

Energy

BULLETIN

Office of **ENERGY** WA

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Safety Certification of Type A Gas Appliances

Recently the Gas Technical Regulators' Committee (GTRC) issued a Discussion Paper outlining proposals for a new, harmonised Australia-New Zealand regime for the safety regulation of domestic gas appliances.

The Office of Energy is a member of GTRC, which is dealing with this project as an issue arising from the Trans Tasman Mutual Recognition Agreement. The Agreement allows any product of one country to be sold in the other and presently a one year exemption applies for gas appliances, to allow time for the implementation of a harmonised regime.

The current Australian regime has to date operated largely around the AGA's certification scheme. The Australian Gas Association scheme deals with more than safety issues and also has some difficulties with satisfying competition policy principles. Some see it as a technical barrier to trade, which is not acceptable under World Trade Organisation principles. The AGA scheme is also not acceptable to New Zealand.

On the other hand, the existing New Zealand scheme does not provide sufficient assurance of safety outcomes for Australian regulators. Accordingly, there is a need for both schemes to change and the GTRC proposals are designed to provide the compromise solution.

The GTRC proposals, which this Office supports, are similar to those used in Europe and include that:

- appliances must meet essential safety requirements, to be demonstrated by type testing and confirmed by independent certification.
- volume production must be supported by a formal quality management system, to give assurance of ongoing compliance.
- A prescribed safety compliance 'mark' is to be applied to each article.

Regulators in Australia and New Zealand are presently reviewing comments received on the initial round of industry consultation. There will be further phases of consultation and it is hoped the details of the new regime will be finalised by the end of 1998.



ALBERT KOENIG
DIRECTOR OF ENERGY SAFETY



Office of **Energy**

New Appointment - Chief Gas Inspector

Kevin Hooper was recently appointed to the position of Chief Gas Inspector, to replace Graham Stewart who resigned recently.



Chief Gas Inspector, Kevin Hooper

Kevin has been with the Office of Energy since its inception in 1995. Prior to that time, he served with the Gas Inspection Branch of the former SECWA.

Kevin says his early challenges are to promote full compliance with the *Gas Standards Regulations 1983*.

However, in keeping with the ethos of the Office of Energy, Kevin says he will continue to take a "light handed" approach to enforcing regulations and standards in industry.

He said a number of areas require attention. Examples he quotes are that gas suppliers have an obligation to report incidents where gas fitters failed to demonstrate competence in gasfitting.

Office of Energy investigations have also revealed a trend of gas fitters failing to pressure test correctly and to provide adequate ventilation when installing bayonet points.

Update on Proposed Amendments to the Gas Standards Regulations 1983

Early in 1998, the Office of Energy commenced a review of the *Gas Standards Regulations 1983*.

As part of the review, key staff of the Office of Energy conducted industry briefings in Perth and at major regional centres. The program was supported by press advertising throughout Western Australia aimed at advising industry participants and other interested parties of the nature of the proposed regulation changes.

Industry participants were invited to submit their comments on the proposed changes. Industry comment has now been analysed and final drafting instructions are being prepared. Overall, there has been good support for the proposals but a number of valuable issues were identified for further work.

More information on the progress of the amendments will be notified in future editions of the Energy Bulletin.

National Reference Group Electrical Licensing

An article in Energy Bulletin No 10 advised of a proposal by the Electrical Regulatory Authorities Council (ERAC) to form a national reference group to address specific licensing issues. The focus of the Group is to work towards greater national uniformity of electrical licences.

The National Reference Group Electrical Licensing has now been formed and is currently addressing a number of licensing uniformity issues.

The Office of Energy is directly involved in the Group and will provide a progress report in the next edition.

1998 WA Energy Efficiency Awards

Minister for Energy, Colin Barnett announced the finalists and winners of the 1998 WA Energy Efficiency Awards in a ceremony at Kings Park Function Centre on 4 June 1998.

The WA Energy Efficiency Awards acknowledge the efforts and achievements of industries, businesses, government agencies and community groups in energy use and management as well as the application of renewable energy. The awards are hosted by the Office of Energy on behalf of the Government of Western Australia.



Minister for Energy, Colin Barnett (second from right) with representatives of Honeywell, winners of the Commercial Buildings category, from left to right, Dammica Wickramaratne, Steve Hannah and Dale Lofts

The diverse array of entries for this year's awards demonstrates that advances in energy efficiency need not be confined to high technology areas or be the result of expensive research and development. Energy efficiency can be as simple as making people aware of conserving energy in their daily lives.

Entries are judged by an independent panel comprising representatives of organisations in fields associated with the theme of the Awards.

1998 category winners are:

- Commercial Buildings: Honeywell Limited for Whitford City Shopping Centre
- Industry: Westralian Sands Ltd for Waste Heat Recovery Plant, Capel
- Educational and Community Based Programs: Western Power Corporation for World of Energy Roadshow

- Innovative Product or Project: Sola-Kleen Pty Ltd for Smart Touch Monitor

There was no award made this year in the Planning, Transport and Infrastructure category.

How energy is used in our community has become very relevant to all Western Australians. It is this relevance to the broader community that makes the WA Energy Efficiency Awards such a significant event and worthy of the respect it has achieved.

For further information, please contact: Brett Cummings, Office of Energy, telephone 08 9327 1477.

Liquid Fuel Shortage Emergency Plan

The Office of Energy, through the State Emergency Management Advisory Committee, is the designated "lead combat authority" for liquid fuel shortage emergencies in Western Australia. The Office is responsible for the maintenance and implementation of an action plan to manage liquid fuels supplies in the event of a liquid fuel supply shortage occurring. The plan covers fuels like petrol and diesel.

The plan provides for management of the supply of liquid fuel to the general public, to ensure that emergency and essential services obtain sufficient fuel to maintain services to the community. Various demand restraint measures would be applied.

Details of the plan and restraint measures will be available at the Office of Energy web site during a liquid fuel emergency.



Safety Switch Promotion and Rebate Scheme

Energy Minister Colin Barnett launched the Office of Energy's "Safety Switches Save Lives" campaign on 7 June 1998.

The campaign was targeted at the half million Western Australian home owners whose residences were built before mid-1992 and are therefore unlikely to have the additional level of safety provided by safety switches. All new homes built since 1992 are required to have safety switch protection for power points.



Minister of Energy Colin Barnett launches the Campaign with resident Sandi Tuck

At the launch, Mr Barnett announced that as an incentive to support the "Safety Switches Save Lives" campaign, the Government, through the Office of Energy, was offering a \$50 rebate to the first 1000 owner/occupiers of homes built prior to June 1992 who had a safety switch installed by a licensed electrical contractor during the promotion period between 8 June and 31 August 1998.

The rebate offer proved very successful. The first 1000 applications for the \$50 rebate were received within twelve days.

The campaign is being supported by television and newspaper advertising. A second phase of the promotion will encourage house holders to take proper care of their electrical appliances.

Recently the Office of Energy, through the Electrical Regulatory Authorities Council (ERAC), made a recommendation to Standards Australia that the level of safety switch protection in all new domestic installations be extended to include lighting circuits. This proposal was supported by ERAC members.

Standards Australia has indicated that this additional level of protection will be incorporated into the forthcoming edition of AS/NZS 3000 Wiring Rules due for release in 1999.

Office of Energy Web Site

The Office of Energy will soon be opening its new web site.

People will be able to visit the internet site and find out about the activities of the Office of Energy and the structure of the regulatory framework. Most of the electrical and gas licensing information that is available from the Licensing Office will be available on the web. Publications like the Energy Bulletin and Energy Matters will also be accessible, either as a read only file or as a document that can be down loaded and printed.



The address for the Office of Energy web site is www.energy.wa.gov.au and it should be operational in early August.

Survey of Participants of Electrical Industry Presentations

The Office of Energy conducted a series of Electrical Industry Presentations between September 1997 and May 1998. The Presentations were held at major regional centres and attracted around 1300 electrical contractors and workers.



From the Office of Energy perspective, the attendances were very good. A wide range of issues was raised in discussion and in most cases these were able to be dealt with at the open forums.

Those attending the Presentations were asked to complete a questionnaire.

Perhaps the most important message back to the Office of Energy was that nearly 75% indicated an improved understanding of the issues covered at the Presentations.

The challenge for the Office of Energy is to now reach those industry personnel who do not attend the Presentations.

Energy Bulletin Survey

In the previous edition of the Energy Bulletin, readers were asked to complete a questionnaire and forward their responses to the Office of Energy.

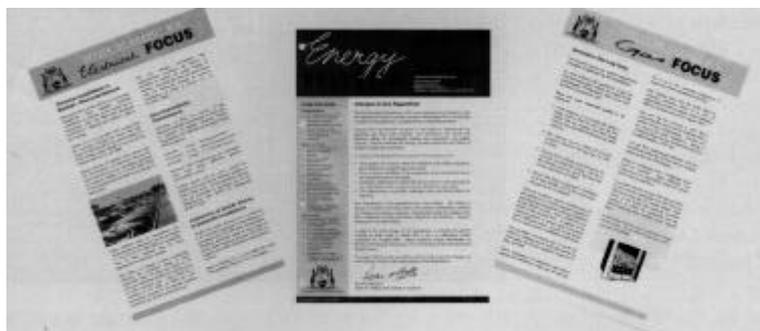
We take this opportunity to thank the many readers who made their time available to complete the questionnaire. We were particularly pleased with the level of response to our request. We received 1101 replies which constitutes 23 percent of Bulletins that were sent out.

It was also encouraging for us to learn that our work in maintaining industry communications like the Energy Bulletin is acknowledged.

We received a number of comments about separating the electricity and gas sections of the Bulletin. Whilst we would be prepared to consider this request, other research that we have carried out indicates wide support for the electricity and gas sections being mailed out together.

If there is sufficient support, we can trial a different mailing arrangement for selected recipients, so that certain electrical industry personnel will receive the Energy Bulletin and the Electrical Focus; the Energy Bulletin and Gas Focus will only be sent to certain gas industry personnel.

If you would like to be part of this trial arrangement, please telephone Harry Hills on 08 9422 5208.



Electrical Contractors Association WA Excellence Awards

The Electrical Contractors Association of WA is currently calling for nominations for its 1998 Excellence Awards.

The Awards are conducted each year, to provide recognition of outstanding achievements in the electrical contracting industry.

Judging will be carried out in the following categories:

- Small Enterprise/Company
- Small Commercial/Residential
- General Contracting
- Industrial Contracting
- Teledata Specialist
- Export Award

Winners of the Excellence Awards will be announced at an industry dinner to be held at the Rendezvous Observation City Hotel on Saturday 19 September 1998.

The Office of Energy is once again proud to be a major sponsor of this event. We encourage electrical contractors to participate, either by nominating their business or by attending the Excellence Awards evening.

For further information, please contact: Rod Hale, Electrical Contractors Association, by telephoning 08 9321 8637.

Australian Electrical & Electronic Manufacturers' Association Seminar to be Held in Perth

The Australian Electrical & Electronic Manufacturers' Association (AEEMA) is conducting a one-day seminar in Perth to address various regulatory issues affecting electrical and electronic products in Australia.

Presentations will be made by staff from the Australian Communications Authority (ACA), AEEMA and the Office of Energy. There will be opportunity for discussion and comment from participants.

Seminar Details

**10:00 AM to 4:00 PM
Thursday 3 September 1998**

Rydges Hotel, Perth

The seminar will address a number of topical issues confronting the supply of electrical and electronic products to the Australian market:

- Industry and the Regulator: The Impact of Competition and Globalisation
- Declared Articles List Review
- The Regulatory Compliance Mark
- The Electromagnetic Compatibility Framework: Audit Procedures
- Trans-Tasman Market Alignment
- Possible Transition to a 230 Volts Regime in Australia
- Energy Efficiency and Environmental Regulation Regulatory Issues
- Mutual Recognition Agreements (APEC, EU): Their Implications for the Electrical Industry.

The seminar will be of interest to the following groups of electrical industry people:

- manufacturers
- electrical contractors
- electrical wholesalers
- electrical retailers

For more information about the seminar and to register: please contact Brigitte Budarick, AEEMA, by telephoning 02 6247 4655.

Alternative formats of the Energy Bulletin may be available to meet the needs of people with disabilities.

For enquiries on articles in this Energy Bulletin, please contact Harry Hills, Office of Energy:

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