

# energy

## Bulletin

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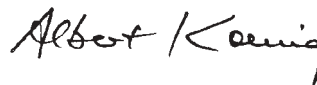
## Centenary Awards Recognise Contributions to the Energy Industry in WA

Recently a number of Centenary Medal awards were made and it was very pleasing to see recognition of a number of people who have made significant contributions to Western Australia's community, through their work in the energy industry. Details are given in this edition of the Energy Bulletin.

It was also pleasing to note that the Electrical Licensing Board recently held its 300th meeting since 1991, when new regulations and a new single Board were

introduced. Prior to 1991, there were separate Boards for electrical contractors and electrical workers.

The Electrical Licensing Board can be proud of its achievements, especially as the work of its members often involves extensive personal contribution.



ALBERT KOENIG

DIRECTOR OF ENERGY SAFETY

## FUEL RATIONING – FOR EXERCISE

Energy Safety recently participated on behalf of Western Australia in a 'desk top' exercise designed to test the State's preparedness to deal with a liquid fuel shortage affecting petrol and automotive diesel supply.

This national fuel emergency simulation exercise was coordinated by the National Oil Supplies Emergency Committee in Canberra.

The aim was to assess Australia's ability to deal with shortages using the powers of the Liquid Fuel Emergency Act. This legislation provides for the Commonwealth, following consultation with the various States and Territories, to declare a national fuel shortage emergency and with the assistance of the various States and Territories, to institute measures to manage liquid fuel demand. The demand measures provide for the introduction of retail rationing across Australia.

## ENERGY MINISTER RELEASES REPORT INTO QUALITY AND RELIABILITY OF ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

Minister for Energy Eric Ripper MLA recently released Energy Safety's report into a four-month investigation of complaints about the reliability and quality of power supplies in regions serviced by the South-West electricity grid.

The report confirms that parts of the electricity network are not operating at the benchmark standards set out in the regulations, mainly due to the age of the electricity network and the increasing demands being placed upon it. The report identifies priority areas and Western Power has been requested to provide options on how best to deal with the problems.

Further information is inside this edition of the Energy Bulletin.

# Energy Safety



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## Energy Minister Releases Report on Consumer Complaints About Electricity Supply Network Reliability

In June 2003, Energy Minister Eric Ripper released an Energy Safety report into a four-month investigation of power faults in regions serviced by the South-West electricity grid.

The Minister said the report confirmed many of the faults related to the age and increasing demands on the electricity network.

"We have an electricity network that is nearly 40 years old, covers vast distances, and is affected by trees, fires and storms," Mr Ripper said.

"And as the regional economy diversifies, the system also has to cope with increasing power demands."

"But frequent or extended power outages can be devastating and costly for regional families and businesses and it is clear more has to be done to prevent this occurring."

Mr Ripper said more than 270 complaints about power supply problems were made to Energy Safety by early May 2003.

Many came from Toodyay (59), Bremer Bay (38), Koorda (22), Naremben (13) and Corrigin (10).

The Minister said all complaints were being investigated. A broad analysis showed:

- about 45 per cent of complaints resulted from local factors such as tree interference, ageing local equipment and birds;
- about 45 per cent resulted from upstream, systemic problems associated with excessive high voltage feeder length or too few substations, which affected performance such as system voltage and reliability; and

- some 10 per cent related to local safety concerns such as unsafe poles or low overhead wires.

"Clearly, the maintenance and stability of the network must be a major priority for Western Power," Mr Ripper said.

"It is a problem that has developed over decades and will take many years to completely resolve, but I am pleased Western Power has already made an important start by increasing its regional capital works and maintenance investment during recent years."

The Minister said new electricity supply industry regulations [Electricity (Supply Standards and System Safety) Regulations 2001] meant formal safety and reliability standards were now in place.



"In beefing up the powers of Energy Safety, the Government has given consumers an avenue for their complaints to be independently investigated and measured against the new standards," he said.

Mr Ripper said the Director of Energy Safety had forwarded the report to Western Power and asked the utility to review the supply system in the affected regions and prepare options for remedial action by the end of the month.

Western Power had fully co-operated with the director's investigations.

Western Power has 830,000 customers across the State, including 50,000 in the Wheatbelt.

A full copy of the report is available from Energy Safety's website.

## Gas Fitters Welcomed as New Readers

A warm welcome is extended to gas fitters holding permits and certificates of competency who will now be receiving a copy of Energy Bulletins.

The responses to a recent questionnaire sent to the last known address of Certificate of Competency holders enabled Energy Safety to ensure data in the licensing register is up to date. This has made it possible to send information like Energy Bulletins to correct mailing addresses.

The timely action of gas fitters who responded to the questionnaire is appreciated. Gas fitters who were unable to be contacted or who did not respond to the mail out have had their names removed from the database. Those persons will no longer receive information from Energy Safety.

If any readers are aware of a gas fitter who may not have kept his or her details current, please encourage them to contact Energy Safety. This is very important, as gas suppliers will no longer accept Notices of Completion from gas fitters who are not registered with Energy Safety.

Licence holders are reminded that they are required to inform Energy Safety of changes of address details.

## Progress on the Review of Part IX of the Electricity Regulations

Further to the lead article in the previous edition of the Energy Bulletin (No. 27 – April 2003), the review of the 'live work' issue is now complete.

The invitation to comment on the third round of industry consultation resulted in a lot of comments being

received. A summary of the comments is available on the Energy Safety website.

It is noteworthy that a large mining company recently voluntarily adopted the draft regulatory requirements for live work as its "company safety policy". This action is seen as very positive for both electrical employees and the company concerned, providing a structured, risk assessment-based approach that has inbuilt safeguards for high risk 'live work' activities.

## Changes in the Pipeline for Gas Standards

Since July 2003, Standards Australia has been responsible for the development and maintenance of gas technical standards.

This function, which principally covers technical standards relating to gas installations and gas appliances and components, has previously been carried out by the Australian Gas Association (AGA).

This agreement between the AGA and Standards Australia comes with the expected refocusing and convergence, over the next 12 months, of various associations representing the downstream energy industry (including the AGA). The refocusing reflects structural changes that have been occurring across the entire Australian energy market in recent years.

The 55 gas standards will be published on-line and in hardcopy alongside the more than 20,000 existing Standards Australia publications, with the industry benefiting from Standards Australia's expertise, systems and extensive national and international standardisation resources.

This move will see future gas technical standards more likely being aligned with, and adopted as, International Standards by International Standards Organisation.

## Perth Trial of Hydrogen Powered Buses

Perth will soon be the home of three hydrogen fuel cell buses as part of an international trial involving eleven countries. The buses will become part of the Perth metropolitan fleet operated by TransPerth.

A fuel cell is a device that uses hydrogen or hydrogen-rich fuel and oxygen to create electricity by an electrochemical process. When pure hydrogen is used (as will be the case in the Perth buses), fuel cells emit only heat and water as a by-product. This is good news for green house concerns and the general comfort of the public in the streets of Perth.

Fuel cells will be classed as Type B gas appliances (as an appliance that consumes gas). Each fuel cell will be certified by Energy Safety inspectors as a Type B appliance.

Gas fitters with an appropriately endorsed Class I gasfitting licence will be permitted to install, commission and service these units.

Energy Safety is working with the Department for Planning and Infrastructure to ensure compliance with appropriate Regulations.

The buses will have a storage capacity of 44 kg of hydrogen stored at 35 Mega Pascals. They will have a range of 200 km per fuel load and will seat 57 passengers.

This is an exciting project for Perth. It is expected that the buses will be in service towards the end of 2004.



*One of the hydrogen powered buses that will be trialled in Perth*

## Centenary Medals Awarded to Energy Industry Persons

The Commonwealth Government established a new award in the Australian Honours system, known as the Centenary Medal. The award was established to commemorate the Centenary of Federation and the valuable contributions that persons have made to Australian society and government.

The Western Australian Government committed to the scheme to ensure due recognition to West Australians who have made a particularly significant contribution to our community.

As a result, the following West Australians were recently awarded a Centenary Medal for their valuable contributions and service to the energy sector and we take this opportunity to recognise their awards.

### **Robert (Bob) Pritchard – For service to the electrical engineering profession**

Bob has served the electrical engineering profession for 47 years with dedication and commitment. He initiated and oversaw the quality assurance accreditation for the first engineering office in WA. In a voluntary capacity, Bob has been an active member of the Institution of Engineers, Australia. He is also the current Chairman of the Electrical Licensing Board.



*Bob Pritchard*

**Norman (Norm) Saunders – For service to the electricity industry**

During his 33 years as a Principal Engineer in the State's Public Service, Norm ensured that electrical services in government buildings were of the highest standards of safety, quality and reliability.



*Norm Saunders*

**Thomas (Tom) Coulter – For service to the electrification of Western Australia**

Tom commenced working for the State Electricity Commission in 1951, retiring from the State Energy Commission of WA (SECWA) in 1987. He contributed significantly to the rural electrification of the State. Tom also developed and implemented strategies to achieve improved electricity supply reliability and consolidated supply authority electrical training.



*Tom Coulter*

**Dr John Bromley – For service to gas research and developing gas appliance testing codes**

Dr Bromley worked for 34 years in SECWA and then AlintaGas and was considerably involved in the development of gas appliance approval testing codes. He was awarded a PhD for his work on indoor air quality with regard to unflued gas heaters which allowed use of these appliances in WA. He was the Principal Scientist of the WA Gas Laboratory and currently continues his research with Curtin University.



*Dr John Bromley*

**Fred Barnes – For service to the conversion of Perth and Fremantle to natural gas**

Fred managed the Perth and Fremantle Towns Gas to Natural Gas Conversion project during 1969 to 1972. He consequently became Principal Engineer Gas Utilisation at SECWA and also contributed greatly to the Australian Gas Association, particularly in gas appliance safety. He undertook initial solar research in WA as a SECWA project.



*Fred Barnes*

Centenary Medals were also awarded to:

- Bruce James OAM - 'For service to the community and to engineering'; and
- Roy Hayes – 'For service to the community through the Western Australia power utility'.

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