

Review of Western Power Customer Service Charter

20 April 2009

Economic Regulation Authority



WESTERN AUSTRALIA

DECISION

The Economic Regulation Authority (**Authority**) has assessed Western Power's review of its Customer Service Charter (**charter**), the reviewed charter and the summary document on 20 April 2009.

REASONS

The Authority has assessed the review, the charter and the summary document against the requirements of Western Power's licence and notes the following:

Existence

Clause 12.1 of the Western Power licence states that the licensee must prepare a charter if it supplies electricity to small use customers. Clause 12.2 of the licence requires that Western Power review the charter at least once every 36 months from the grant of the licence.

The licence was granted to Western Power on 30 March 2006, therefore the charter review was due by 30 March 2009.

Western Power originally submitted its charter and summary document to the Authority for approval on 26 March 2009. The Secretariat of the Authority provided feedback to Western Power regarding the charter and summary document which resulted in Western Power submitting a revised, final version of both documents on 14 April 2009.

The Authority finds that Western Power has submitted its charter and summary document for review within an acceptable timeframe.

Accuracy

Section 82 of the *Electricity Industry Act 2004* provides that it is a condition of every distribution licence that the licensee is to comply with the provisions of the *Code of Conduct for the Supply of Electricity to Small Use Customers* (**Code of Conduct**) that apply to the licensee.

Clause 11.1(2) of the Code of Conduct states that a charter must at least include a summary of the customer's and distributor's rights and obligations under the Code. In addition, a charter should include an explanation of the complaints handling process and the difference between distribution and retail functions, reference to key documents in relation to the supply of electricity to customers, and contact details of the distributor, the Authority, Energy Safety (Department of Commerce) and the electricity ombudsman.

The Authority finds that the contents of the charter and summary document are generally consistent with the relevant legislation and licence requirements.

Consultation

Clause 12.4 of Western Power's licence states that any review of the charter should have regard to the Customer Service Charter Guidelines. Paragraph 6.3 of the Guidelines requires a licensee to engage with its customers and/or their representatives in the review of their charter.

Western Power has advised that the review of the charter and summary document was undertaken in two stages.

The first stage involved an internal review of 12 weeks. During this time, workshops were held with 20 representatives from across the business to determine how the charter and summary document should look and what information should be included.

The second stage of the review involved consultation with consumers and community representatives. Western Power invited six regional customers and ten peak body representatives to review the draft charter and provide feedback. Community representatives included, among others, WACOSS, Energy Ombudsman, Office of Energy, Association for the Blind, Ethnic Communities Council of WA. Feedback was provided by each stakeholder either by phone (one), in writing (seven) or face-to-face (eight). A considerable number of amendments were made as a result of feedback received from consumers and community representatives.

The Authority finds that, on the basis of the information provided, Western Power undertook a commendable level of public consultation with regard to this review.

Accessibility

Clause 12.4 of the Western Power licence states that any review of the charter should have regard to the Customer Service Charter Guidelines. Paragraph 6.4 of the Guidelines requires a charter to be prepared in simple language that is easily understood by customers.

The Authority finds that both the charter and summary document are written in a 'plain English' manner.

LYNDON ROWE
CHAIRMAN

For further information, contact:

Economic Regulation Authority
Perth, Western Australia
Phone: (08) 9213 1900