

Woodside pipeline reopening marred by delays

Posted Fri Jan 4, 2008 3:15pm AEDT

Woodside has been criticised for its handling of a shutdown at the North West Shelf which has left Western Australia with minimal gas supplies.

The shutdown happened two days ago after an electrical fault raised safety concerns.

Industrial customers have been forced to burn oil and coal to fuel their refineries and power stations.

Woodside had hoped to bring the plant online last night but mechanical issues have delayed the start-up until later today.

The State Government says its disappointed with Woodside's lack of communication about when it hopes to restore gas flow to the Dampier to Bunbury pipeline.

Western Power says cool weather today means domestic electricity supplies in the state's south-west will not be stretched.

David Martin from Horizon Power, which provides electricity to WA's north, says the Burrup Fertiliser Plant is continuing to divert some of its gas into the power grid.

"Some of the mining companies up there - Pilbara Iron have closed their mining operations - and that's enabling us to keep generation at our Karratha and Port Hedland terminals and we're maintaining supply," he said.