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Welcome Move to Modernise Electricity Networks In the Top End

Top End consumers will benefit from the energy reforms proposed by the Northern Territory Government in legislation to be considered this week, the Energy Networks Association said today.

ENA Chief Executive Officer John Bradley said the restructure of Power and Water Corporation would see network operations independently regulated in line with national standards.

“Consumers will benefit from the separation of Power and Water with improved transparency and a more level playing field for competition to emerge in the generation and retail sectors.

“Given the growth outlook for the Northern Territory, it’s vital it has a modern electricity structure which encourages private sector investment in competitive sectors,” Mr Bradley said.

Mr Bradley said the restructure was important to achieve real scope for competition, which was legally introduced in April 2000.

“It’s been over 14 years, since the Top End introduced a legal framework for competition – but real competition requires dismantling of Power and Water which otherwise dominates the market.

“Competition in the generation and retail sectors will put downward pressure on costs and consumers can have confidence that market participants are competing through lower prices,” Mr Bradley said.

Mr Bradley said nationally consistent regulation of networks had been a key part of energy reforms throughout Australia.

“There are real challenges in operating an electricity network across urban, regional and remote communities in the Top End, with more than 8500 km of power lines and underground cables.

“The ENA urges Northern Territory parliamentarians to support legislation that puts a clear focus on network performance and efficiency, and introduces a nationally consistent regulatory framework.

“A safe, reliable and affordable electricity network will be the backbone for future economic development in the Territory, so this is a historic reform whose time has come,” Mr Bradley said.

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ENA is the peak national body for Australia’s energy networks; and represents gas distribution and electricity network businesses on economic, technical, environment and safety regulation as well as national energy policy issues.