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Dr Kenneth Michael has been appointed as Western Australia's Gas Pipelines Access Regulator.

Energy Minister Colin Barnett said Dr Michael had been acting in the position since February. His permanent appointment was made under the Gas Pipelines Access (Western Australia) Act 1998 which implemented the National Access Code.

The code provides for third parties to gain access to gas pipelines on fair and reasonable terms. It also provides for the resolution of disputes and a mechanism for appeal.

Dr Michael recently retired from the position of chief executive officer of Main Roads. He has extensive experience in managing infrastructure similar to that of gas pipelines.

The following pipeline systems are covered by the National Access Code: Parmelia Pipeline System; Karratha to Cape Lambert Pipeline; Beharra Springs connection to the Parmelia Pipeline; Dampier-to-Bunbury Natural Gas Pipeline System; Tubridgi Pipeline System; Goldfields Gas Pipeline System; several laterals from the Goldfields Gas Pipeline and AlintaGas Mid-West and South-West gas distribution systems.

Mr Barnett said the National Access Code and the gas pipelines access law were an important development in the reform of the State's energy sector.

Both would promote competition by allowing gas consumers to contract directly with the gas producer of their choice and pay a fair and reasonable charge for the transport of their gas by the pipeline owner.

"It will promote the efficient use of gas pipelines by allowing third parties to use spare capacity rather than having to invest in new pipeline systems," Mr Barnett said.

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