



ELECTRICITY DISTRIBUTION – SERVICE QUALITY PERFORMANCE FOR THE MARCH QUARTER 2003

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. The Authority commenced posting the reports provided by the DNSPs on its website with the September quarter 2002 reports, released in February 2003.

For the quarterly reports, the Authority will provide a very brief overview of the measures reported by the DNSPs. For the publication of annual reports, the Authority plans to provide a more detailed review of DNSPs' service quality performance. The annual reports will include more extensive analysis and, as annual data is accumulated, allow the performance of each DNSP to be assessed over time.

Summary of the DNSPs' March quarter 2003 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

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 distributors).

During the 12 months to the end of the March quarter 2003, Ergon Energy's customers, on average, experienced 4.40 distribution-related interruptions, leaving them without power for a total of 484.0 minutes. These figures have decreased from 4.67 distribution-related interruptions and 499.9 minutes of time without power as at the December quarter 2002, indicating that the

reliability of electricity supply for the March quarter 2003 was better than in the March quarter 2002¹.

Over the same period, Energex customers, on average, experienced 2.07 distribution-related interruptions, leaving them without power for a total of 188.4 minutes. These figures show a small increase in the average number of interruptions, from 2.01 distribution-related interruptions as at the December quarter 2002, and a small increase in the total time-off supply, from 187.1 minutes without power as at the December quarter 2002, indicating that the March quarter 2003 reliability performance deteriorated slightly compared to the March quarter 2002.

Ergon Energy experienced an increase of 106 complaints regarding the reliability of supply from the December quarter 2002 even though its distribution-related reliability performance improved. Energex experienced an increase of 48 complaints regarding the reliability of supply from the December quarter 2002, which may reflect the slight decline in its reliability performance.

Quality of supply measures

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.

Ergon Energy reported on five of the nine measures required in the Guidelines and has indicated that it is implementing a new complaints system to report the remainder by the December quarter 2003. Ergon Energy received a total of 759 quality of supply complaints during the March quarter 2003 compared to 761 complaints during the December quarter 2002.

Energex reported on eight out of the nine categories of quality of supply problems required in the Guidelines and has indicated that it will report the ninth (voltage spikes) in the June quarter 2003. Energex received a total of 696 quality of supply complaints during the March quarter 2003 compared to 672 complaints during the December quarter 2002.

Customer service measures

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

Two measures that both DNSPs have reported against for the March quarter 2003 relate to call centre performance and timeliness of new connections. During the March quarter 2003, Ergon Energy customers had to wait, on average, 48 seconds to speak to an operator when calling the call centre, compared to 53 seconds during the previous quarter. However, these results are above the September quarter 2002 waiting time of 27 seconds. On average, customers had to wait 4.2 days for a new connection to the network compared to 4.5 days during the December quarter 2002 and 11.8 days during the September quarter 2002.

¹ As quarterly reliability measures are based on 12 month rolling averages, the only difference between results for the December quarter in 2002 and the March quarter in 2003 is that the former includes March quarter 2002 reliability data while the latter includes March quarter 2003 reliability data. Therefore, comparison of reliability data for the December quarter in 2002 and the March quarter in 2003 is effectively a comparison of reliability performance during the March 2002 and 2003 quarters.

Energex customers had to wait, on average, 1 minute and 38 seconds to speak to an operator when calling the call centre, compared to 1 minutes and 45 seconds during the previous quarter. These results are considerably lower than the September quarter 2002 waiting time of 3 minutes and 3 seconds. Customers had to wait, on average, 4.1 days for a new connection to the network compared to 4.2 days during the December quarter 2002 and 4.1 days during the September quarter 2002.

Other measures of interest include, for Ergon Energy, the percentage of total complaints resolved within 20 days, which improved from 92.0% in the December quarter 2002 to 94.2% in the March quarter 2003. The proportion of total new connections that were not made on the agreed date increased from 6.1% in the December quarter 2002 to 7.0% in the March quarter 2003.

For Energex, the percentage of total complaints resolved within 20 days decreased from 91.0% to 81.0% over the same period. The proportion of total new connections that were not made on the agreed date improved from 7.0% to 5.0% over the same period. The proportion of total customer appointments that were not met within 15 minutes of the agreed time increased from 2.0% in the December quarter 2002 to 3.4% in the March quarter 2003.