

ELECTRICITY — PREPAID METERS

277. Hon SALLY TALBOT to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Energy:

I refer to the use of prepaid electricity meters in Western Australia.

- (1) In which communities in the Kimberley and the Pilbara have prepaid meters been installed?
- (2) How many have been installed in each community?
- (3) Are these prepaid meters now being removed?
- (4) If yes —
 - (a) why;
 - (b) when was the decision made to remove the meters;
 - (c) what is the cost of removal;
 - (d) what is the deadline for removal; and
 - (e) what alternative plan does the minister have to assist low-income customers manage their power costs?

Hon PETER COLLIER replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of this question. It is question C184, is it not?

Hon Sally Talbot: Yes.

Hon PETER COLLIER: It is quite a lengthy response, so I seek leave to have it incorporated into *Hansard*.

The PRESIDENT: That is unusual. It is only usually done for tabular forms, but the Leader of the House is perfectly entitled to do it if he wants.

Hon PETER COLLIER: I would like to do so.

Leave granted.

The following material was incorporated —

I thank the Hon. Member for some notice of this question.

1.&2. The communities which have been connected to the Horizon Power network and have had prepayment meters (PPMs) installed by Horizon Power are listed below by region. Also shown is the number of PPMs in each community or town.

West Kimberley

- Ardyaloon, 75
- Djarjdjin/ Lombadina, 60
- Beagle Bay/Bobieding, 58
- Bidgydanga 91
- Budulah/Bungardi, (Derby) 82
- Bayulu, 51
- Darigunayal/Djimung Nguda/Junjuwa/Karmulinunga/Kurnangki/Mindi Rardi, (Fitzroy Crossing) 127
- Yungngora 66
- Mowanjum 58

East Kimberley

- Guda Guda 21
- Mirima /Nulleywah, (Kununurra) 58
- Red Hill/Nicholson Camp/Warrayu, (Halls Creek) 60
- Kalumburu 83

Pilbara:

- Irrigunji 19
- Gooda Binya 12
- Cheeditha 15
- Bindi Bindi 20

3. The prepayment meters are not being removed. In May 2013, Horizon Power sought an extension to the grandfathering period for the replacement of existing meters from the 30 June 2013 to 30 June 2014, by which time Horizon Power plans to have a new metering solution developed. The extension has been sought from the Electricity Code Consultative Committee, the ECCC, which has supported the extension and the request is currently with the Economic Regulation Authority (ERA).

4. Although the meters have not yet been removed, they will be required to be replaced by 30 June 2014 should the ERA approve the extension.

- a. The ECCC reviews the “Code of Conduct for the Supply of Electricity to Small use Customers”, (the Code), every two years. In the 2009 review, the ECCC recommended changes to part 9 of the Code which were gazetted. These changes added requirements that both a retailer and a network operator were required to comply. The existing prepayment meter installed in communities does not meet these requirements. The meters are therefore required to be replaced by the end of the grandfathering period.
 - b. The decision was made in the Code review of 2009.
 - c. The meters cannot be removed without providing a replacement meter. The cost for the exchange of the prepayment meters to a credit meter will be ~\$1 million which covers the cost of the replacement meter and its exchange in the field.
 - d. The deadline for removal is 30 June 2013; however, the expected extension approval will move this deadline to 30 June 2014.
 - e. Horizon Power remains committed to the delivery of an alternative prepayment metering system and is working through the development of such a system presently. A trial of a new system is expected to take place in the first quarter of 2014.
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