State.
- A small use customer is a household or business that consumes less than 160MWh of electricity per year, or about \$58,000 per year.
- Western Power supplies 95.9% of customers, Horizon Power 4.1% and a small number is supplied by Rottnest Island Authority.
- The State's three gas distributors are ATCO Gas Australia (99.8%), Kleenheat and Esperance Power Station.

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