

Electricity Supply Panel – Submission from NECA Tasmania

Background

The National Electrical and Communications Association (NECA) is the peak industry body representing the interests of electrical and communications contractors Australia-wide.

NECA represents over 5000 electrical contractors in Australia.

NECA Tasmania is the peak industry association for electrical contractors in Tasmania.

Issues

1. Competition in the electricity industry

Aurora competes with local contractors in supplying services to customers. It is Aurora policy that only Aurora employees are able to work on Aurora assets.

The Authorised Meter Installer program which replaced the Authorised Contractors Scheme (ACS) is an example of this competition.

It was a requirement for contractors to be accredited under the ACS to be able to work on Aurora meters. However, Aurora unilaterally changed the requirement when the Accredited Meter Installer (AMI) scheme was introduced in 2010. The AMI scheme had associated training costs that had to be met by individual contractors.

NECA Tasmania members who have participated in the scheme have praised the quality of the training. However, the cost of the training and the time away from the workplace for employees to complete the training is prohibitive.

2. The Regulator

The electrical regulator in Tasmania is Workplace Standards. The agency is staffed by Aurora employees. This has the potential to give an impression that the agency is not transparent. If the agency was independently staffed, there would be no chance of a misleading impression.

3. National Electricity Market

NECA Tasmania feels that by Tasmania joining the national grid and introducing competition into the local market, services provided by Aurora would improve.

4. National Competition Policy

NECA Tasmania has concerns that the current situation in Tasmania does not meet the criteria of the National Competition Policy.

5. Bottleneck in retail supply

The time lapse from submitting an Electrical Works Request (EWR) to connected can be as high as 10 days.

Where new infrastructure is required such as a power pole, the time lapse can be as high as three months.

When a Form A is submitted by the contractor for work completed, the response is often returned to the customer who often doesn't understand their requirement to get back in touch with the contractor so the work can be completed. This often makes the delay even longer.

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