SUBMISSION TO THE ECONOMIC REGULATION AUTHORITY

21 JULY 2026

Submission to the AA6 Western Power Review

Technology enablement, accountability and timely approvals

KEY RECOMMENDATION Make approval of emerging household energy technologies a measurable AA6 service outcome, with published pathways, deadlines, reporting and escalation.

Electrify Everything WA welcomes the Economic Regulation Authority's review of Western Power's sixth access arrangement (AA6). The ERA has correctly identified electrification, distributed energy resources and more complex customer connections as central challenges, and has proposed stronger transparency, accountability and connection reform.[1]

Western Power has a vital responsibility to maintain safety and reliability. However, caution cannot become an open-ended reason for delaying technologies operating elsewhere. Stakeholders often cannot identify who is responsible for assessing a new technology, what evidence is required, when a decision will be made, or how an adverse decision may be reviewed. This uncertainty discourages renewable energy uptake and excludes renters, apartment residents and households without off-street parking.

The existing accountability framework is too focused on expenditure, conventional service standards and major connections. It does not adequately measure whether Western Power is enabling household technologies promptly. The AA5 experience reinforces the need for stronger delivery obligations: the ERA's third progress report found that average queuing time for connection applications remained static and that there had been little progress on longstanding streetlighting actions. Strategies and reports are useful, but transparency after delay is no substitute for timely decisions.[2]

Electrify Everything WA asks the ERA to make technology enablement an explicit, measurable AA6 outcome. Western Power should publish a technology approvals register identifying each proposal, responsible unit, issues, requested information, target decision date, status and final reasons. Standard technologies should have defined assessment timeframes, with escalation to senior management and the ERA where deadlines are missed. Pilot pathways should be used where evidence is incomplete, rather than leaving proposals indefinitely unresolved.[3]

Priority technologies

- **Vehicle-to-Grid (V2G) –** Bidirectional charging allows an EV battery to support a home and export electricity when the grid needs it. Western Power acknowledges V2G as a valid connection type, but consumers need a clear, product-neutral approval pathway covering compatible vehicles, chargers, export controls and dynamic operating requirements. AA6 should set a deadline for publishing standard connection arrangements and approving compliant equipment, supported by reporting on applications, processing times and reasons for rejection.[4]
- **Plug-in home batteries for renters –** Small batteries that plug into a dedicated outlet could allow renters and people unable to alter a switchboard to store low-cost daytime electricity and reduce evening demand. Western Australia requires appropriate electrical, product and network safeguards, but the absence of a defined assessment pathway prevents suppliers from demonstrating compliance. Western Power should coordinate with safety regulators and standards bodies, publish the technical evidence required, and establish controlled trials rather than treating fixed, professionally installed batteries as the only acceptable model.
- **Kerbside EV charging –** Many inner-city homes have no driveway or garage, making home EV charging difficult despite residents having an electricity account only metres from the kerb. Sporadically deployed commercial streetlight charging is manifestly inadequate and not scaleable for the anticipated penetration of EVs. Per-household charging facilities are required from behind-the-meter to fully utilise available energy from residential solar systems. Councils are exploring cable channels, gully charging, bollards

and other solutions. Local governments should not have to negotiate a new network interpretation for every trial or street.

- **Balcony solar for strata and apartments –** Plug-in or dedicated-circuit balcony solar is widely used in parts of Europe and the USA and could provide modest, low-cost renewable generation to apartment residents who lack access to a shared roof. Safety, export and structural requirements must be addressed, but these are matters for published standards and controlled approval processes. Western Power should define whether and how compliant micro-generation can connect, establish export-limited trial arrangements, and work with electrical safety and building regulators to avoid a blanket barrier.
- **Mandatory three-phase supply for new residential builds –** New homes are increasingly expected to support induction cooking, heat-pump hot water, electric vehicle charging, rooftop solar and batteries. Installing single-phase infrastructure can create future upgrade costs and restrict the size and flexibility of electrification systems. Existing research has ascertained that build-costs between single-phase and three-phase are inconsequential when conducted at build-time. Where three-phase distribution is available in the street, Western Power should require or strongly facilitate three-phase service to new detached homes and suitable multi-residential developments. AA6 should compare the upfront network cost with avoided retrofits and improved phase balancing.
- **Solar-sharing technologies for strata –** Solar-sharing devices allow one rooftop solar system to distribute generation dynamically among separately metered apartments. This can overcome roof-space, cabling and fairness problems that make conventional individual systems impractical. Systems are already marketed for Australian apartment buildings on the east coast, yet WA needs a predictable technical and connection pathway. Western Power should publish requirements for power-sharing systems, nominate a responsible assessment team, recognise approvals and operating experience from other jurisdictions, and time-limit product reviews.[5]

Accountability measures

The ERA should not rely solely on Western Power to design its own measures and judge its own performance. AA6 should include independently reviewed key performance indicators for emerging-technology approvals: median and maximum assessment time; number of technologies awaiting a decision; percentage decided within the published timeframe; trials commenced and completed; and stakeholder satisfaction with clarity, consistency and communication. Missed targets should require a corrective action plan and, where persistent, have financial consequences through an incentive or adjustment mechanism.[6]

Western Power should also engage early with consumer groups, technology providers, electricians, local governments and strata representatives. Technical requirements should be proportionate to actual risk and recognise equivalent evidence from credible Australian and international jurisdictions. Where Western Power is not the final decision-maker, it must identify the responsible agency, coordinate a whole-of-government pathway and communicate this clearly rather than allowing responsibility to circulate between organisations.

AA6 is an opportunity to move from passive network access to active transition enablement. Western Power should remain rigorous on safety, but it must also be accountable for timely, transparent and evidence-based decisions. Without these obligations, useful technologies may remain unavailable until well after they are needed, and the benefits of electrification will continue to flow mainly to households with detached homes, private parking and capital. Electrify Everything WA urges the ERA to make equitable technology approval a defined Western Power service outcome for AA6, for the long-term benefit of consumers.

Sources consulted

[1] Economic Regulation Authority, “Framework and approach AA6 (2027–2032)” and AA6 Issues Paper, including the identified need for electrification, DER integration, accountability and timely connections. View source

[2] Economic Regulation Authority, Western Power AA5 – Third annual progress report, 18 June 2026, executive summary and accountability discussion. View source

[3] Economic Regulation Authority, AA6 Framework and Approach Draft Decision, 7 May 2026, especially expectations for delivery reporting, connections improvement and DER/DSO approval reforms. View source

[4] Western Power, “Electric vehicle to grid connection”, describing bidirectional chargers, V2B/V2H and V2G. View source

[5] Allume Energy, “Get Started – Solar for Apartments”, information on SolShare and shared solar for apartment buildings. View source

[6] WA Expert Consumer Panel, submission on the AA6 Draft Decision, recommending stronger incentives, independent review and performance accountability. View source