



## **ELECTRICITY DISTRIBUTION – SERVICE QUALITY PERFORMANCE FOR THE DECEMBER QUARTER 2004**

### **Introduction**

The Authority's *Electricity Distribution: Service Quality Reporting Guidelines* require Distribution Network Service Providers (DNSPs) to provide data on specific service quality measures on a quarterly and annual basis. The Guidelines are available on the Authority's website at [www.qca.org.au](http://www.qca.org.au). The Authority commenced posting the reports provided by the DNSPs on its website with the September quarter 2002 reports.

For the quarterly reports, the Authority provides a very brief overview of the measures reported by the DNSPs. For the annual reports, the Authority provides a more detailed review of DNSPs' service quality performance and, as annual data is accumulated, it will review the performance of each DNSP over time. The Authority released separate annual reports of the distributors' financial and service quality performance for 2003-04 in March 2005 and are available on the Authority's website.

### **Summary of the DNSPs' December quarter 2004 service quality reports**

The service quality measures collected by the Authority are not intended to allow comparison of the two DNSPs with each other. This is because Energex and Ergon Energy operate in very different environments. Energex operates a distribution network that is located in the urban area of South East Queensland whereas Ergon Energy operates a distribution network spread across the remainder of the state. As a result, it is to be expected that the distributors' performance will vary significantly on a number of service quality measures.

The service quality measures that the DNSPs are required to report against fall into three broad groups – reliability measures, quality of supply measures and customer service measures.

**Reliability** measures provide information about interruptions to electricity supply. Interruptions can occur because of problems with generation, transmission or distribution. Distribution interruptions may be planned or unplanned, and unplanned interruptions will at times be due to events that are beyond the control of the DNSPs, such as severe storms. A DNSP's performance is best indicated by the duration and frequency of planned and unplanned interruptions that are due to distribution network problems within the distributor's control (although lengthy and frequent interruptions due to other influences may indicate a need for improved risk management measures on the part of the distributor).

**Quality of supply** measures are intended to indicate problems with the nature of electricity supply, such as low or high voltage levels, based on customers reporting symptoms that are typically associated with such problems.

**Customer service** measures provide information about how customers' problems, enquiries and requests for services are handled by the DNSPs.

## **ENERGEX**

### *Reliability measures*

Energex improved its basis for reporting reliability data from the June quarter 2004 by using the actual customer numbers affected by interruptions in its calculations rather than estimated customer numbers as used previously. As reliability data is calculated on a 12 month rolling average basis, the full effect of this change will not be revealed until the June quarter 2005 report (when 12 months of data collected under the new method will be available). However, it appears that the change may slightly worsen Energex's reliability performance relative to the likely outcome under the previous estimated approach.

During the 12 months to end December 2004, Energex customers, on average, experienced 1.83 distribution-related interruptions, leaving them without power for a total of 175.6 minutes. This outcome compares to 1.88 distribution-related interruptions and 174.9 minutes without power during the 12 months to end September 2004, indicating customers, on average, experienced slightly fewer distribution-related interruptions but experienced more time without power for the December quarter 2004 compared to the December quarter 2003.<sup>1</sup>

Consistent with the Authority's Guidelines, Energex has removed the impact of seven severe weather-related events from its distribution-related reliability performance data. Although six of these events occurred in the March quarter 2004, they still impact the December quarter 2004 reliability data because the reliability measures are based on a 12 month rolling average. The other weather-related event occurred during the December quarter 2004, where approximately 61,000 customers in the Wynnum and bayside suburbs were affected by a major storm on 13 December 2004.

Without these events excluded (that is, measuring the distribution-related reliability customers actually experienced), Energex's customers, on average, experienced 2.51 distribution-related interruptions, leaving them without power for a total of 394.7 minutes during the 12 months to end of December 2004. These figures compare to 2.51 distribution-related interruptions and 386.3 minutes without power during the 12 months to end September 2004. After allowing for the effect of changing the basis of determining customer numbers, these figures indicate that the unadjusted reliability for the December quarter 2004 deteriorated slightly compared to the unadjusted reliability for the December quarter 2003.

For the December quarter 2004, Energex reported that customers made 104 complaints regarding the reliability of supply compared to 51 complaints in the September quarter 2004. However, the December quarter 2004 performance is consistent with the corresponding quarter in 2003 (93 complaints).

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<sup>1</sup> As quarterly reliability measures are based on 12 month rolling averages, the only difference between results for the September and the December quarters in 2004 is that the former includes December quarter 2003 reliability data while the latter includes December quarter 2004 reliability data. Therefore, comparison of reliability data for the September and December quarters in 2004 is effectively a comparison of reliability performance during the December 2003 and 2004 quarters.

### *Quality of supply measures*

Energex reported that it received a total of 387 technical quality of supply complaints during the December quarter 2004, which was an improvement on the 489 complaints received during the September quarter 2004. Of the categorised events, the largest decrease was recorded for complaints relating to low supply voltage (which can cause light dimming and motor starting problems). The number of technical quality of supply complaints has generally been trending downwards since reporting began under the Authority's Guidelines, with the December quarter 2004 performance representing the lowest point recorded to date.

### *Customer service measures*

During the December quarter 2004, Energex customers had to wait, on average, 30 seconds to speak to an operator when calling the call centre, down slightly from 34 seconds during the previous quarter. The percentage of calls abandoned decreased significantly from 8.2 per cent in the September quarter 2004 to 3.6 per cent in the December quarter 2004. Both of these call centre measures improved significantly from the September quarter 2004 even though there was a 9.4 per cent increase in the total number of calls to the call centre compared to the September quarter 2004.

The proportion of total customer appointments that were not met within 15 minutes of the agreed time deteriorated from 2.9 per cent in the September quarter 2004 to 3.3 per cent in the December quarter 2004. Historically, this measure has ranged between 2.0 and 3.5 per cent.

In other measures, Energex customers had to wait, on average, 4.06 days for a new connection to the network compared to 4.03 days during the September quarter 2004. This measure has varied little over the last two and a half years. The proportion of new connections that were not made on the agreed date deteriorated significantly from 2.1 per cent in the September quarter 2004 to 4.4 per cent in the December quarter 2004, even though the number of new connections made decreased by 630. However, the December quarter 2004 performance was still an improvement on the corresponding quarter in 2003 (5 per cent). The proportion of re-connections that were not made on the agreed date was slightly worse at 2.2 per cent over the same period, even though the number of re-connections made decreased by 1,726. This measure has remained between 2 per cent and 3 per cent over the last two and a half years.

The average time taken to repair faulty street lights decreased slightly from 3.5 days in the September quarter 2004 to 3.4 days in the December quarter 2004. The December quarter 2004 performance was the same as the corresponding quarter in 2003.

The occasions on which the required notice of a planned interruption to supply was not given increased significantly from 27 per cent in the September quarter 2004 to 65 per cent in the December quarter 2004. Energex stated that the large increase in this measure was due to problems it encountered after changing the process for recording planned interruption notices. This casts some doubt on the robustness of this measure which needs to be addressed. With the exception of a very low number in the March quarter 2003 (the first quarter this measure was reported), this measure had previously ranged between 25 and 32 per cent. The occasions where the duration of a planned interruption exceeded the time specified in the notification decreased from 43 per cent to 35 per cent. The December quarter 2004 performance also represented an improvement from the corresponding quarter in 2003 (41 per cent).

The reported total number of complaints increased significantly from 372 in the September quarter 2004 to 454 in the December quarter 2004. The December quarter 2004 also represented an increase from the corresponding quarter in 2003 (392). The average time taken to resolve these complaints remained steady at 8 days. This measure has ranged from 7 to 12 days since the December quarter 2002. The percentage of total complaints resolved within 20 days deteriorated from 93 per cent in the September quarter 2004 to 88 per cent in the December quarter 2004. This also represented a deterioration in the measure when compared to the corresponding quarter in 2003 (91 per cent).

The average time taken to fix a technical supply fault increased slightly from 44 days in the September quarter 2004 to 45.5 days in the December quarter 2004. Historical comparisons of this measure cannot be made due to a change in the reporting of this measure in the September quarter 2004.

## **ERGON ENERGY**

### *Reliability measures*

During the 12 months to end December 2004, Ergon Energy customers, on average, experienced 5.03 distribution-related interruptions, leaving them without power for a total of 572.3 minutes. These figures compare to 5.07 distribution-related interruptions and 560.0 minutes of time without power during the 12 months to end September 2004, indicating customers, on average, experienced slightly less distribution-related interruptions but experienced more time without power for the December quarter 2004 compared to the December quarter 2003.

Ergon Energy customers made 339 complaints regarding the reliability of supply in the December quarter 2004, compared to 173 complaints in the September quarter 2004. This performance is consistent with the corresponding quarter in 2003 (337 complaints).

### *Quality of supply measures*

Ergon Energy reported that it received a total of 750 quality of supply complaints during the December quarter 2004 which was a deterioration on the 606 complaints during the September quarter 2004. The largest increase was recorded for complaints relating to low supply voltage (which can cause light dimming and motor starting problems). The December quarter 2004 performance also represented a deterioration from the corresponding quarter in 2003 (669 complaints).

### *Customer service measures*

During the December quarter 2004, Ergon Energy customers had to wait, on average, 21 seconds to speak to an operator when calling the call centre, down from 44 seconds during the previous quarter. The percentage of calls abandoned decreased from 4.2 per cent in the September quarter 2004 to 2.4 per cent in the December quarter 2004. Both of these call centre measures improved significantly from the September quarter 2004, despite an 18.5 per cent increase in the total number of calls to the call centre. The result for both measures was lowest numbers since reporting of Ergon Energy's service quality data began under the Authority's Guidelines.

In other measures, Ergon Energy customers had to wait, on average, 2.5 days for a new connection to the network, unchanged from the previous quarter. This measure has varied only marginally over the past year, ranging from 2.5 days to 2.9 days. The proportion of new connections that were not made on the agreed date improved slightly from 6.8 per cent in the September quarter 2004 to 6.3 per cent in the December quarter 2004. This also represented an improvement from the corresponding quarter in 2003 (8.5 per cent). The proportion of re-connections that were not made on the agreed date improved from 4.8 per cent in the September quarter 2004 to 3.4 per cent in the December quarter 2004. This may have been partly due to the 1,026 fewer re-connections that were made. The December quarter 2004 performance was a significant improvement from the corresponding quarter in 2003 (7.4 per cent). However, Ergon Energy customers had to wait, on average, 26 hours to be re-connected to the network in the December quarter 2004 compared to 23 hours during the September quarter 2004. Since the March quarter 2003 (the first quarter this measure was reported), this measure has varied between 13 hours and 31 hours.

The average time taken to repair faulty street lights increased from 2.8 days in the September quarter 2004 to 3.1 days in the December quarter 2004. This measure has generally remained between 2.5 and 3.5 days over the last two and a half years.

The occasions on which the required notice of a planned interruption to supply was not given increased from 5.2 per cent in the September quarter 2004 to 6.7 per cent in the December quarter 2004. However, this result was an improvement on the corresponding quarter in 2003 (10.8 per cent). The occasions where the duration of the planned interruption exceeded the time specified in the notification also increased from 29.8 per cent to 31.3 per cent. However, this was still a slight improvement on the corresponding quarter in 2003 (33.2 per cent).

The total number of complaints increased from 823 in the September quarter 2004 to 949 in the December quarter 2004. However, this result was an improvement on the corresponding quarter in 2003 (1,020). The average time taken to resolve these complaints increased slightly from 6.7 days in the September quarter 2004 to 6.8 days in the December quarter 2004, but was an improvement on the corresponding quarter in 2003 (9.3 days). The percentage of total complaints resolved within 20 days improved from 93.1 per cent in the September quarter 2004 to 98.2 per cent in the December quarter 2004. This was the highest percentage of total complaints resolved within 20 days since reporting began under the Authority's Guidelines.

The total number of repeat complaints decreased from 26 in the September quarter 2004 to 17 in the December quarter 2004. Historically, this measure has varied between 17 and 61. The average time taken to resolve repeat complaints improved significantly from 24 days in the September quarter 2004 to 9.8 days in the December quarter 2004. Historically, this measure has varied between 3 days and 24 days.

For the December quarter 2004, Ergon Energy changed its reporting of the average time taken to fix a technical supply fault to be more consistent with the Authority's Guidelines. Prior to the September quarter 2004 report, Ergon Energy only included the time taken to resolve the customer's problem excluding any time taken for network augmentation work. In its September quarter 2004 report, Ergon Energy was able to report the total time taken to rectify problems which arise and are fixed during a quarter. For this latest report, Ergon Energy is now able to report the total time taken (including across quarters) to rectify technical supply faults. These changes mean that the 74 days that customers, on average, waited for a technical supply fault to be fixed during the December quarter 2004 is not comparable with the results for previous quarters.