



Media Statement

21 March 2019

Dedicated minister needed for cross-government scrutiny of business licensing in WA

The Economic Regulation Authority recommends that a senior minister be responsible for leading cross-government business licensing policy, monitoring and improvement, as part of the final report of its inquiry into state government business licensing.

The ERA's report was today tabled in State Parliament by the Treasurer, the Hon Ben Wyatt MLA, and published on the [ERA website](#).

The ERA's final report includes 15 recommendations which cover leadership, transparency and accountability, building capability in the public sector, and making it easier to improve licensing schemes.

ERA Chair Nicky Cusworth said that the recommendations were intended to work together to improve all areas of business licensing in Western Australia, and to work with, rather than add to, existing government structures and processes.

"Business licensing affects most Western Australian businesses and workers, yet our licensing schemes are not managed consistently to ensure they remain necessary, effective and cost-efficient," Ms Cusworth said.

"Government should be managing licensing schemes like they would any other public asset – like a road or a hospital."

Ms Cusworth said that the ERA had found no consistent approach to managing and improving Western Australia's more than 700 licensing schemes.

"Licensing exists to protect the community, economy and environment from harm, and too often problems are not identified until something goes seriously wrong," she said.

"For example, electrical licensing and occupation health and safety regulations were amended in 2017 after four people died while carrying out electrical work."

Ms Cusworth said that Western Australia was the only Australian state without a central website to enable consultation on government reviews, decisions and projects. This would improve consumer input on licensing schemes.

"To make it easier for businesses and the public to have their say, the ERA recommends that the State Government should consider establishing a central consultation website, like YourSAy in South Australia," she said.

“For more than 200 licensing schemes, there is either no information on agency websites about the scheme or no way to apply for a licence online, so the ERA also recommends that government target funding towards digitising services.”

The ERA thanks all those who have provided input and submissions to this inquiry.

To read the final report and associated material, visit: www.erawa.com.au/licensinginquiry

About the ERA:

The ERA is Western Australia’s independent economic regulator. We aim to ensure the delivery of water, electricity, gas and rail services in Western Australia is in the long-term interest of consumers.

The ERA also undertakes inquiries, which provide recommendations to government on economic issues that are likely to have significant implications for the people and businesses of Western Australia.

For further information contact:

Natalie Warnock
Senior Media and Communications Advisor
08 6557 7933 or 0428 859 826
media@erawa.com.au

D198696