



Media Statement

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WA gas and electricity retailers under the spotlight

Competition in Western Australia's retail natural gas market has intensified in the last 12 months, according to a report by the Economic Regulation Authority (ERA).

In a report highlighting the performance of energy retailers in WA, the ERA found that Kleenheat has increased its residential market share from 3.7 per cent to seven per cent (47,353) and its share of the non-residential market from 2.7 per cent to 9.7 per cent (871).

ERA Governing Body member, Dr Stephen King, said the data shows that more customers have exercised their right to choose a gas retailer.

He said another finding of the report was an almost 50 per cent increase in residential gas disconnections, up from 10,165 in 2014 to 15,184 this year, although this was below the six year peak of 17,232 in 2010.

"WA's residential gas disconnection rate was higher than the three other states that we benchmark against," Dr King said.

"Ninety-six per cent of residential gas disconnections were performed by Alinta Energy. Despite enhancing their customer communication and working with financial counsellors, Alinta Energy's data suggests there has been no significant changes in the indicators that measure assistance to customers in payment difficulties.

"Alinta Energy said that for those customers who fail to respond to the various methods of communication - including visits by its staff - disconnection is used as the last resort.

"The impact of disconnection on customers can be significant because as well as the withdrawal of an essential service for the period of the disconnection, the customer faces additional fees and charges to reconnect.

"For the electricity retailers, a total of 9,412 residential electricity customers were disconnected, which was similar to last year. The three other states we benchmark against also reported relatively unchanged levels of residential electricity disconnections.

"It's good to see that the work electricity retailers have put into helping struggling customers has stabilised the rate of disconnections. The electricity retailers have shown that the economic downturn does not necessarily have to result in an increase in disconnections. Gas retailers could learn from them and improve their performance in this area.

“It is also a credit to the electricity industry that complaints have reached a six year low.”

The report is the latest in a series of annual reports published by the ERA that examines the performance of energy retailers who supply small use customers in WA.

The purpose of the report is to bring transparency and accountability to the performance of energy retail businesses that supply residential customers. It covers affordability, access to supply and customer service.

The 2015 Annual Performance Report for Energy Retailers is available on the [ERA website](#).

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