



Media Statement

4 January 2018

Growth in new property connections slowdown in 2017

Growth in new connections on Western Australia's gas and electricity networks has slowed down, according to the Economic Regulation Authority.

The ERA's *Annual Performance Report Energy Distributors* found growth in new connections matched a general slowdown in property development activity, particularly in Perth.

ERA chair Nicky Cusworth said although there were fewer new connections, there had been an increase in reconnections.

"The number of reconnections is driven by retailers" Ms Cusworth said.

"The increase in reconnections on the Horizon Power network was due to the installation of new smart meters under the Advanced Metering Infrastructure program. These properties can now be disconnected and reconnected remotely.

There was also a marked increase in reconnections on Western Power's distribution network.

Some of the increase can be explained by an increase in customer reconnections following disconnection for failure to pay a bill."

Household gas consumption was at a six year high in 2016-17.

"Unusually cold weather in winter and autumn could explain the increase in household gas consumption across the State," Ms Cusworth said.

The majority of the increase was due to increased consumption by households connected to the ATCO distribution systems, which increased from 10.050 million gigajoules to 11.036 million gigajoules.

Consumption on Kleenheat's distribution systems increased by 16.1 per cent to 8,531 gigajoules in 2016-17.

- The 2017 annual performance report for energy distributors is available on the ERA's [website](#).
- An [infographic](#), highlighting the findings is also available.

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 160 MWh of electricity per year, or about \$56,000 per year.
- Western Power supplies 95.8 per cent of customers, Horizon Power 4.1 per cent and a small number is supplied by Rottnest Island Authority.
- In 2016-17 the State's three gas distributors were ATCO Gas Australia (99.9 per cent of customers), Kleenheat and Esperance Power Station.

Media enquiries, contact Richard Taylor, Riley Mathewson, on 08 9391 2144 or 0451 471 006 or email rit@rmpr.com.au.