

ENERGY IN TASMANIA REPORT 2020-21

The Tasmanian Economic Regulator published its annual performance report for Tasmania's energy sector, the *Energy in Tasmania Report 2020-21*, today.

The Tasmanian Economic Regulator, Mr Joe Dimasi, noted the growing contribution of wind and solar electricity generation to meeting Tasmania's energy needs.

The completion of commissioning of the Granville Harbour and Cattle Hill wind farms in 2020-21 allowed them to operate at full capacity for the first time, resulting in a 34.9 per cent increase in wind generation, compared to 2019-20.

Exports of electricity from rooftop solar to the grid increased by 39.8 per cent compared to 2019-20, as a result of growth in the number of installations and an increase in the average generating capacity of installations.

The increasing contribution of wind and rooftop solar, combined with lower prices in Victoria and lower inflows into Hydro Tasmania's catchments, resulted in Hydro Tasmania reducing its hydro-electric generation by 15.7 per cent. Net imports across Basslink were 590 GWh in 2020-21, which was the equivalent of 5.5 per cent of electricity consumption in Tasmania, compared to net exports of 509 GWh in 2019-20.

There were no significant electricity transmission or distribution reliability issues in 2020-21, with TasNetworks' overall network performance achieving target levels.

The number of residential electricity customers in Tasmania increased by 0.9 per cent in 2020-21, while the number of small and large business customers decreased by 1.6 and 0.8 per cent respectively. Customer growth was 0.6 per cent for the year, the same as the increase in electricity consumption, which also rose by 0.6 per cent.

On the Bass Strait Islands (BSI), which are not part of the National Electricity Market (NEM), electricity generation was just over 19 GWh in 2020-21, up from 18 GWh in 2019-20.

While Aurora Energy continues to serve the majority of residential and business customers, smaller electricity retailers increased their market share, from 1.6 per cent in 2019-20 to 3.0 per cent in 2020-21.

More electricity customers were repaying debts in 2020-21 compared to 2019-20 due, in part, to the restrictions imposed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, the number of customers on voluntary payment plans, where offered by retailers, also increased.

In 2020-21, the number of Tasmanian residential and small business gas customers increased by 2.6 and 6.7 per cent respectively, continuing the increase in gas customer numbers in 2019-20. Annual gas consumption through the distribution system increased by 153 TJ, or approximately 4.3 per cent.

In contrast with electricity, the number of residential and business gas customers entering into payment plans decreased in 2020-21. The number of customers on payment plans was the lowest in the past five years.

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