

Essential Energy

PUBLICATION GUIDE

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Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009

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The *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (NSW)* (GIPA Act) came into effect on 1 July 2010. Under the terms of the Act, Essential Energy must publish an agency information guide each year. This document is Essential Energy's information guide for 2017.

A copy of this document is available free of charge by either downloading it from our website at www.essentialenergy.com.au, or by contacting our Right to Information Officer.

If you intend to reproduce any part of this document, please contact the Right to Information Officer. We ask you to acknowledge Essential Energy as the source of the information.

Telephone enquiries regarding the GIPA Act can be made on 13 23 91

Written enquiries about the GIPA Act should be directed to:

Right to Information Officer
Essential Energy
PO Box 5730
PORT MACQUARIE NSW 2444

Email enquiries about the GIPA Act should be directed to GIPA@essentialenergy.com.au

ESSENTIAL ENERGY'S MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONS

With more than 200,000 kilometres of powerlines spanning 95 per cent of New South Wales and serving more than 830,000 customers, Essential Energy – a State Owned Corporation – is responsible for managing and operating Australia's most extensive electricity distribution network.

Essential Water, an operating division of Essential Energy, currently services approximately 9,500 water services customers in Broken Hill, Menindee, Sunset Strip and Silverton and 9,000 sewerage services customers in Broken Hill.

Essential Energy continues to support regional development and economies through its almost 3,200 locally based employees.

Essential Energy operates in accordance with multiple legislative instruments, including, but not limited to:

- *Electricity Supply Act 1995 (NSW)*
- *State Owned Corporations Act 1989 (NSW)*
- *Energy Services Corporations Act 1995 (NSW)*
- *Electricity (Consumer Safety) Act 2006 (NSW)*
- *National Electricity (New South Wales) Act 1997 (NSW)*
- *Gas Supply Act 1996 (NSW)*
- *Water Act 1912 (NSW)*
- *Water Management Act 2000 (NSW)*
- *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (NSW)*
- *Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)*

Executive and regional management structure

Members of Essential Energy's Executive comprise:

- Chief Executive Officer;
- Executive General Manager Regulation & Innovation;
- General Manager Asset Management;
- General Manager Network Services;
- Company Secretary/General Counsel;
- General Manager Safety, Human Resources & Environment;
- General Manager Customer & Stakeholder Engagement
- Chief Financial Officer;
- Chief Information Officer; and
- Program Director Transformation

Essential Energy's field operations are divided into three regions, reflecting the environmental and geographic diversity of our network footprint.

Major functions

Essential Energy's core business is the safe and reliable supply of electricity, as outlined in the *Electricity Supply Act 1995 (NSW)* (the Act):

- The transmission and distribution of electricity.
- The provision and maintenance of works for the distribution of electricity.
- The protection of the public from dangers arising from the transmission, distribution and use of electricity.
- The promotion of the safe and efficient use of electricity and electrical fittings and appliances.
- The promotion of energy conservation and of measures to increase the efficiency of energy transmission and use.
- Such other functions as are approved by the Minister on the recommendation of the Corporation.
- Additionally, ancillary functions are outlined in the Act. Essential Energy may:
- Conduct any business and for that purpose, use any property or the services of any staff of the distributor.
- Acquire and develop land as necessary for the exercise of its functions, and dispose of land.
- Acquire or build, and maintain and dispose of, any buildings, plant, machinery, equipment or vehicles.
- Make and enter into contracts or arrangements for the carrying out of works or the performance of services or the supply of goods or materials.
- Make charges and impose fees for services performed and goods and materials supplied to it.
- Appoint agents, and act as agents for other persons.

EFFECTS ON MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

In exercising its statutory functions, Essential Energy may affect members of the public in its many operations, including, but not restricted to:

- The construction of electricity infrastructure, including substations, poles, conductors, transformers.
- Routine repair and/or replacement of existing overhead and underground infrastructure.
- The acquisition of land and the redevelopment of buildings and land.
- Trimming of trees adjacent to distribution infrastructure.
- Inspection of customers' premises to ensure compliance with relevant safety standards.
- Repair and replacement of streetlighting.
- The issuing of invoices and carrying customer services.

PARTICIPATION BY THE PUBLIC IN POLICY MAKING DECISIONS

Customer consultation

A diverse cross-section of regional community representatives make up the membership of the newly-formed Customer Advocacy Group responsible for providing Essential Energy with insight and advice on electricity network issues.

This Group replaces the Rural Advisory Group (established in 1998) and the Customer Council. The Customer Advocacy Group will continue in the tradition of these groups as a proactive forum for consultation, engagement and insight across Essential Energy's customer base, on any matters relating to the supply of electricity and associated services.

Membership of the Group represents domestic, industrial, commercial, rural and remote customers and primary producers as well as low-income households and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Ministerial and departmental correspondence

Customers are welcome to contact Customer Advocacy Group members to provide feedback for discussion at these meetings. Contacts can be found by visiting our website at www.essentialenergy.com.au

Energy & Water Ombudsman New South Wales

The Energy & Water Ombudsman New South Wales (EWON) provides a free, fair and independent dispute resolution service for all electricity and gas customers in New South Wales, and some water customers. There is no charge to consumers for the service.

NATURE OF DOCUMENTS HELD BY ESSENTIAL ENERGY

Essential Energy holds many files, documents and instruction manuals concerning its operations. A number of publications are available free of charge from Essential Energy either by calling 13 23 91 or by visiting our website at www.essentialenergy.com.au.

Essential Energy holds the following documents:

- Policy & procedure documents
- Board business papers
- Instructions to employees
- Employee newsletters/memos/bulletins
- Notices to external organisations
- Customer bulletins
- Specifications
- Reports
- Maps, plans and diagrams
- Publications

When files become out of date or inactive, they are stored at the premises of Essential Energy's records archiving contractor. Any costs for the retrieval of these documents from storage will be evaluated with regard to the individual complexity of each request. After a period, they are disposed of according to the *State Records Act 1998 (NSW)*. Files are 'sentenced' (a minimum amount of time the information needs to be kept before it can be approved for destruction is determined) and retained, destroyed or sent to State Archives in accordance with the requirements of the *State Records Act 1998 (NSW)*.

ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS, PROCEDURES AND CONTACT POINTS

In many instances, customer information relating to a person's own account, or information that is already publicly available may be provided, or access given to documents by simply making a request either in person, by telephone, fax, mail or e-mail. Under the GIPA Act, Essential Energy is required to release information about its operations and activities unless there is an overriding public interest against disclosure, or if the information falls within an exemption category of information under the *State Records Act 1998 (NSW)*. In accordance with this obligation, Essential Energy has established the following methods for releasing information about its operations:

Open access information (mandatory release)

Certain information must be disclosed on our website, free of charge. This includes policy documents, a current publication guide, disclosure log and register of government contracts.

Authorised proactive release

Essential Energy can be asked what information we will make publicly available in addition to the information contained on our website. Frequently requested information or information of public interest may be readily available.

Informal request for information

Specific information can be requested from Essential Energy. Unless there are good reasons to require a formal application, Essential Energy encourages the release of information where possible. Such information could include requests for personal information by the individual concerned.

Access application (formal application) for release of information

Specific information that has not otherwise been made available may be formally requested from Essential Energy. In some circumstances, access to information will require a formal access application. Sometimes there is an overriding public interest test against disclosing certain information.

OBTAINING INFORMATION FROM ESSENTIAL ENERGY

General enquiries

Essential Energy welcomes enquiries from its customers. If the information you require is not available on our website, www.essentialenergy.com.au, you can make enquiries by phone, email or mail. We will decide whether the information you want:

- is open access or proactive release information that is readily available. If it is, we will tell you where and how you can obtain the information
- should be made available as part of a 'proactive release' of information
- can be disclosed to you through informal release – for example, where no third party information is involved
- requires a formal access application – for example, because consultation with a third party is required
- should not be made available due to an overriding public interest against disclosure of the information.

Formal applications for access to documents can be made in writing to our Right to Information Officer. You will need to supply all relevant details and include the application fee. Alternatively, applications can be lodged in person, emailed or posted to our Right to Information Officer.

Fees and charges for formal applications

The following fees are applicable for formal applications:

Nature of Application	Application Fee	Processing Charge
Access by individuals to records about their personal affairs	\$30*	\$30* per hour after first 20 hours
All other requests***	\$30*	\$30 per hour*
Internal review	\$40*/**	Nil
Amendment of records	Nil ***	Nil

* Subject to a 50 per cent reduction for financial hardship and public interest reasons.

** Refunds may apply as a result of successful internal reviews and successful applications for amendment of records.

*** No application fees may be charged for internal reviews in relation to amendment of records.

Essential Energy may request an advance deposit by advising of the estimated processing charge and giving at least four (4) weeks for payment to be made.

NOTE: If any personal information held by Essential Energy is incomplete, incorrect, misleading or out of date, you have the right to request that it is corrected. Applications for correction of personal information in a document should be made in writing in the form of a letter. Any information to support the request should be included in the application. Once you have received documents under the GIPA Act, there is no charge to have personal information in the documents amended.



Contacting our Right to Information Officer

Essential Energy's Right to Information Officer can be contacted by:

Mail: The Right to Information Officer
 Essential Energy
 PO Box5730
 PORT MACQUARIE NSW 2444

Telephone: 13 23 91

Email: GIPA@essentialenergy.com.au

Face to face and telephone enquiries can be made between the business hours of 9:00am to 4:00pm.

Proof of identity may be required at the time the inquiry is made or the application lodged.

If you would like further information in relation to the GIPA Act, please contact the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner on free call: 1800 472 679 or visit the website at www.ipc.nsw.gov.au.