

MEDIA RELEASE

Independent regulator releases report on utility performance

Each year, the ACT Independent Competition and Regulatory Commission reports on the performance of utilities and their compliance with their licence conditions. Today we released our report on the utilities' performance in 2021-22. In addition, we reported on National Energy Retail Law retailers' compliance with the Consumer Protection Code 2020.

"Despite the challenges brought by the COVID-19 pandemic and extreme weather events, utilities generally met their licence conditions and the service levels guaranteed by the Consumer Protection Code," Senior Commissioner Joe Dimasi said.

Customer complaints about sewerage and gas services declined, complaints about water supply services remained stable; and there was a slight increase in electricity distribution service complaints.

Interruptions to water supply services slightly decreased from the previous year and unplanned interruptions to sewerage services decreased from 1,188 in 2020-21 to 609 in 2021-22. This demonstrates a significant improvement in reliability for sewerage services.

However, total planned interruptions for electricity distribution services increased slightly from the previous year. Notably, unplanned sustained interruptions lasting 12 hours or longer significantly increased from 26 events during 2020-21 to 52 events in 2021-22. The utility advised these additional sustained unplanned interruptions occurred during a series of severe storms in the Belconnen area during early 2021.

The Consumer Protection Code establishes guaranteed service levels. If a utility does not meet a guaranteed service level when providing its utility service, it must pay a rebate to the affected customer. Prior to the code coming into effect in 2020, customers needed to apply for a rebate to receive one. Since the code came into effect, retailers must pay rebates without the customer needing to first apply. This change has significantly increased the number of rebates paid to affected customers.

The automatic payment of rebates has seen customers receive the rebates they are entitled to. The number of rebates paid to customers by utilities has increased from a total of \$151,610 paid in 2020-21 to a total of \$297,034 paid for 2021-22. The increase in rebates paid is primarily due to the rebates paid by the electricity distribution utility for late connections.

Energy retailers also paid a total of \$7,760 in rebates under the Consumer Protection Code. This represents a decrease from 2020-21, in which retailers paid \$9,870 in rebates.

He said "These rebates serve as recognition that customers have received poorer services than they should expect. Automatic payment of rebates also gives utilities and retailers stronger incentives to improve their performance."

Our full report is available on our website www.icrc.act.gov.au.

Contact

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Background

The commission licensed five utilities to operate in the ACT in 2021-22: Icon Water for water and sewerage services; Evoenergy electricity and Evoenergy gas for electricity and gas distribution services; Transgrid for electricity transmission services; and East Australian Pipeline Limited (EAPL) for gas transmission services. For the upcoming 2022-23 reporting year, the commission will also report on Lumea Pty Ltd.'s performance against its electricity transmission service licence obligations (issued on 21 July 2022).

We do not license retail energy providers. Energy retailers are authorised under the national energy customer framework by the Australian Energy Regulator, which reports annually on their performance.

A snapshot of overall outcomes is included in the attachment.

Attachment: 2021-22 outcomes at a glance

Reliability

Electricity distribution

Planned interruptions

1,381

Number of planned interruptions to services.

▲ 118 from 2020–21

101

Electricity customers not notified within at least four business days before a planned interruption.

▼ 577 from 2020–21

Unplanned sustained interruptions

52

events that lasted 12 hours or longer, which required a rebate (885 customers).

▲ 26 events from 2020-21



Water supply and sewerage services

438

Number of unplanned interruptions to water supply services.

▼ 64 from 2020-21

1,188

Premises affected by unplanned interruptions for sewerage services.

▼ 609 from 2020-21

16

Premises not restored to sewerage services within 12 hours.

▲ 16 from 2020–21

Gas distribution

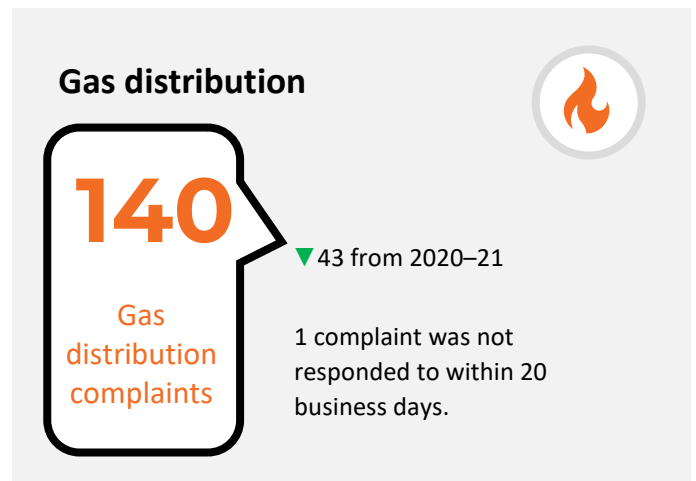
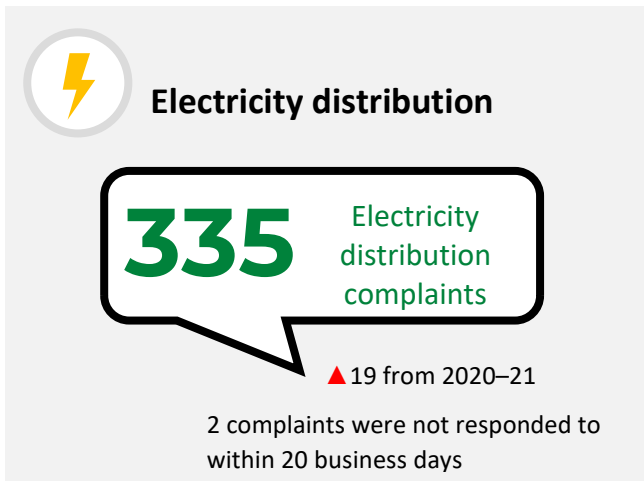
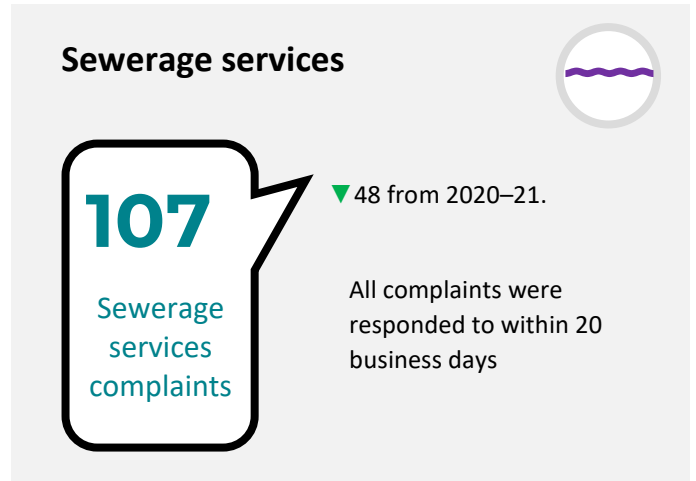


All premises affected by planned interruptions to gas supply were notified within 4 business days.



All interruptions were restored within 12-hours.

Customer complaints



Consumer protection

