



## **GAS DISTRIBUTION - SERVICE QUALITY PERFORMANCE FOR THE YEAR ENDING 30 JUNE 2006**

### **Introduction**

The Authority's *Decision on Gas Distribution: Monitoring Service Quality* (available from the Authority's website at [www.qca.org.au](http://www.qca.org.au)) requires the Queensland gas distribution service providers to collect and report information on service quality performance annually. The Authority commenced posting the reports provided by the service providers on its website with the 2003-04 reports.

The Authority has prepared a brief overview of the measures reported by the service providers. As more performance information is accumulated over time, the Authority will provide a more detailed review of the service providers' service quality performance. However, as there is currently only three years data available, only simple comparisons can be made at this time.

### **Service Quality Reporting Framework**

The gas distribution service providers are required to report against two types of service quality measures – reliability measures and customer service measures. In addition, background information in relation to customer numbers, gas consumption, unaccounted for gas and the length of the distribution network is required.

Reliability measures provide information about the ability of a service provider to maintain continuous gas supply to customers. Outages can occur for a number of reasons including planned renewals, third party damage, water entering the mains or directions from the technical regulator.

Unlike electricity networks, gas distribution networks do not suffer from momentary interruptions to supply (interruptions which last for one minute or less) due to the technical characteristics of pressurised gas networks. This means that, even in the event of damage to the mains, gas will often continue to flow and customers may be unaffected, particularly in the residential sector, where gas is used primarily for cooking and heating rather than to power continuous equipment operations.

Customer service measures provide information about the efficiency and responsiveness of service providers in the handling of issues such as complaints, reported leaks and connections. End users experiencing gas supply problems will generally contact the relevant gas retailer in the first instance. Some problems reported to retailers will ultimately be the responsibility of the distribution service provider.

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## ALLGAS

### *Background*

The Allgas network comprises approximately 2,400 kilometres of low, medium and high pressure mains. During 2005-06, Allgas distributed gas to a total of 66,547 customers (up 3.1 per cent on the previous year) who consumed approximately 9.8 petajoules of gas (down 2.2 per cent on the previous year). Allgas' 112 large customers (consuming 10 or more terajoules per year) consumed approximately 7.2 petajoules of gas during 2005-06.

### *Reliability*

The duration of planned gas supply outages increased from an estimated 7,497 hours during 2004-05 to an estimated 12,024 hours during 2005-06 due mainly to a higher number of customers being affected by mains and renewal work, rather than longer outages. The average duration of a planned interruption for mains and renewal work has remained constant at 8 hours over the past three years.

During the reporting period, there was only one unplanned outage, which affected 94 customers. This measure decreased from eight unplanned outages, affecting 428 customers, during 2004-05. The single unplanned outage for 2005-06 was caused by an operator error during repair work. The duration of this unplanned outage was 6 hours.

### *Customer Service*

Allgas responded to 22,851 distribution-related actionable calls during the year. Actionable calls require Allgas to perform some action to remedy an issue/problem on the network. Actionable calls can be initiated by customers identifying problems or by Allgas staff identifying problems. Allgas is unable to report the number of actionable calls exclusive of those generated internally. However, Allgas estimates (using sampling techniques) that there were around 19,652 customer generated calls in 2005-06. This is a slight increase from 2004-05 (18,750 calls) but similar to 2003-04 (19,583 calls).

A total of 100 complaints were received by Allgas in 2005-06 (about 1.50 complaints per 1,000 customers), of which 29 complaints related to reliability. The number of complaints has increased significantly from the 61 complaints received by Allgas in 2004-05 (0.95 complaints per 1,000 customers) and the 22 complaints received in 2003-04 (0.35 complaints per 1,000 customers).

On average, Allgas work crews responded to emergencies (which include all reports of gas leaks) within 26 minutes, a slight improvement from the 31 minutes in 2004-05. This measure covers the time taken from the initial report of the emergency to when the site is made safe. The average response time for the slowest 10 per cent of emergency responses improved significantly from the 91 minutes recorded in 2004-05 to 48 minutes. This result was also an improvement on the 59 minutes recorded in 2003-04.

Approximately 95 per cent of new customers were connected within 10 days<sup>1</sup>, slightly down on 99 per cent in 2004-05. Both these results represent a significant improvement from the result in 2003-04 (79 per cent) despite there being more new connections in each successive year.

The average time taken to connect new customers to the network has remained fairly steady over the past three years, varying between 23 days in 2003-04 to 26 days in 2005-06. However,

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<sup>1</sup> Allgas has reported on the basis of its own internal target of 10 days as opposed to the 20 day timeframe nominated by the Authority.

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the slowest 10 per cent of new connections has continued to lengthen from 95 days and 102 days in 2003-04 and 2004-05 to 122 days in 2005-06. While these delays may seem excessive, they often result from requests from customers to delay previously advised connection dates due to unforeseen delays in building and renovation work. As such, these measures should be considered in light of the very low number (18) of complaints regarding connection/disconnection problems in 2005-06. Allgas is currently unable to separately identify the duration of those delays requested by customers.

In relation to re-connections, 96 per cent of customers were re-connected within one day of applying to their retailer, in line with 99 per cent and 96 per cent in 2004-05 and 2003-04. Over the same period, the slowest 10 per cent of re-connections has taken approximately 2 days.

#### *Unaccounted for Gas*

Unaccounted for gas is the difference between the amount of gas injected into the network and that withdrawn, whilst also adjusting for any gas stored in the network. The level of unaccounted for gas in the Allgas network over 2005-06 represented 3.2 per cent of total throughput, which is an improvement from the 3.4 per cent recorded in 2004-05.

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## **ENVESTRA**

### *Background*

The Envestra network comprises approximately 2,200 kilometres of low, medium, high and transmission pressure mains. During 2005-06, Envestra distributed gas to a total of 77,361 customers (up 3.6 per cent on the previous year) who consumed approximately 5.1 petajoules of gas (down 0.6 per cent on the previous year). Envestra's 67 large customers (consuming 10 or more terajoules per year) accounted for 3.3 petajoules of gas for 2005-06. Not all of Envestra's Queensland network is covered by the access arrangement.

### *Reliability*

The duration of planned gas supply outages decreased from an estimated 25,086 hours during 2004-05 to an estimated 14,388 hours during 2005-06 due to fewer customers being affected by planned interruptions. The average duration of a planned interruption for an affected customer has remained constant at 6 hours over the past three years.

During the reporting period, there were seven unplanned outages, affecting 166 customers. This measure increased from three unplanned outages, which affected 51 customers, during 2004-05. Six of the unplanned outages for 2005-06 were caused by damage to the gas mains by third parties. The remaining unplanned outage was due to a direction from the technical regulator to turn off gas supply during an emergency. The average duration of all unplanned outages decreased from 4.6 hours in 2004-05 to 3.6 hours in 2005-06, well down from 6 hours in 2003-04.

### *Customer Service*

The number of calls from customers increased in 2005-06 to 7,450 (up from 6,196 calls in 2004-05).

A total of 16 complaints were received by Envestra in 2005-06 (which represents about 0.21 complaints per 1,000 customers), of which nine were related to connection and disconnection. The number of complaints has decreased from 20 complaints received by Envestra in 2004-05 (0.27 complaints per 1,000 customers) and 17 complaints received in 2003-04 (0.23 complaints per 1,000 customers).

On average, Envestra work crews responded to reports of emergencies (which included all reports of gas leaks) within 54 minutes, up slightly from 51 minutes and 50 minutes in 2004-05 and 2003-04. This measure covers the time taken from the initial report of the emergency to when the site is made safe. The average response time for the slowest 10 per cent of emergency responses increased slightly from 116 minutes in 2004-05 to 117 minutes in 2005-06. However, the 2005-06 result was still slightly below the 120 minutes recorded in 2003-04.

Depending on the particular type of connection involved, between 34 and 79 per cent of new customers were connected to the Envestra network within 20 days. In 2004-05, this measure ranged between 37 and 56 per cent.

During the reporting period, Envestra took between 19 and 108 days on average (depending on the particular type of connection) to connect new customers to the network compared to a range of 25 to 137 days during 2004-05. The slowest 10 per cent of new connections took between 101 and 354 days compared to 69 and 376 days during the previous year. While these delays may seem excessive, they often result from requests from customers to delay previously advised connection dates due to unforeseen delays in building and renovation work. As such, these measures should be considered in light of the very low number (9) of complaints regarding

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connection/disconnection problems in 2005-06. Envestra is currently unable to separately identify the duration of those delays requested by customers.

As Envestra does not undertake reconnections (these are handled by the retailer), Envestra has been unable to report on the timeliness of re-connections for 2005-06 from its own data sources. In 2003-04, Origin Energy provided Envestra with a (rough) estimate of 98 per cent of re-connections taking place within 24 hours. Origin Energy has informed Envestra that it believes little would have changed in 2005-06.

#### *Unaccounted for Gas*

Envestra's measure of unaccounted for gas does not adjust for the amount of gas stored in its pipeline. The level of unaccounted for gas in the Envestra covered network (part of Envestra's network is not covered by the access arrangements) over 2005-06 represented 5.1 per cent of total throughput of the covered network, which is an improvement from the 5.8 per cent recorded in 2004-05. The level of unaccounted for gas in 2005-06 also represents a significant improvement from the 6.8 per cent recorded in 2003-04.

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