



Mike Taylor (Chair, EHA), Robert Brayshaw (Merz & McLellan), David Eiszele AO (Western Power), Rob Steele (Merz & McLellan), Hon Dan Caddy MLC (State Govt), Peter Varris (City of Vincent), Allison Selman (EA)

Engineering heritage honour for East Perth's pioneering power station

One of the world's earliest power stations built on the Independent Unit Principle, *East Perth Power Station*, has been awarded a prestigious Engineering Heritage National Marker. The award recognises both its pioneering design and its national significance as Australia's first power station to exclusively employ turboalternators.

The marker and interpretation panel were unveiled at a ceremony held on 27 November 2025, jointly hosted by the Electric Energy Society of Australia and Engineers Australia at their Perth auditorium.

At the unveiling, Allison Selman, President of the Engineers Australia WA Division, outlined the Engineering Heritage Marker program and its role in achieving long-term recognition of Australia's most significant engineering achievements.

John Archer, a retired electrical engineer, spoke on the development of the Independent Unit Principle in the early 20th century by renowned electrical engineer Charles Merz. He explained how this innovation dramatically improved reliability and efficiency in electric power generation and went on to become the universally adopted model for large power stations around the world.

The presentation described how Western Australian Premier Jack Scadden and Perth Mayor-elect John Prowse engaged Merz to help develop a central coal-fired power station capable of meeting the State's industrial and community demand for electricity.



Following the presentations, attendees viewed a 20-minute black-and-white film from the 1930s, produced by International Combustion Limited. The film chronicled the design, manufacture and installation of the 'B' Station boilers and was met with warm applause, being widely regarded as the highlight of the ceremony.

Today, significant elements of the East Perth Power Station site remain intact and close to their original condition, including:

- much of the original 'A' Station turbine hall constructed between 1914 and 1916
- the 'B' Station building completed in 1938
- the frequency changer building from 1951.

The Engineering Heritage Marker panel was formally presented by Allison Selman to Daniel Caddy MLC, representing the Western Australian Government, and Peter Varris, Executive Director Infrastructure and Environment, representing the City of Vincent.

The award recognises East Perth Power Station's enduring contribution to the development of reliable electrical power generation in Australia and its significance in the global history of power station engineering.