



ELECTRICITY DISTRIBUTION – SERVICE QUALITY PERFORMANCE FOR THE SEPTEMBER QUARTER 2006

Introduction

The Authority's *Electricity Distribution: Service Quality Reporting Guidelines* require Distribution Network Service Providers (DNSPs) to provide data on service quality measures quarterly and annually. The Guidelines can be obtained from the Authority's website at www.qca.org.au.

The Authority commenced publishing the DNSPs' reports on its website with the September quarter 2002 reports. In August 2005, the Authority revised its Guidelines to strengthen the reporting and to facilitate nationally consistent reporting. The DNSPs commenced reporting against the revised Guidelines with the September quarter 2005 reports.

For the quarterly reports, the Authority provides a brief overview of the measures reported by the DNSPs. For the annual reports, the Authority provides a more detailed review of the DNSPs' performance. Reports of the distributors' annual financial and service quality performance are available on the Authority's website.

The nature of the data

The service quality measures that the DNSPs are required to report against fall into three groups.

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.

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.

A cautionary note

The service quality measures collected by the Authority are not intended to allow comparison of the 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.

A number of measures reported by the distributors are subject to detailed qualifications. In some cases, this relates to the consistency of measures over time. Readers should consult the distributors' reports to ensure correct interpretation of the data.

ENERGEX

1. Reliability measures

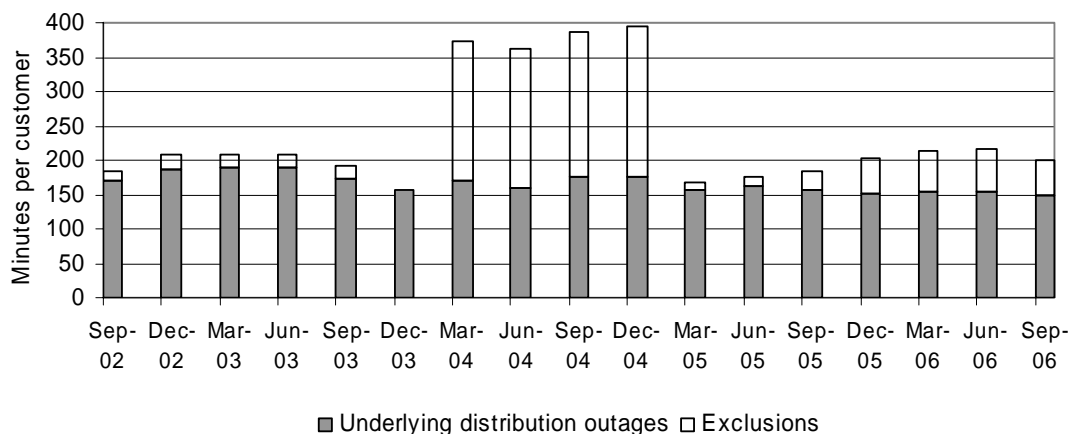
➤ *Underlying reliability best on record.*

The average duration of distribution-related outages fell from around 28 minutes during the June quarter to around 22 minutes during the September quarter, a level similar to that experienced during the September quarter 2005.

For the 12 months to end September 2006, Energex customers experienced, on average, 2.09 distribution-related interruptions leaving them without power for a total of 199.1 minutes. As shown in Figure 1, this result was an improvement on the 12 months to end June 2006.

Removing the effect of unusual events, underlying distribution-related reliability (shaded) improved marginally, with the average duration of outages over the preceding 12 months falling below 150 minutes per customer for the first time since reporting commenced.

Figure 1 Average duration of outages per customer for the 12 months to end of quarter



Energex's customer reliability complaints increased from 52 during the June quarter to 68 customer complaints during the September quarter 2006. However, this result was well below the average (115 complaints) for the previous four September quarters.

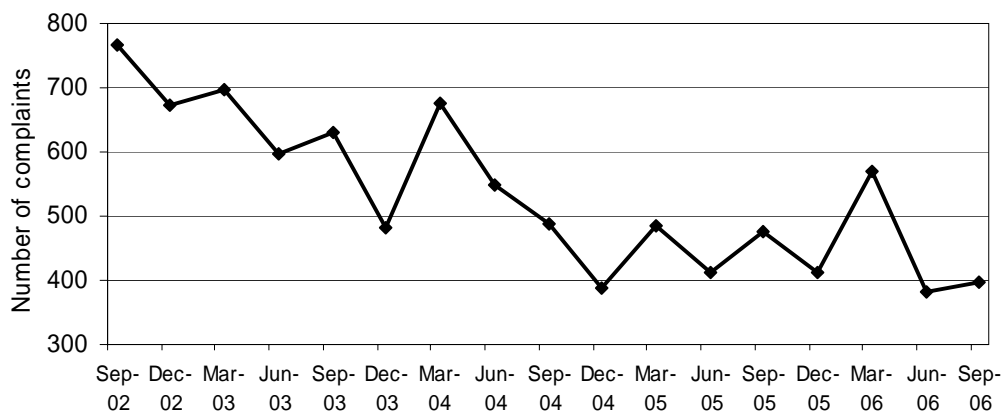
The average time taken to resolve reliability of supply complaints decreased from 3 days to 2 days, the shortest since reporting commenced and well below the average of 10 days.

2. Quality of supply measures

- *Technical quality of supply complaints up slightly from historic low.*

During the September quarter, total quality of supply complaints increased slightly from the lowest level on record, as shown in Figure 2. A decrease in minor voltage dips (which can cause flickering lights and require the resetting of digital clocks) was more than offset by increases in low supply voltage (which can cause light dimming and motor starting problems) and TV or radio interference.

Figure 2 Total number of quality of supply complaints



The average time taken to fix technical supply faults during the September quarter was 37.5 days, which is average for this measure over the past 2 years (31 to 45 days).

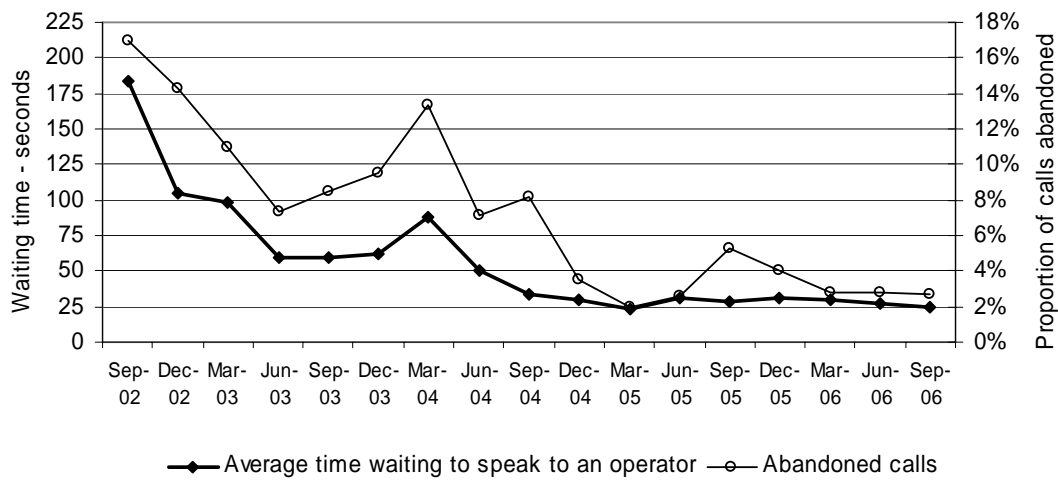
3. Customer service measures

- *Call centre performance near record best, while notification of planned interruptions improves.*

On average, Energex customers had to wait 25 seconds to speak to an operator when calling the call centre during the September quarter, which is the second lowest time on record as shown in Figure 3.

The percentage of calls abandoned fell slightly to 2.7 per cent.

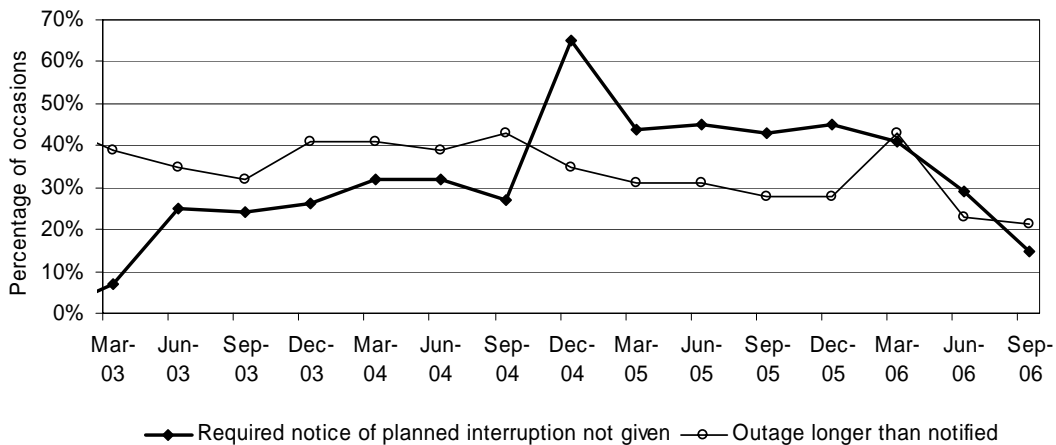
Figure 3 Waiting time to speak to an operator and abandoned calls



The time taken for new connections and re-connections remained close to long term levels of around 4 days and 4.1 hours respectively. However, for the fourth consecutive quarter, the average time taken to repair faulty street lights remained high (at 5 days) compared to the average of 4 days since reporting commenced.

As shown in Figure 4, occasions on which Energex did not provide the required notice of a planned interruption decreased significantly to 15 per cent. Occasions on which the duration of a planned interruption exceeded the time specified in the notification decreased slightly to its lowest level on record at 21 per cent.

Figure 4 Insufficient notification of planned interruptions



The reported number of customer service complaints increased significantly from 1,055 in the June quarter to 1,754 in the September quarter. Energex advise that this increase was due primarily to better recording of complaints by call centre staff following refresher training. The average time taken to resolve customer service complaints decreased from 3 days to another record low of 2 days.

ERGON ENERGY

1. Reliability measures

➤ *Reliability improves during the September quarter.*

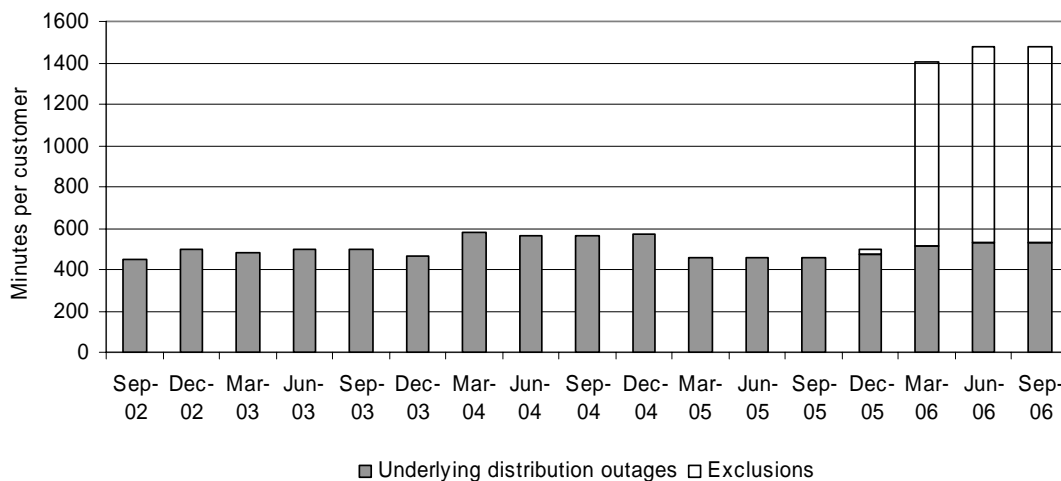
The average duration of distribution-related outages was around 85 minutes during the September quarter 2006, down from around 90 minutes during the June quarter and around 45 seconds lower than the result for the previous September quarter.

During the 12 months to end September 2006, Ergon Energy customers experienced, on average, 4.73 distribution-related interruptions leaving them without power for a total of 1,474.6 minutes. However, as shown in Figure 5, the impact of Cyclone Larry in March continues to influence the 12-month reliability data.

Removing the effect of exclusion events, including Cyclone Larry, underlying distribution-related reliability (shaded) remained virtually unchanged between the June and September quarters and near the middle of the historical range.

As there were no exclusion events during the September quarter itself, outages attributed to exclusion events in the 12 months to the end of September remained the same, at 942.8 minutes, largely reflecting the impact of Cyclone Larry in the March quarter.

Figure 5 Average duration of outages per customer for the 12 months to end of quarter



Reliability complaints received from Ergon Energy customers declined to 194 complaints, down 18 per cent on the June quarter result but around 15 per cent higher than the average for this time of year.

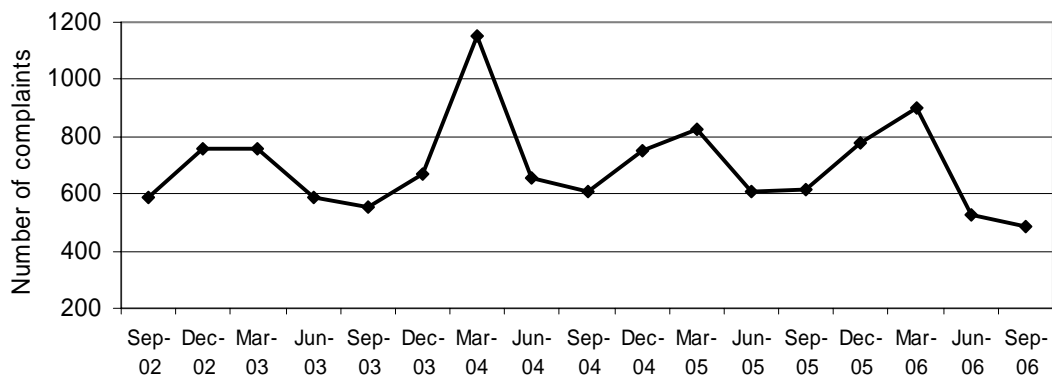
Consistent with the decline in the number of complaints, the average time taken to resolve reliability of supply complaints decreased to 4.7 days during the September quarter, down from 5.9 days during the June quarter.

2. Quality of supply measures

- *Technical quality of supply complaints down again to another record low.*

The total number of technical quality of supply complaints decreased during the September quarter to the lowest level yet recorded, as shown in Figure 6. An increase in complaints about low supply voltage (which can cause light dimming and motor starting problems) was more than offset by fewer complaints about waveform distortion or unbalance (which can cause equipment to perform erratically), minor voltage dips (which can cause flickering lights) and voltage swells (which can cause blown lights and motor protection devices).

Figure 6 Total number of quality of supply complaints



Despite the decline in the number of complaints, the average time taken to fix technical supply faults increased slightly during the September quarter to 73 days. This result is still at the low end of the narrow range of recent outcomes for this measure.

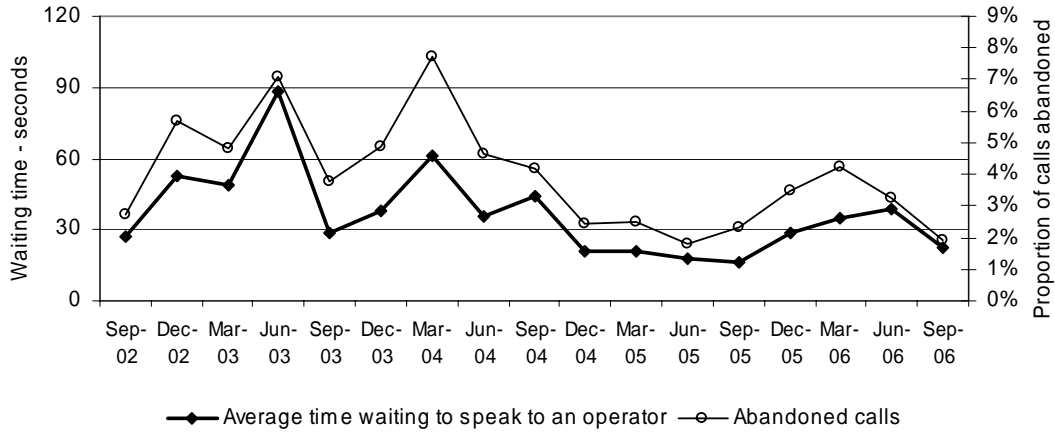
3. Customer service measures

- *Call centre performance improves sharply, as does the timeliness of streetlight repairs.*

The length of time customers had to wait to speak to an operator decreased significantly (by 17 seconds) to 22 seconds. As shown in Figure 7, this substantially reverses the run of increases that occurred since the record low result recorded for the September quarter 2005. The turn-around is likely due in part to the 10 per cent decrease in the number of calls to the call centre during the quarter.

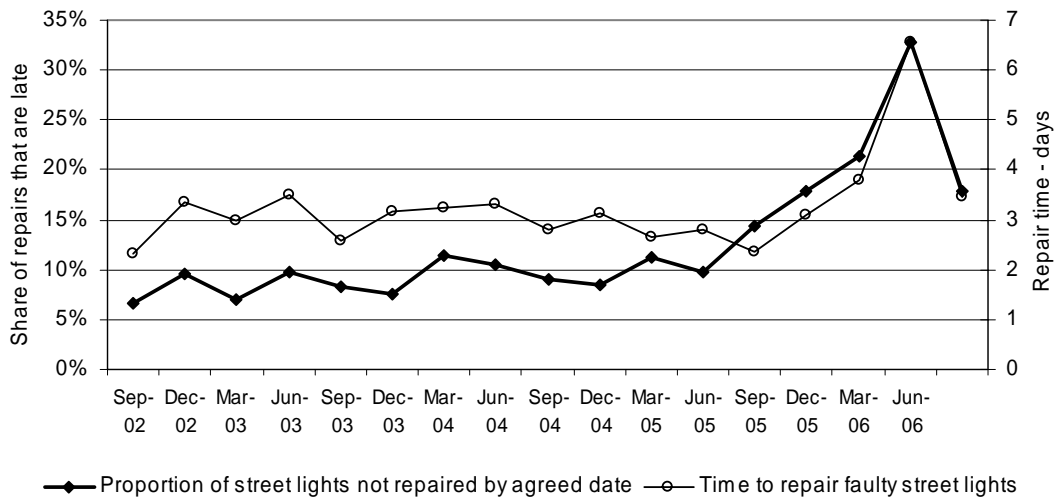
The percentage of calls abandoned also decreased significantly, from 3.2 per cent to 1.9 per cent during the September quarter.

Figure 7 Waiting time to speak to an operator and abandoned calls



The time taken to repair faulty streetlights decreased significantly during the September quarter to 3.4 days. As shown in Figure 8, this result reflects a return towards longer term performance and was predicted by Ergon Energy once streetlight maintenance returned to normal following the impact of Cyclone Larry.

Figure 8 Timeliness of streetlight repairs



The number of customer service complaints decreased from 826 in the June quarter 2006 to 695 in the September quarter 2006. This result was around 10 per cent higher than the average number of complaints usual for this time of year. The average time taken to resolve these complaints decreased from 6.6 days to 4.8 days.