



Economic Regulation Authority

 WESTERN AUSTRALIA

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*Promoting fair prices, quality services and choice.*

## Media Statement

**11 November 2009**

### New Chief of WA Economic Regulation Authority

Leading Western Australian economist Greg Watkinson has been appointed as the new Chief Executive Officer of the State's Economic Regulation Authority.

Greg will take up the position from Mr Peter Kolf, who is retiring, in February next year.

Authority Chair, Lyndon Rowe, said Peter had set an extraordinary example of coordinating and bringing together three regulatory areas to become a single entity after the Authority was created in 2004. He had also been Executive Director of the Authority's predecessor, the Office of Gas Access Regulation, since 1999.

"He has held several senior positions in his career – he has been a senior manager with the WA Office of Energy, Director of the Australian Independent Air Fares Committee and Manager, Pricing Policy, for Telecom Australia," Mr Rowe said.

"His service to the Authority has been above and beyond the call of duty and he has paved the way for the better regulation of the State's gas, electricity, rail and water industries," he said.

Mr Rowe said Greg headed the Authority's References and Research Division, which is responsible for undertaking independent inquiries for the WA Government.

Before joining the Authority he worked for the State's Department of Treasury and Finance where he provided advice on microeconomic policy. He has also worked as an economist in the areas of macroeconomics, education and social policy.

Peter said it had been an honour to have worked for the Authority.

"There were only a couple of us who laid the foundations of the Office of Gas Access Regulation in a serviced office accommodation back in 1998. Gradually, with the appointment of Dr Ken Michael AC in the capacity as Gas Access Regulator, the office grew to a total of around seven staff. This was, however, increased when the Authority was created and a range of additional functions were added," he said.

“It’s quite a different organisation now because in 2004 we took over rail access and water licensing and were given an inquiries function. Subsequently, we assumed responsibility for electricity access and licensing.

“In the gas area, additional functions were acquired in licensing and in respect of full retail contestability. More recently, the Authority acquired new functions in the surveillance of the wholesale electricity market.

“Interestingly, the inquiries function has become a significant part of our work, which has been both fascinating and challenging.”

He said that, as demonstrated by a recent survey of stakeholders, the Authority was highly regarded and he was fortunate to have been involved in that achievement.

On behalf of the Authority, Mr Rowe acknowledged the outstanding contribution of Peter and said the Authority looked forward to working with Greg to ensure the work of the Authority continued to promote the interests of Western Australians.

**For more information contact Lyndon Rowe, Chair ERA (08) 9213 1900 or Sue McKenna 0424 196 771.**

*The Authority is the regulatory body that provides high quality, independent economic regulation and advice to State Government.*

**ENDS**

**Lyndon Rowe**

**CHAIRMAN**

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