

Our ref: 64319573
Contact: David Murphy – 9427 5997

4 August 2023

Mr Jai Thomas
Coordinator of Energy
Energy Policy WA

By email: EPWA-submissions@dmirs.wa.gov.au

Dear Jai,

PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE ELECTRICITY NETWORK ACCESS CODE – PRIORITY PROJECTS

Western Power supports the proposed changes to the Electricity Network Access Code to allow for the fast-tracking of major transmission network investment through the regulatory process, insofar as it aligns with its ongoing support of the State’s decarbonisation plans.

Western Power welcomed the release of the South-West Interconnected System (SWIS) Demand Assessment by the Minister for Energy on 9 May 2023, which aligns with our own plans for transmission growth as presented to the Economic Regulation Authority as part of our Revised AA5 Proposal.

In our Revised Access Arrangement proposal (AA5) we identified requirements to undertake transmission network augmentations to support the delivery of the Government’s decarbonisation plans during the AA5 period and proposed to:

- deliver network upgrades in the East Region of the of the Western Power Network to maximise the utilisation of the 220kV transmission line to the Eastern Goldfields; and
- undertake scoping and planning of potential network augmentations for the North Region of the Western Power Network.

The Economic Regulation Authority’s Final Decision approved the proposed expenditure, noting it is for network expansion projects identified by the Government to support the announced closures of coal fired generation.

The Government’s most recent proposal to provide a mechanism whereby Western Power is able to expedite its work on future transmission investment priorities, subject to a determination by the Minister for Energy, through these proposed changes to the Access Code, are therefore strongly supported.



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The proposed mechanism by which the Minister is provided powers to determine priority investment projects that are then exempt from the upfront regulatory test of the Access Code, is a sensible approach to ensuring timely investment in the transmission network and enabling the needs of market participants to be met as they too seek to decarbonise their operations.

By removing the upfront regulatory test, Western Power accepts its commitment to prudent and efficient delivery of any nominated priority project, and maximising the net benefit to consumers.

Western Power appreciates the opportunity to provide input into this matter and looks forward to continuing its close working relationship with the Government on these important matters.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Zahra Jabiri', written in a cursive style.

Zahra Jabiri

Head of Regulation and Investment Assurance