

# Final legislation to split SECWA into 2 separate entities

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Energy Minister Colin Barnett today introduced into Parliament the final legislation needed to split the State Energy Commission of Western Australia into two separate corporatised entities.

Mr Barnett said the legislation served to dissolve SECWA and vest in the new electricity and gas corporations necessary operational powers.

"Today's final Bills set up the Office of Energy as an independent adviser to Government to oversee such matters as energy policy, contractor licensing and other regulatory functions," Mr Barnett said.

"These roles within SECWA were no longer deemed appropriate as a part of the new competitive environment."

The legislation also provides for the appointment of two officials - a co-ordinator of energy and a director of energy safety.

"These two officers will take over the policy advisory and safety regulatory roles that were previously the responsibility of SECWA," Mr Barnett said.

The energy co-ordinator will assist the Energy Minister in planning and co-ordinating the provision of energy in WA and provide broad-based advice on energy policy. The co-ordinator will be responsible for granting approval for new electrical generating stations or gas undertakings, or extensions to electrical transmission works. Other duties will include monitoring the operation of the State's energy industry, promoting the development of commercial renewable energy applications and providing support in the resolution of energy-related disputes.

The energy safety director will assume the safety functions of SECWA in relation to the Electricity Act, the Gas Standards Act and Liquid Petroleum Gas Act.

"Although the legislation does not dictate the organisational structure necessary to support these positions, it is the Government's intention that an independent Office of Energy be established," Mr Barnett said.

The Office of Energy will include staff currently employed by the Energy Policy and Planning Bureau.

"The Office of Energy will eventually operate independently and provide advice to Government on an independent basis," Mr Barnett said.

"However, during the necessary transitional period, the office will function



Colin Barnett

within the Department of Resources Development."

Media contact: Caroline Lacy 222 9699