



# Minutes

**Meeting Title:** Minutes  
**Meeting Number:** 02/2024  
**Date & Time:** Tuesday, 11 June 2024 10:00am (AWST)  
**Location:** Ken Michael Room, Level 4, 469 Wellington Street, Perth (Boorloo) and Online via Microsoft Teams  
**Attendees:** Members

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Tay Alers	CCI WA	
	Chamber of Minerals and Energy	Apology
Rowan Kelly	Consumer Credit Legal Service	
	Ethnic Communities Council of WA	Apology
Suresh Rajan	Independent advocate	
Leanne Berard	Financial Counsellors' Association	
Sheldon Mumby	Pastoralists & Graziers Association	Apology
Nick Warland	Property Council of Australia (WA)	
Kitty Prodonovich	RCCI WA	
Graham Hansen	UnionsWA	
Sophie Hantz	WA Council of Social Service	
John Hassell	WA Farmers Federation	Apology
Daniel Thomson	WA Local Government Association	

## ERA

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Steve Edwell (Chair), Jenness Gardner (CEO), Emily Robinson (A/Manager Strategy and Stakeholders), Sara O'Connor (ED Regulation), Chloe Upton (AD Alternative Electricity Services), Emma Forrest (AD Licensing & Customer Protection), Clare Darragh (Communications Officer).

## Observers

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Penny Lipscombe	Consumer Protection (DMIRS)	Apology
Marcus Claridge	Energy and Water Ombudsman	
Brent Savage	Energy Policy WA	Apology

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## 1. Acknowledgement of Country by Jenness Gardner, CEO ERA

The meeting opened at 10:00am.

Jenness Gardner gave an Acknowledgement of Country.

## 2. **Welcome by Steve Edwell, Chair ERA**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Steve spoke about the power sector and the new market start, 1 October 2023. The ERA is working with EPWA and analysing internally why prices are rising. Steve noted it's important that policy and decarbonisation does not put pressure on driving up prices. Steve has been doing work on the decarbonisation process and the role of IT systems.

Current ERA work includes:

- Gas revenue resets for gas pipelines, currently working on ATCO and the Goldfields Gas Pipeline.
- Rail regulation.
- Monitoring Western Power performance following on from AA5, in particular rural reliability and other issues such as streetlighting.
- Ongoing work on customer protections for consumers of gas, electricity and water.

## 3. **Apologies**

Steve noted the apologies.

## 4. **Minutes of meeting 1/2024 held on Monday, 20 March 2023**

The Chair approved the minutes of Meeting 1/2024 as a formal record of those events.

## 5. **Alternative Electricity Services (AES) framework**

Chloe Upton provided an overview of the Alternative Electricity Services (AES) regulatory framework. The new framework, which extends customer protections to new and emerging electricity services, is expected to commence in 2025. The ERA is responsible for administering and enforcing the framework and is undertaking activities to prepare for this new role.

The following matters were discussed:

- The need to understand the definition of an embedded network service provider, as different types of entities including strata managers and dedicated embedded network operators can be responsible for on-selling within an embedded network.
- The cost of living and the need to keep administration costs as low as possible to minimise the impact on customers and small businesses.
- The need to provide ample opportunities for consultation as the guidelines and supporting documentation are developed.
- The increasing opportunities for consumers to go off grid due to the decreasing cost of small energy systems, and the corresponding importance of customer protections being extended to a variety of supply arrangements.

ERACCC noted the ERA would continue to update members on the AES project as it progresses.

## **6. Customer code protections**

Emma Forrest provided an overview on customer code protections. Over the past two years, the ERA has amended the consumer protection instruments for electricity, gas and water customers to provide expanded protections for vulnerable consumers. Wherever possible, the protections in each instrument have been aligned. The ERA has also commenced its two-yearly reviews of the Gas Marketing Code of Conduct and the Code of Conduct for the Supply of Electricity to Small Use Customers.

ERACCC members discussed protections for life support customers under the Electricity Code including what assistive technologies are classified as life support under the State Government's life support equipment subsidy scheme.

Members also discussed what oversight the ERA had of retailers' family violence policies and highlighted the need for writing and language to meet the needs of consumers. Training for front line staff around family violence was also discussed. The ERA welcomes feedback on how the implementation of family violence customer protections can be improved.

ERACCC noted that the draft review report for the Gas Marketing Code of Conduct review was currently open for consultation. The Electricity Code Consultative Committee is meeting in July to discuss and review issues before publishing its draft review report.

## **7. Member updates**

Nick Warland advised that the supply of transformers and other components and getting new projects connected to the grid was an issue. Steve agreed that the backlog of connections to generators and networks is a big issue here and in the US and Europe. Western Power continues to report on connections times and is due to implement a new connection process in July 2024.

Leanne Berard spoke about financial hardship. The average energy debt is around \$2,000 in metropolitan areas and that debts up to \$14,000 have been seen in regional areas. Applications for financial hardship grants are also up. Steve spoke about the challenges government faces to review and improve current hardship support measures.

Tay Alers updated members on the Consumer Confidence Report. The divide between people doing well and people who are struggling is increasing. The report also asked people about EV uptake which found that if prices fell people would be more interested in buying. Tay also noted that new housing connections remains an issue.

## **8. ERA upcoming decisions and consultations**

Emily Robinson provided an overview of the ERA's upcoming consultations and decisions.

## **9. Meeting closed at 11:30am**

The next meeting is planned for Tuesday, 15 October 2024.